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AUGUST 2021 | ISSUE 2

REFRAME

Newsletter 2



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Reframe e-newsletter 2

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REFRAME

The Reframe team is happy to present you its Newsletter 2!

Since our Newsletter 1, a lot of work has been done and now, we are able to deliver to you some really interesting and useful materials.

- Did you know that we conducted a Europe-wide survey on Circular Economy with more than 100 participants?
- Are you curious what experts are saying about the main barriers and drivers about CE?
- Do you want to know what happened on our partner meeting in Cyprus and what will be the next results of the project?

If your answer is yes, you are at the right place, keep reading and welcome to the REFRAME project!

How well are we performing?



Circular Economy Assessment

A Europe-wide outlook

The REFRAME project completed the Europe-wide Circular Economy (CE) Assessment that took place from the end of February to mid-April 2021 using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was available in English, Portuguese, Bulgarian, Hungarian and Greek and was shared through various channels (Website, Emails, Newsletters, Social Media, etc.). More than 100 respondents from several EU countries responded to the survey, the majority of whom come from the top management of SMEs (President/ CEO/ Directors/ Managers/Supervisors) from the Construction and Manufacturing sectors, employ less than 50 persons and are relatively old in the business, with more than 10 years of operation.

Scope of the Survey

The respondents dealt with general questions regarding the CE and special questions regarding risks, opportunities and challenges, which are tailored to their company.

The questionnaire also included questions about the maturity level of the respondents' company regarding the Circularity of business and disclosed their assessment on their level of knowledge concerning the ability of the company to adopt CE principles. Several interesting findings were obtained, the most important of which are summarized hereinafter.



LET'S SEE THE RESULTS!



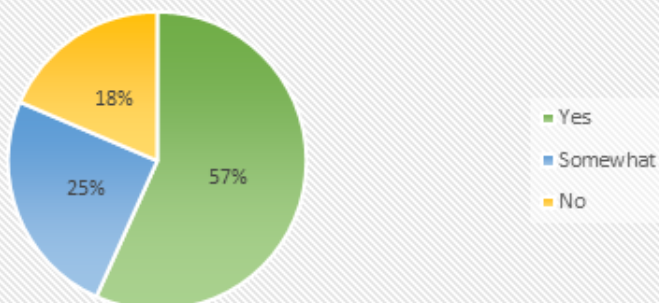
More than half of the respondents (54%) have established an Environmental Management System (EMS) or related procedures as a means to environmental protection. Nevertheless, very few companies follow CE practices, e.g. refurbish goods and parts, use recovered/recycled materials to produce new products, sell upcycled products and deliver product access with leasing or renting, and almost one-third see that CE is a priority on the company's agenda to a great extent.

It is encouraging, however, that the vast majority of the respondents think that CE has business opportunities and mention that their existing business model could be easily shifted to a circular one. More importantly, 30% are currently implementing a CE transition.

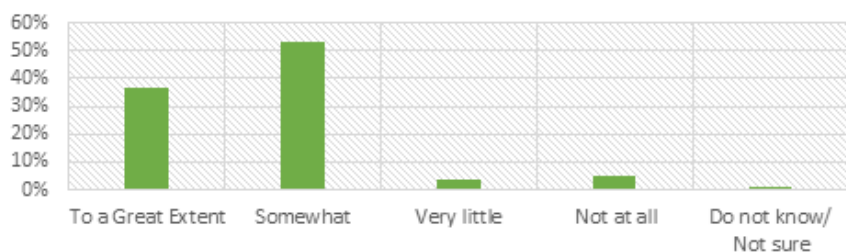
Companies that try to implement CE transition have identified several risks, such as low-quality products, excess costs and other financial risks, lack of CE processes standardization, legislative barriers, lack of by-product processing companies, lack of knowledge in the implementation of CE principles, etc. Finally, two-thirds of the participants mentioned that they either do not offer CE training or offer very little to their employees. The latter is of particular interest and proves the usefulness of the REFRAME project which aims, among others, at providing construction & manufacturing SMEs and micro-enterprises employees (and future employees) with practical knowledge on implementing CE transition in their business

FACTS AND FIGURES

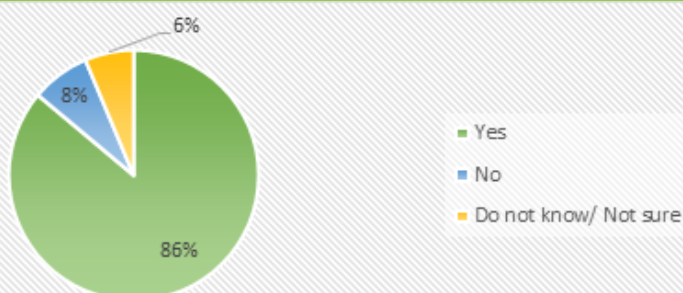
Are you aware of the Circular Economy approach?



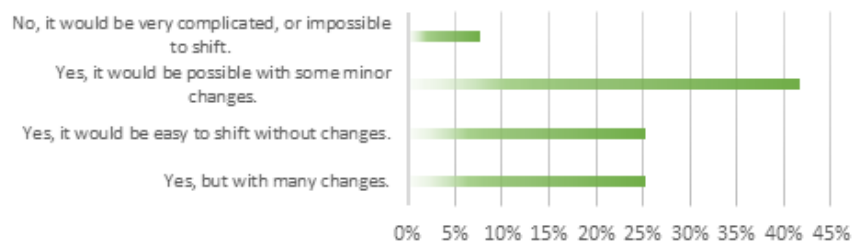
Do you think that you need more information, training, and awareness regarding circular economy principles?



Do you think that Circular Economy has business opportunities?

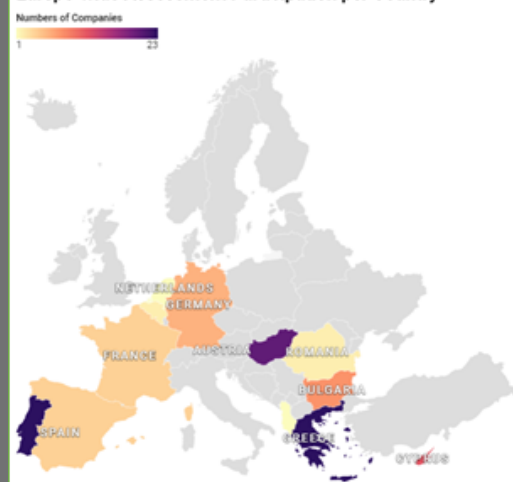


Do you consider that your existing company's business model is easy and flexible to shift to a Circular Economy one?



100+
RESPONDENTS

Europe-wide Assessment Participation per Country



PARTICIPANTS'
LOCATION

BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITIES



CIRCULAR
ECONOMY

What are the experts saying?



EXPERTS' INTERVIEWS

Besides the Circular Economy (CE) Assessment survey, REFRAME conducted a number of **semi-structured interviews with CE experts**, which were held online due to the social distancing measures adopted to control the spread of COVID-19.

In total, twelve CE experts from SMEs and large enterprises, research institutes/HEIs and non-governmental organisations and public entities (namely 10 managers/CEOs and 2 researchers/academics) were interviewed to gain a more in-depth insight regarding the steps of the transition toward CE, the challenges/barriers and risks that SMEs face in employing CE initiatives, the main benefits of CE initiatives for SMEs, the training needs required for employees to acquire CE related knowledge, etc.

Based on experts' opinions, consumers show an **ever-increasing interest in sustainability**, look for "green" products with a low environmental footprint and consider products' cost, quality, durability, etc. Yet, the implementation of CE principles is not well-established in construction, manufacturing and crafts enterprises (although there are differences between countries and across enterprises). The main reason is that the transition to CE is a complicated process in terms of re-designing, considering that each industry is working with different models.

In general, the **main drivers** for the transition to CE are the potential economic benefits, the importance of closing the economic loop between raw materials, components and products, the compliance with the regulations and the related financial burden that the company may receive, the pressure from the consumers and the Social License to Operate (SLO) and the awareness of both the producers and the consumers about sustainability and CE.

On the other hand, the **main barriers** are related to lack of appropriate strategies and legislation to promote CE, administration costs which are oftentimes higher than the savings achieved, lack of access to the funding required to support the transition to CE, the insufficient supply streams of materials both in terms of quality and quantity and cultural factors (e.g. no one is reluctant to change and companies and their personnel are mainly focused on the daily operation).

The experts also pointed out that CE is a win-win solution for enterprises and the society. CE can result in significant cost reductions and indirect benefits that have to do with CSR, customer satisfaction, etc. CE initiatives save also valuable primary raw materials, reduce energy consumption, produce less waste, reduce GHG and pollutants emissions, etc. Regarding REFRAME's objectives, the experts mentioned the importance of CE training because these programs, particularly in SMEs, are practically non-existent. Further, all the experts mentioned that the training programs should be addressed to all staff categories, from the top manager to the worker who operates a machine or collects the waste.

Transnational Partner Meeting in Cyprus

In July 2021, the project partners met for the first time in person in Larnaca, Cyprus to discuss topics of key importance. During the two-days meeting, partners discussed the design of the *Self-Rate Tool* and explored how the results of the S-R tool should be connected with the learning pathways (O2) as well as the CE transition Action Plan (O3).

The first module of the S-R Tool will be addressed to *SMEs and microenterprises* and will estimate their circularity index based on self-rate questions. The results will rank the priorities of the company according to the Circularity Ranking System and will direct the person(s) in charge to specific modules of the Circular Economy Implementation Framework (CE Framework).

The second module of the tool will be addressed to *SME owners/managers*, employees and future employees, VET centres trainers, consultants, etc. and will assess their knowledge around CE issues.

Based on the performance of the respondent, the tool will direct her/him to specific sections of the CE Course.

Partners discussed topics related to the Training content development, which will be available in two different versions, a “white collar” and a “blue collar” version of training material will be supporting the users in their learning paths. The draft contents of the CE Strategy document have also been presented and discussed.

Topics such as specifications of the iLearn Tool, dissemination and sustainability of project results were also part of the agenda.

The two-days meeting was very fruitful and enabled partners to continue their joint project related work on mutual grounds of understanding, ensuring highest professional development of the outputs.



Forthcoming Milestones

*Take a look
at what we
are
developping
for you*



31/10/2021

**1st Module of
the Self-Rate
Tool**



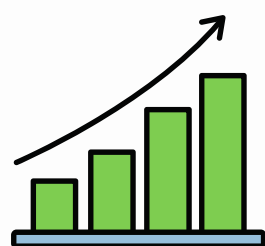
30/11/2021

**1st draft of
the CE
Strategy**



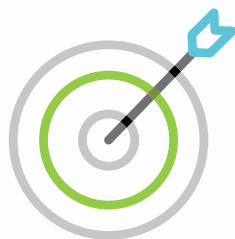
02/2022

iLearn Tool



30/11/2021

**Training
materials
developed**



**02/2022
Circular
Economy
Course in
digital form**



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Lets connect and make the journey towards your CE goals together!

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