

by Clarissa Morawski

*“For me, after nearly 20 years in the business of waste reduction in Canada, this is an exciting new chapter. In August, our family moves to Barcelona, Spain, where we are keen to experience the culture and customs of the Catalanian people.”*



# Reloop: Vision of a circular economy

For decades, our economies have developed a ‘take, make, use, and dispose’ pattern of growth, a linear model resting on the flawed assumption that resources are infinite, easy to source, and cheap to dispose of. We manufacture products and packaging, use them for a short time, and then throw them away with no thought about repair or reuse. As a result, valuable materials that could help boost Europe’s economy are ending up as waste in landfills or incinerators, or as litter.

The circular economy is an alternative to the traditional linear economic model. In a circular economy, products and materials remain in the production cycle for as long as possible, and are continuously re-used, recycled or safely returned to nature. The goal is to reduce or eliminate waste — not just from the manufacturing process, but also throughout the various stages of a product’s lifecycle.

Moving towards a circular economy requires changes throughout the value chain, from product design to new modes of consumer behaviour. This, in turn, depends crucially on the development of policy drivers that incentivize the shift to a system where waste prevention, reuse, and closed-loop recycling are prioritized, by assigning value to resources through deposits and related economic incentives. This is where *Reloop* comes in.

## Who is Reloop?

*Reloop* was formed as an international not-for-profit association of like-minded interests who share a common vision of a circular economy. In a world where the climate is changing, and where the demand and competition for energy, water, and other natural resources is greater than ever before, *Reloop* aims to work as a platform for advances in policies that promote a world where resources remain resources, and where they create jobs.

Although it is based in Europe, the organization is open to all nationalities (including non-European countries) and consists of founding members, honorary members, and members-at-large, from all sectors

across Europe. This includes producers, distributors, recyclers, academia, NGOs, trade unions, green regions, and cities. By connecting people with specific competencies (e.g., research, advocacy, technical, multi-media), *Reloop* works as a network to promote the environmental and economic benefits of a circular economy, and also allows for information-sharing between stakeholders.

## Next Steps for Reloop

The launch of *Reloop* is timely, following the European Commission’s announcement in December 2014 to withdraw the Circular Economy Package (CEP) from its 2015 Work Programme. Over the next couple of months, the Commission will be requesting input into the re-draft of the CEP — which has an end-of-year deadline — and it is important that all stakeholders’ voices are heard, not just those of large multi-national interests.

*Reloop* has developed a position paper that identifies important considerations for DG Environment when developing the new CEP related to waste. Among these considerations is that the new CEP introduce targeted collection programs for marine debris packaging offenders like beverage containers and plastic bags. *Reloop* is also proposing that the new CEP include preparation for reuse and recycling targets for packaging by material, including 60 per cent for plastics, 80 per cent for metal and glass, and 90 per cent for paper

and cardboard by 2025 (as per the original CEP which was introduced in 2014). Considerations also include minimum criteria for extended producer responsibility (EPR) and definitions in all waste related directives (like the packaging directive for example) that are consistent with those of the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC). Of all the considerations proposed by *Reloop*, perhaps the most important is the development of a revised recycling rate calculation methodology that takes into account losses throughout the recycling chain. This methodology is con-

**March 25, 2015 marked the official launch of Reloop, Europe’s first pan-European organization to focus specifically on issues relating to waste and diversion that represents the interests of and serves as the voice for industry, government, and environmental organizations at the European Union level. In this article, Clarissa Morawski, Reloop’s managing director, explains what the organization is all about and why it’s important to move towards a circular economy.**





Clarissa Morawski moderates a panel at the European Reuse Conference on March 25, 2015.

sistent with that of the Canadian Standards Association's *CSA SPE-890, A Guideline for the Accountable Management of End-of-Life Materials*, which is slated to be published later this summer.

As Europe moves forward on a path to de-carbonate the economy and work towards zero emissions and zero waste, it is imperative that policies be designed to support this goal. If crafted properly, the EU CEP will support a level playing field among member states, stimulate innovation in products design, and incentivize reverse distribution systems for higher quantity and quality recycling within Europe. Reloop will continue to work closely with its members and with the Commission to ensure that progress towards a circular economy continues and remains high on the political agenda.

For me, after nearly 20 years in the business of waste reduction in Canada, this is an exciting new chapter. In August, our family moves

to Barcelona, Spain where we are keen to experience the culture and customs of the Catalonian people. With members of our team on the ground, CM Consulting will continue to service our Canadian clients and publish our bi-annual reports on waste batteries, beverage containers and WEEE recycling programs in Canada. For team bios, please visit [www.cmconsultinginc.com/about-waste-management-analysts/](http://www.cmconsultinginc.com/about-waste-management-analysts/).

I will continue to be actively engaged in the development of Canadian stewardship policy and I promise to keep the readers of SWR fully informed on developments of the CEP in Europe.

Saludos! 

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