Europe Carbon Neutral in 2050: 2 steps forward, 1 step back

Yes, local and international legislators and governments delivered their green ambitions and promises to the public with great emphasis. In exchange for a vote, perhaps. And they have not always kept their promises. 2020, 2030, 2050 are all milestones where we need to change our behaviour to cope with climate change. But as always, you need a goal to work towards, and even if the goal is not fully achieved, you will still achieve some of the result. In other words, we need more ambitious plans to get there.

With Extended Product Responsibility with probably an Added Value Tax bonus for the good guys and a malus for the slow ones, things really will change.

100% transparent traceability of products through digital product passports will ensure that polluters will pay. And let us not forget that the consumer (in some cases) is not responsible for waste. It is the manufacturer who has this extended product responsibility. How will the manufacturer prevent consumer waste?

CSRD or Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive will gradually become mandatory for all companies in the coming years. A set of reporting tools on both your impact on the planet, with for example life-cycle analyses of products, but also on the social impact on your staff and on the environment will be essential. The biggest companies will first have to replace their current NFRD (Non-Financial Reporting Directive) with CSRD. And we will follow. In a few years, this will be as common as having a website.

Material-related directives will land in all European countries. In some countries, they have already landed. Banning single-use plastics, as well as regulations on batteries and packaging, are good examples.

More than 80% of a product's impact is in its design. Logically, Europe will motivate and later force us to replace all current products with eco-designed products whose components and materials will be used over and over forever and ever. The European directive called: "sustainable eco-designed products become the European standard", was published in March 2022. We expect it to become national legislation within 24 to 36 months. GET YOURSELF READY FOR THIS!

The commitment to go for 100% circular procurement for governments in Europe is a no brainer. 20% of goods and services are procured by governments in Europe and for that this will become exemplary behaviour. And it will change manufacturers and their products, and you will have to deal with that even if you don't do business with the government.

But all the above as "the sword of Damocles" hanging over our heads is not at all the most compelling reason to make the big shift now. It is to the advantage of the players in our industry to innovate and take the changes mentioned above as guidelines for the future. Even if you don't care about the planet, it is in your best interest to see what is coming. **For your business to thrive on the circular economy is a very good reason to change**.

During this session of the Responsible Office Masterclass, we got to understand the Sustainability Materiality Matrix, Global Reporting Initiative and GRI standards, and we had a workshop on designing our own circular strategy for our business.

If the CEO of a company taking part in this Masterclass asks an attending employee what he or she learnt during this comprehensive training, we can certainly give a good idea of the future and a circular vision. All CEO's will become people with green fingers :-)!

Everybody is very welcome at our Responsible Office Masterclass closing meeting on 15 December 2023.
Both online and in The Circular Hub in Ghent Belgium.
(10:00 for participants of the Masterclass) 12:00 (for public) until 15:30 CET.
Agenda: MARKET DIALOGUE with participants of this Masterclass, experts, private and public buyers. Free of charge and free catering for everyone.
Join and invite your CEO, colleagues and customers that are interested to learn more on circularity.

Read all reports of 5 Masterclass III sessions 2023: https://www.responsible-office.be/blog

kathleenbosteels@responsible-office.be