

*A circular economy, where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained as long as possible, is essential to develop more sustainable, low carbon and resource efficient societies.*

*As public service providers and local and regional government leaders, we owe it to our citizens to protect their health and the cities in which they live. To succeed, we need to work hand in hand with all stakeholders active in the chain and access EU funds.*

*The benefits a circular economy offers are unquestionable. As recently presented by the European Commission, it will create 180,000 direct jobs and avoid 443 million tons of greenhouse gas emission by 2030.*

*This is why, at the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), we share the European Union's ambition to play a leading role in moving from a linear economy towards a circular economy, with a [circular economy package](#) adopted by the European Commission in 2015.*

*This initiative will have a direct impact on how towns and cities manage waste, for instance, when defining waste treatment priorities (prevention, reuse, recycling, etc.). We are pleased that the EU package recognises the essential role we are playing, for instance, by adapting our policies to EU goals for waste management, encouraging innovation through [green public procurement](#) or developing awareness raising campaigns for our citizens.*

*However, ambitious local initiatives, especially those of small towns, cannot succeed without an adequate access to EU funds. For the past months we have advocated a financial framework that allows small towns to achieve EU targets. EU investment funds are great, but they are not adapted to thousands of towns and cities with smaller capacities.*

*Now of course, towns and regions cannot lead this fight alone. It is therefore crucial that the package ensures a balanced between the responsibilities of all stakeholders active in the chain - local governments, product designers, resource extractors, producers, distributors, citizens - and looks at how they can contribute to developing a circular economy on an equal footing.*

*The role of initiatives and networks is fundamental as well. Some of the most*

*successful local policies and projects are taking place under European initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors that mobilises over 7,000 towns, cities and regions in the battle against climate change, to reach the Paris agreement targets. This shows how important it is for us to work hand in hand with other partners and demonstrate our leading role.*

*At CEMR, we will make sure that local and regional governments are fully supported on the way towards a circular economy. At the end of the day, municipalities are paving the way towards a more sustainable society for citizens."*

\*Stefano Bonaccini, President of the Emilia-Romagna region and President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)