

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



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CE-PRINCE

Interreg CE-PRINCE Steering Committee Meeting in Ljubljana

CE-PRINCE Central Europe Green PRocurement and Innovation Network for Circular Economy is a project co-financed by Interreg Central Europe transnational cooperation programme aiming to standardise circular procurement approaches across Central European countries and industries.

Key Milestones Presented: *Initial Assessment Results and Interactive Heat Map launched, Transnational Strategy for Circular Green Public Procurement Advancement in Central Europe*

On 22 May 2025, the third Steering Committee meeting of the Interreg CE-PRINCE project convened at the headquarters of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce in Ljubljana, hosted by the Chamber as one of the official project partners.

The meeting was formally opened by Valentina Kuzma and Boštjan Udovič ([Slovenian Chamber of Commerce](#)) and Sara Piana ([Liguria Region](#)), who welcomed the CE-PRINCE consortium. Kuzma highlighted the importance of

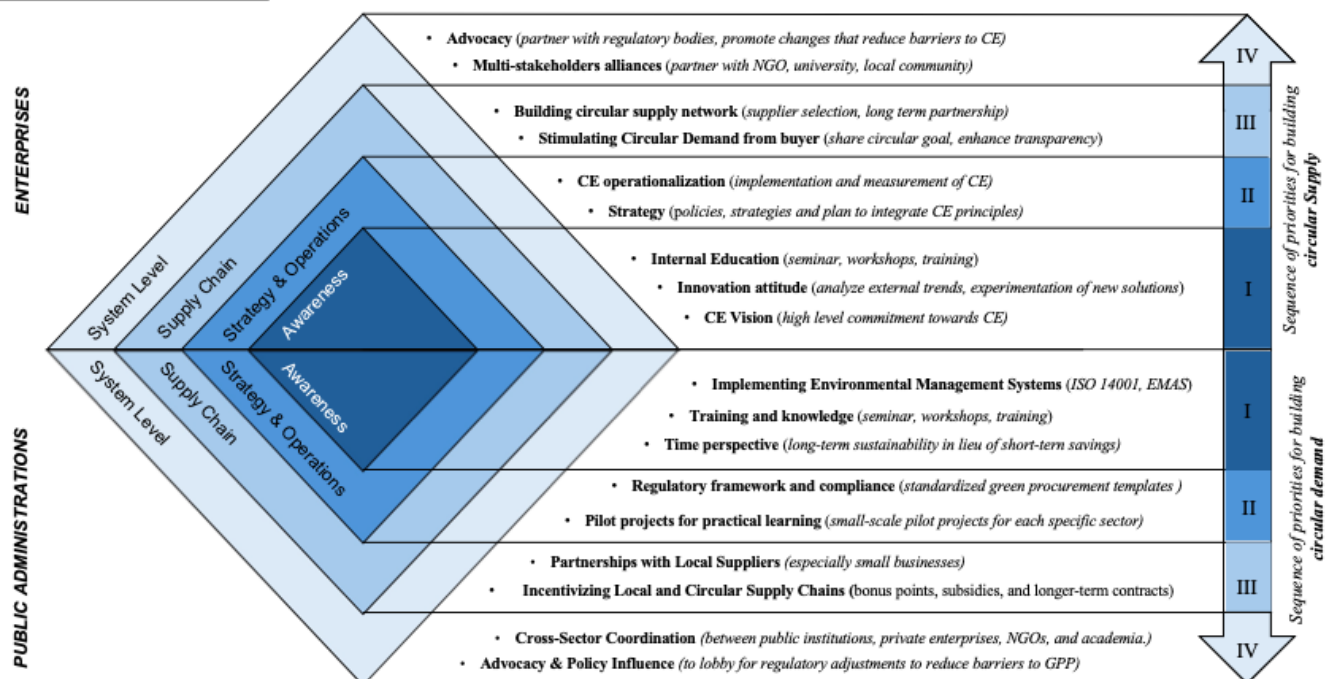
this transnational cooperation, which aligns capacity-building efforts with a tight timeline based on findings from the project's assessments and strategic developments.

First-Year Achievements: From Assessment to Action

The morning sessions focused on technical discussions, while the afternoon was dedicated to project management. A central topic was the progress within Work Package 1, where partners collaborated on **a comprehensive analysis of the state of Circular and Green Public Procurement (C/GPP) in Central Europe's public and private sectors.**

Domenico Mecca from Italy's [Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies](#) presented key findings from over 230 public sector responses, nearly 400 private sector responses, and 70 in-depth interviews. These findings reveal existing gaps between circular demands and offerings, while also identifying major barriers, needs, and actions necessary to close these gaps.

Insights from Initial Assessment: needs and actions to fill the gap between demand and offers



Introducing the CE-PRINCE Interactive Heat Map

A major achievement of the meeting was the presentation of the **CE-PRINCE Interactive Heat Map** by András Pál ([ERI Hungary](#)). This cloud-based tool offers a geographic visualization of C/GPP implementation across Central Europe. It aggregates key data and highlights the most adopted circular practices, regional strengths, and common obstacles.

 Access the Heat Map [here](#)

Strategic Outputs and Next Steps

The project also celebrated the publication of the **Transnational C/GPP Strategy**. This key document defines an overarching framework of objectives and priorities to promote GPP at both policy and operational levels, thereby supporting the adoption of circular economy practices in both the public and private sectors. It represents the cornerstone of the upcoming CE-PRINCE activities, defining the roadmap for developing Action Plans and capacity-building activities for Public Administrations and private companies. The meeting highlighted the role of the **Advisory Board**, comprising 25 experts from across Europe, who contributed to the development of the Transnational Strategy.

 Read the Strategy [here](#)

As CE-PRINCE moves into its next phase, the focus will shift to finalising and launching Transnational Action Plans, and initiating capacity-building and pilot activities in both the public and private sectors. These actions aim to embed circularity into procurement practices and contribute to a greener economic model across the region.

Innovation Spotlight: Cradle to Cradle & Digital Product Passport

The committee was honoured to welcome Albin Kälin ([EPEA Switzerland](#)), a leading expert in Cradle to Cradle® design innovation. Kälin emphasized the need for corporate compliance with game-changing sustainability criteria and highlighted the emerging role of Digital Product Passports (DPPs).

He presented the “Passport Compass” – a toolkit designed to enrich product transparency far beyond the minimal data currently required, promoting supply chain traceability and return systems. Kälin raised a critical point: Can such data-driven tools align with and enhance C/GPP implementation?

epeaswitzerland

Politics takes Action: EU Legal Compliance Framework



Corporate	• ESPR (ecodesign for sustainable product regulation) • EPR (extended producer responsibility) • Monitoring & reporting • Capacity building & education • Collaboration and partnerships, network of trust™, material stream concept • CSDR (Corporate sustainability directive) • GCD (Green claim directive) • EUTAX (EU taxonomy regulation)
Products	• DPP (Digital Product Passport)
Materials	• CRAM (Carbon border adjustment mechanism) • EUDR (EU deforestation regulation) • Conflict minerals regulation • Nature restoration law
Supply Chain	• CSDDD (corporate sustainability due diligence directive) • Forced labour product ban regulation

Building Synergies Across Projects

The meeting concluded with the presentation of two complementary Interreg cross-border initiatives facilitated by the Slovenian Chamber of Craft and Small Business:

- [Circular Buildings](#) (Interreg Italy-Slovenia): Focused on sustainable construction, lifecycle thinking, emissions reduction, and circular waste management.
- [RECREATE](#) Project: Evolved from the RETRACKING initiative, this project addresses the collection and recycling of industrial materials such as fiberglass, metals, and hard plastics through circular approaches.

In addition, Katharina Hofer introduced the [foodCIRCUS](#) project, targeting agrifood sector circularity, food waste reduction, and improved waste management – an excellent synergy with CE-PRINCE’s scope.

Looking Ahead

With key assessments completed and strategic frameworks in place, CE-PRINCE enters a decisive phase. The upcoming activities will test innovative circular procurement models in real-world settings, marking **a significant step toward circular economic transformation in Central Europe.**

For more information, please visit:

 www.interreg-central.eu/projects/ce-prince

"Public Procurement is one of the essential keys to stimulate and accelerate circular economy in cities and regions all over Europe. Companies need to be assured of a certain volume in demand to innovate and change to circular design and production. Public authorities can practice what they preach by not only deciding on the proper policies for their societies, but also demonstrating it by adjusting their own procurement to boost circular economy.

CE-PRINCE is one of the important projects at the moment that aim to establish exactly that."

Joan Prummel, Advisory Board member of CE-PRINCE project
