

**Commissioner Roswall's speech at the event, 'Experimentation Journey for Achieving Circularity' hosted by the JRC**

Stockholm, 11 September 2026

Dear Birgitta, dear Blerta,

Distinguished guests from Dalarna and partner territories.

It is a pleasure to join you in Avesta – my hometown!

You know, I have spoken to people, communities and businesses all over the world about circularity.

So it is nice to be able to come home and speak about this vital issue.

In my travels, I often tell the story of Queen Katarina of Saxe-Lauenburg, who died after just four years of marriage to King Gustav I of Sweden.

She left behind, among other things, an impressive wardrobe.

Her father wrote to Gustav asking for the clothes back, so her younger sisters could inherit them.

But Gustav refused. Fine fabrics were hard to come by in Scandinavia, and he had no intention of sending them back to the continent.

Three gowns made the journey home.

The rest stayed in Sweden, resewn, remade and remodelled into new garments.

This story is 500 years old, but I think it resonates strongly today – in a world where resources are scarce and where the amount of waste is enormous.

And – as we see today – where the movement towards a circular economy is already underway in businesses and communities across Europe.

I know that you had very fruitful workshops and study visits yesterday.

Today, we turn our attention to something just as important: The governance and ecosystem conditions that will allow circular transformation to scale.

Circularity is an economic necessity, an industrial necessity and an environmental necessity.

I have seen its potential across Europe, and I have seen firsthand how committed so many people, businesses and communities are to circularity. The fact that you have all travelled here is proof of this.

This commitment is a huge opportunity for Europe. But to make the most of that opportunity we need clear, ambitious, and common rules.

Rules that make sense for people and business.

That is why I will present the Circular Economy Act later this year.

First, the Act will simplify the regulatory framework and remove barriers to the single market on things like how we define waste.

It sounds like a minor issue - but Member States' different definitions of waste and resources make it difficult for companies to make their supply chains more circular.

But these are not just national bottlenecks. There are plenty of regional ones too. Just think of the fact that there are more than twenty different EPR schemes just within France. That leaves huge room for simplification.

We want to make it easier to move secondary raw materials in the EU to where they have the highest value and utility, by ensuring that they can easily be transported in the Single Market. At the moment, just getting the approval to transport electronic waste between Member States can take between 90 to 180 days.

So we will remove the duplication of administrative burdens such as double reporting and registration.

Second, the Act will strengthen the secondary raw material markets; addressing bottlenecks on the supply and demand sides. We already took an import step forward this week, with our new rules on public procurement. Not only did we create better conditions for more sustainable and circular procurement, we also cut our rules from 900 to 200 pages. That's simplification in action!

And finally, it will reduce our dependency on imports of critical raw materials from countries like China by mining critical raw materials from the waste we produce.

But real circularity cannot be achieved legislation alone.

And that is precisely why we are here today. To learn from regions, cities and municipalities.

The work carried out by the territories present here today highlights the good practices and the potential around Europe.

It shows how place-based experimentation can turn our shared ambition into concrete results.

And it gives us a blueprint for action.

Take our host region of Dalarna. It has focused its experimentation on circular construction – and explored how public administration can create circular demand.

Navarra, in Spain, has shown how circularity can influence public health procurement processes.

Normandy, in France, has shown what is possible on plastics.

But they are not the only ones.

East and North Finland on Circular Mining and Bioeconomy.

Häme, in Finland, on AI-driven foresight for circularity.

And Central Macedonia on the importance of building awareness across its regional innovation ecosystem.

Each of you is here to celebrate the work done in this Experimentation Journey.

You have shown that a solution tested in one territory can take root in another – adapted to local needs but carrying the same ambition. And I am proud that this work builds on the European Commission's Joint Research Centre Preparatory Action on “Innovation for Place-Based Transformation.”

What makes this work so effective is right here in front of us: local knowledge, existing infrastructure, and community trust — the kind of assets that no single policy can deliver.

On behalf of the European Commission, I want to thank the Region of Dalarna, all partner territories, the JRC, and every one of you for your dedication through all these months of work.

So, let us build on this momentum.

And let us share these lessons to build a more resilient, resource-efficient Europe.

Thank you, and I wish you a fruitful and inspiring discussion.

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