



# Circular Lifestyles in Action: Policy recommendations resulting from NiCE Pilots

## Report by Session host:

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## Number of Participants: 22

### Short introduction:

The session focused on governance, policy instruments and practical tools supporting the transition to circular lifestyles in cities and regions. It brought together insights from pilot actions implemented within the NiCE Project, highlighting how local initiatives such as resource centres and reuse systems can be enabled and scaled through appropriate regulatory, financial and soft policy measures. A key element of the discussion was to explore how different types of policy instruments can support circular initiatives at local, national and EU levels, while considering their potential impact, feasibility and role in engaging communities and stakeholders.

### Participants:

Participants represented a diverse mix of stakeholder groups, including local and regional authorities, national ministries, research institutions, universities, NGOs, and innovation centres. They came mainly from Germany, as well as Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Slovakia.

### Summary:

The session brought together policymakers, researchers and practitioners to explore how circular lifestyles can be supported through effective governance and policy instruments. Building on experiences from the NiCE Project pilots implemented in eight cities in Central Europe, the session combined expert presentations with an interactive group exercise.



Initial inputs were delivered by NiCE project partners. They introduced the concept of circular lifestyles and presented initiatives supporting its adoption in Central Europe, such as launching resource centres, activating vacant spaces in city centres, connecting online and offline trade, and engaging users in circular practices. The presentations highlighted key enabling conditions as well as barriers. A second input provided a more detailed overview of each pilot, including the main activities, success factors, and limitations encountered.

The group work formed the core of the session. Participants worked in four groups to identify which policy instruments are needed to support the uptake and scaling of circular solutions. They discussed different types of instruments: regulatory, economic and soft, across local, national and EU levels. As a result, a matrix was developed, assessing policy instruments in terms of their impact and feasibility.

The exercise encouraged participants to combine insights from the NiCE pilots with their own professional experience, while also identifying additional policy ideas relevant to their contexts. The session fostered exchange between diverse stakeholders and created a space for critical reflection on how policy frameworks can better support circular economy transitions in cities and regions.

### **Specifics from the Session:**

The session highlighted strong cooperation potential between municipalities, research institutions and NGOs working on circular economy solutions. Participants identified opportunities to replicate pilot approaches, co-develop policy guidance and strengthen links between local experimentation and national frameworks. Notably, a group of university students, shared that they felt inspired by the session and motivated to engage further in circular economy activities. This underlined the importance of involving younger generations and academia in shaping and scaling circular lifestyle solutions.

### **Key insights of the session:**

The session highlighted that effective circular economy policies require a balanced mix of regulatory, financial and soft instruments tailored to different governance levels. Local initiatives play a crucial role in testing and demonstrating solutions, but need supportive national and EU frameworks to scale. Participants also emphasised that feasibility is as important as impact when designing policies, as complex or resource-intensive measures may face implementation barriers. Finally, strong stakeholder engagement and clear communication are essential to drive behavioural change and ensure the long-term success of circular lifestyle initiatives.

### **Links to further information:**

NiCE Project website: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/projects/nice/>

Knowledge Platform about circular lifestyles: <https://circularlifestyle.eu/>