The European Circular Bioeconomy Policy Initiative
A Mission for Europe
Introduction

We live in exciting times with extraordinary opportunities to better the condition in which humans live on Planet Earth while recognising the enormous challenges we face in achieving peace, prosperity, ecological sustainability and improved human and animal health. History has shown the astonishing capacity of humanity to continually develop through collaboration, scientific innovation and collective visions.

Technological innovation is developing more rapidly than at any time in history. Whilst innovation has created well-being on an unprecedented scale, this has come at the price of depleting basic resources and polluting the air, water, soil and food we depend upon, whilst driving climate change- an existential threat to human survival. Humanity faces a critical moment in which we ask ourselves: how can we continue to develop without the negative impacts we have created in the last two centuries?

We all recognise that the time in history has arrived in which technology needs to be deployed for us to create energy, materials and economic development that has ecologically regenerative rather than destructive outcomes.
Our Vision

We believe that biomaterials and bioenergy¹ are key instruments to change the paradigm “making more with less” and to close the carbon cycle.

We believe that the opportunities and challenges we face in Europe for continued prosperity are intrinsically linked to the growth of a restorative, regenerative European circular bioeconomy.

In this vision we see materials and energy derived from biowastes and agricultural by-products, from renewable, sustainably grown, bio-based resources that complement food production, are returned through systemic management to soil, to enhance and ensure the long-term viability of agricultural production in Europe. Soil provides us with 95% of our food—its continued exploitation is unsustainable and is causing erosion and declining quality. Regeneration of soils and improved biodiversity of our natural capital through restorative, circular management of energy and materials, are essential to inverting the tendency to worsening ecological quality.

Our Mission is for the advancement of the European Economy, the regeneration of our Environment, the sustainability of our Agriculture, the development of Scientific Research and the Health of our Citizens.

¹ By “bio-energy” we believe the sustainable management of renewable biomass and biogenic waste resources to create energy through technologies such as anaerobic digestion is generally beneficial. Combustion of forest products for energy purposes is not within the scope of this initiative.
Our Principles

1. WE HAVE TO STOP THINKING ABOUT UNLIMITED GROWTH.

The Earth has its ecological boundaries and unlimited, continual economic growth has gone beyond the capacity of the planet both to provide feedstock for unlimited growth and to absorb the by-products of growth. The planets’ natural sinks are finite, and they are already exhausted. Population growth has slowed dramatically, presenting us a window of opportunity to overcome ecological imbalances.

2. WE HAVE TO CREATE SYSTEMS AND ECONOMY THAT ARE REGENERATIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE TRIGGERING A CULTURAL CHANGE BY MAKING MORE WITH LESS.

Human activity has created well-being but has also resulted in ecosystem destruction, depletion of resources and over-exploitation of both plant and animal species. The Club of Rome prediction of 1972 is finally becoming the reality that the next generation of humans will have to deal with.

3. WE HAVE TO STOP THE DEGRADATION AND POLLUTION OF SOIL, AIR AND WATER AND USE RENEWABLE RESOURCES WHOSE APPLICATIONS MIMIC NATURE BY BEING BIODEGRADABLE.

The bioeconomy is already a major contributor to the European economy; however, its potential has not been fully realised as a regenerative instrument for well-being. The bioeconomy needs to become circular so that we use materials and energy that derive from plant-based resources and return them soil to regenerate it. We agree with and adhere to the 4 per 1000 initiative launched by France within the Global Climate Action Plan (GCAA) adopted by the UNFCCC at COP 22.

4. WE SHOULD PRODUCE MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS WITH A VISION OF THE SYSTEMS INTO WHICH THEY WILL BE MANAGED THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE CYCLE AND AIM TO IMPLEMENT THOSE SYSTEMS THROUGH POLICIES.

Materials and products are too often placed upon global markets with no thought for the ecological consequences they may have. Usually, there is no consideration of the systems into which these materials fit and how they can improve system management - for example, of waste or food production.

5. WE HAVE TO AVOID SUBSTITUTION AND WORK TO CHANGE CONSUMPTION MODELS, MOVING TO CIRCULAR USE OF MATERIALS, PRIVILEGING PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF WASTE AND RE-USE OF PRODUCTS.

As we move rapidly from a fossil fuel economy to one based upon the use of renewable energies and materials, we need to understand that simple substitution of fossil-based materials with renewable materials is not a change of paradigm but a continuation of wasteful use of resources.
A Coalition to Advocate for these Changes

The European Circular Bioeconomy Policy Initiative is a broad alliance of those who share the vision and the principles laid out here.

The ECBPI will provide a platform to promote this vision within the context of European policies.

Broadly the ECBPI will advocate for policies which have a positive impact on regenerative and restorative practices that help close the carbon cycle through the use of renewable and biodegradable materials and energy sources.

The ECBPI will work as a loose coalition of the like-minded, including researchers, academics, NGOs and other associations, policy makers and businesses interested in this sector. The ECBPI will create a meeting and discussion space for all its partners to co-design policies to regenerate territories both ecologically and socially. The employment of renewable materials and energy is a starting point for new initiatives to decarbonize, innovate, regenerate different value chains.

The ECBPI is non-political and adhesion to the initiative is free for all entities in 2021. The ECBPI may receive funding for specific actions from any of its partners or from external sources, subject to disclosure.

The ECBPI is founded by David Newman and will be represented by him for the first two years.

For further information visit: www.ecbpi.eu