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## Press Release

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### **ACR+ reaffirms the power of collaboration for the circular transition during its 29th General Assembly**

The network of public authorities ACR+ just came back from three days in Dublin (Ireland) dedicated to circular economy. Members arrived from different corners of Europe for the annual general assembly, held in parallel to the Circular Economy Hotspot 2023. Discussions revolved around the idea of cooperation as a necessity in the current transition to circular economy.



*Brussels, Belgium* – “Learn, connect, inspire”. The three key words of the Circular Economy Hotspot 2023 could just as well be the ones behind the 29th General Assembly of the Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+). The idea of connection and the power of collaboration were especially in the centre of the discussions that took place in Dublin.

Welcomed by the Eastern Midlands Waste Region, currently co-holding the vice-presidency of the network, members of ACR+ gathered in the Irish capital for three days dedicated to circular economy. If the main event for the participants was the annual General Assembly on 31 May, they also joined the [Circular Economy Hotspot 2023](#) and the Awards Ceremony of the [European Week for Waste Reduction](#) 2022 on 1 June.

"It was our pleasure to host such an important series of events last week, Dublin felt like the epicentre for debate, knowledge sharing and network building on all matters circular last week, we hope that the legacy will be a continued collective movement towards a more sustainable future for all the worlds citizens" said Hugh Coughlan, ACR+ Co-Vice President and Regional Co-ordinator, Eastern-Midlands Region Waste Management Planning Office.

Keynote speeches and interactive discussion groups during the general assembly highlighted the importance of continuing to work hand in hand to achieve a truly circular transformation. As an introduction, Cillian Lohan, member of the European Economic and Social Committee representing the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and Vice-President of the Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment section, insisted on the role of networks and initiatives gathering different types of stakeholders to drive systemic changes. An example of such a bridge between actors is [Navarra Zirkular](#), a public-private partnership initiative to promote the adoption of circular economy in companies in Navarre (Spain). Sergio Perez Garcia, General Director of External Action for the government of Navarre, detailed the goals and main actions of this instrument to facilitate the ecological transition in Navarre companies.

During the interactive session, ACR+ members exchanged on the five working themes that have been adopted at the beginning of the year: Built Environment, Sustainable Food Systems, Circular Lifestyles, Policy and Governance, and Waste and Material Flows. For each theme, they shared their vision, their current activities, and how the network can further support them. To exemplify the relation between a member and ACR+, the interactions that can be built, the floor was given to Joan Prummel, International Circular Economy Advisor at Rijkswaterstaat (Netherlands). Rijkswaterstaat is working to give core to its vision for circular procurement through projects like Interreg North Sea ProCirc in which ACR+ was also a partner. In 2024, ACR+ will be celebrating its 30th anniversary and has already started to prepare for the special reunion that will take place.

*" This year's General Assembly was a tremendous success offering members an opportunity to learn, share and debate with each other whilst also having access to the wider Circular Hotspot activities in Dublin. The input from Members to our work programme for the year ahead showed again the ambition the organisation has to accelerate the circular transition across Europe and beyond."* said Iain Gulland, ACR+ President and Zero Waste Scotland's Chief Executive.

On the following day, the 14th awards ceremony of the EWWR rewarded the most outstanding actions carried out in 2022, in six categories. It was also the occasion to shed light on the first edition of the Euro-Med Weeks for Waste Reduction and its winners.

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*The Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+) is an international network of cities and regions sharing the aim of promoting sustainable resource management and accelerating the transition towards a circular economy on their territories and beyond. The network, gathering around 100 members, is open to other key players in the field of material resource management such as NGOs, academic institutions, consultancies or private organisations. Members' needs and priorities define the network's activities, which include facilitating the exchange of experiences between members, sharing technical and policy information and livening up the network. To strengthen the knowledge and capacities of the network and push for innovation in the field of material resource management, ACR+ is also involved in several projects at European level and in the Mediterranean region, in cooperation with its members.*

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