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## Press Release

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### **New guidelines invite public authorities to apply circular economy to the construction sector to increase its sustainability**

**In the wake of the unveiling of the European Green Deal, making building and renovating a key theme of the deeply transformative policies announced by the European Commission, ACR+ draws its attention to the construction sector. In newly published guidelines the network explores instruments that public authorities can implement to trigger, replicate and make durable circular economy processes within this sector.**

*Brussels, Belgium* – Generating almost 10% of GDP and providing 18 million direct jobs, **construction is one of the most resource-intensive sectors**. It accounts for roughly half of all extracted materials, half of energy consumption, a third of water consumption, and 40% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Data could not be clearer. In the current search for a green future, **turning this strategic sector into a sustainable system is an urging yet inspiring challenge**. It is no wonder the topic of sustainable construction is taking a growing importance. No later than last week, President von der Leyen unveiled the European Green Deal which highlights “building and renovating in an energy and resource efficient way” as one of the key areas where measures should be taken to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2025.

While it is more and more obvious that circular economy is a key model to drive sustainability in the construction sector, current literature on sustainable construction covers energy efficiency extensively and often exclusively. ACR+ addresses this shortfall by publishing **new guidelines on construction for public authorities with a focus on circularity and material resources efficiency**. Even more, **“[Sustainable construction guidelines for public authorities – A circular economy perspective](#)”** goes beyond waste to integrate the whole value chain of the construction sector. The guidelines are targeted at **local and regional authorities** as they play a **crucial role** in the **whole construction life cycle** not only by stimulating innovation and cooperation between all actors but also because they work close to citizens. The aim of the document is to **help public authorities navigate through sustainable construction**, understand what it means and determine how to encourage it.

The first part of the guidelines presents an **overview** of what sustainable construction sector stands for, starting from the current state of play and moving to the circular economy principles. In a second part, the guidelines introduce **approaches, principles, and examples** turning the narrative into **concrete action**. Practical steps to be taken by public authorities to build their strategies are listed. Readers will thus be taken from Belgium to The Netherlands or Italy (amongst other), going even as far as Australia, to discover **good practices associated to each type of action**. **Several initiatives have been developed by ACR+ members**, namely the collection for re-use of bricks in civic amenity sites by the municipality of Odense, the development of an urban regeneration strategy in Prato, the 75% recovery

target for construction and demolition waste by 2020 set by Catalonia's program for prevention, the urban metabolism study commissioned by Brussels Capital Region, a guidance document on construction sustainable procurement developed by Zero Waste Scotland, and the circular economy plan of Paris. More examples, including projects financed by the European Commission – H2020 FISSAC, H2020 BAMB, H2020 RE4 to name a few –, can be discovered in the "[Sustainable construction guidelines for public authorities – A circular economy perspective](#)".

"Sustainable construction guidelines for public authorities – A circular economy perspective" are available for download on [ACR+ website](#).

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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 90 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.*