

## Circular economy country profile 2024 – Switzerland



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## Introduction

The European Commission requested the EEA to produce EU country profiles that offer an updated view of the following elements:

- what circular economy policies are being implemented at a national level with a particular focus on elements that go beyond EU mandatory elements, and
- what are best practices with a focus on policy innovation.

With the EU Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP 2020) "the Commission [...] encourages Member States to adopt or update their national circular economy strategies, plans and measures in the light of its ambition".

These country profiles originate in the work leading to the EEA More from less report (2016)<sup>1</sup>, that presented an overview of approaches to material resource efficiency and to circular economy in thirty-two European countries. The More from Less report was followed by the 2019 EEA Report 'Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 – even more from less: An overview of the policies, approaches and targets of 32 European countries'<sup>2</sup>.

It presented an updated and extended assessment of approaches and identified trends, similarities and new directions taken by countries in the connected policy areas of resource efficiency and the circular economy.

These reports, comprising a compilation of extensive survey responses from countries, were accompanied by 32 country profiles.

In the second quarter of 2022 a new survey with questions and guidelines was launched. Based on information reported by the Eionet network, in particular, the Eionet Group on Circular Economy and Resource Use, and after review and editing by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use (ETC CE), the 30 2022 CE country profiles<sup>3</sup> were published alongside the EEA report 'Circular Economy policy innovation and good practice in Member States'<sup>4</sup> (2022).

These 2024 CE country profiles are an update of the 2022 ones and based on the responses of 29 countries to the survey questions and guidelines that were launched in March 2024. The information in the countries' responses was again reviewed and edited by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use. A selection of Eurostat data was made to further complement these country profiles.

The main objectives of these assessments and its updates are to: • stimulate exchange of information and share good practice examples among country experts; • support policymakers in Eionet countries, the European institutions and international organisations by providing an updated catalogue of circular economy actions being undertaken in European countries.

This circular economy country profile is based on information reported by the Eionet network and, in particular, the Eionet Group members on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy in the second quarter of 2024. Proposals for the further development or amendment of policies represent the view of the reporting country. For Switzerland, all input was provided by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). The information was reviewed and edited by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use. A selection of Eurostat data was made to further complement this country profile.

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<sup>1</sup> [More from less – material resource efficiency in Europe – European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://europea.europa.eu/en/press-releases/2016/06/16-06-2016)

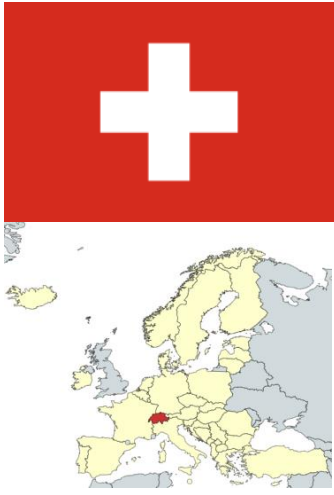
<sup>2</sup> [Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 – European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://europea.europa.eu/en/press-releases/2019/06/19-06-2019)

<sup>3</sup> [Country profiles on Circular Economy in Europe – Eionet Portal \(europa.eu\)](https://europea.europa.eu/en/press-releases/2022/06/22-06-2022)

<sup>4</sup> [draft-report-for-dg-env\\_final.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://europea.europa.eu/en/press-releases/2022/06/22-06-2022)

The information is current as of September 2024, when members of Eionet verified the content of this profile.

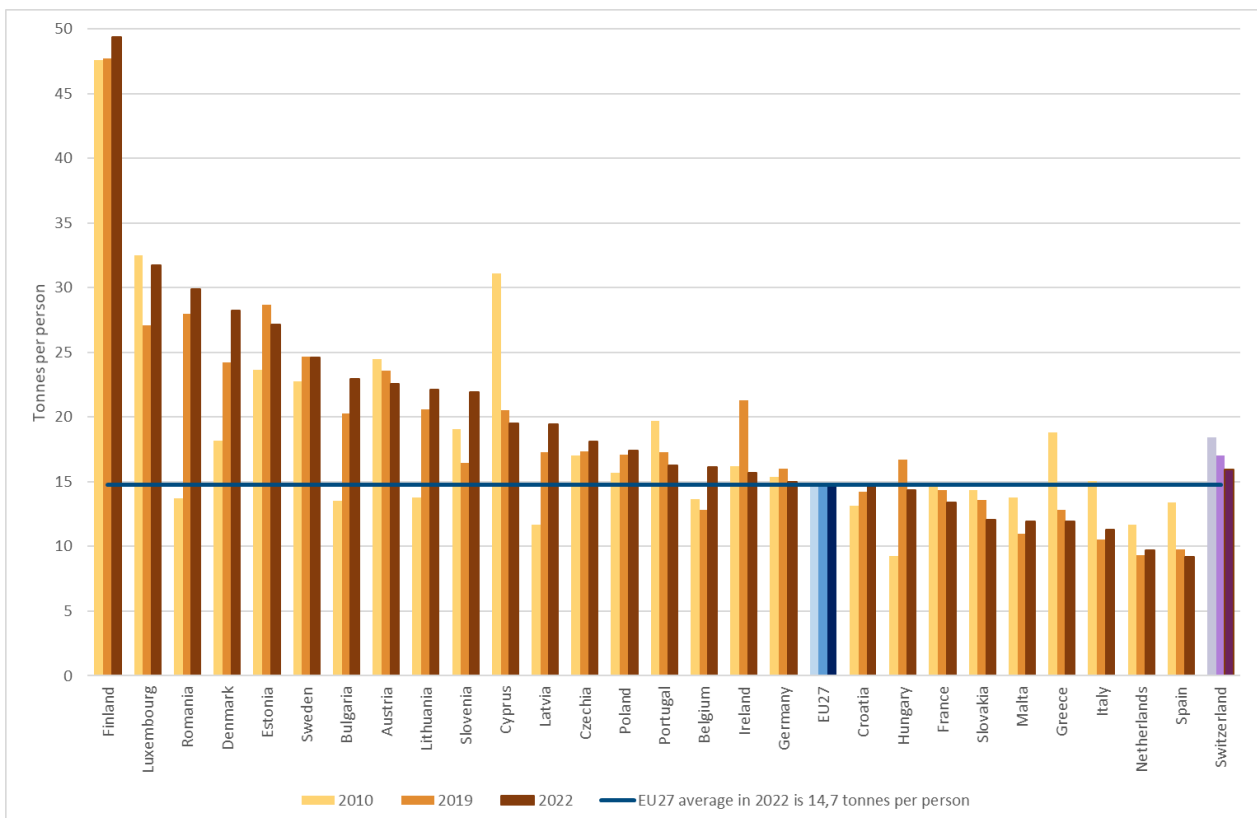
## Switzerland – facts and figures

	<b>GDP:</b> EUR 818.2 billion
	<b>GDP per person:</b> EUR 92 050 (purchasing power standard)
	<b>Use of materials (domestic material consumption (DMC))</b> 91.0 million tonnes DMC 10.4 tonnes DMC/person
	<b>Structure of the economy:</b> Agriculture: 0.6 % Industry: 25.6 % Services: 73.8 %
	<b>Surface area:</b> 41 287 square kilometres
	<b>Population:</b> 8 815 385

Note: all definitions and metadata used in this profile are taken, as shown, from Eurostat

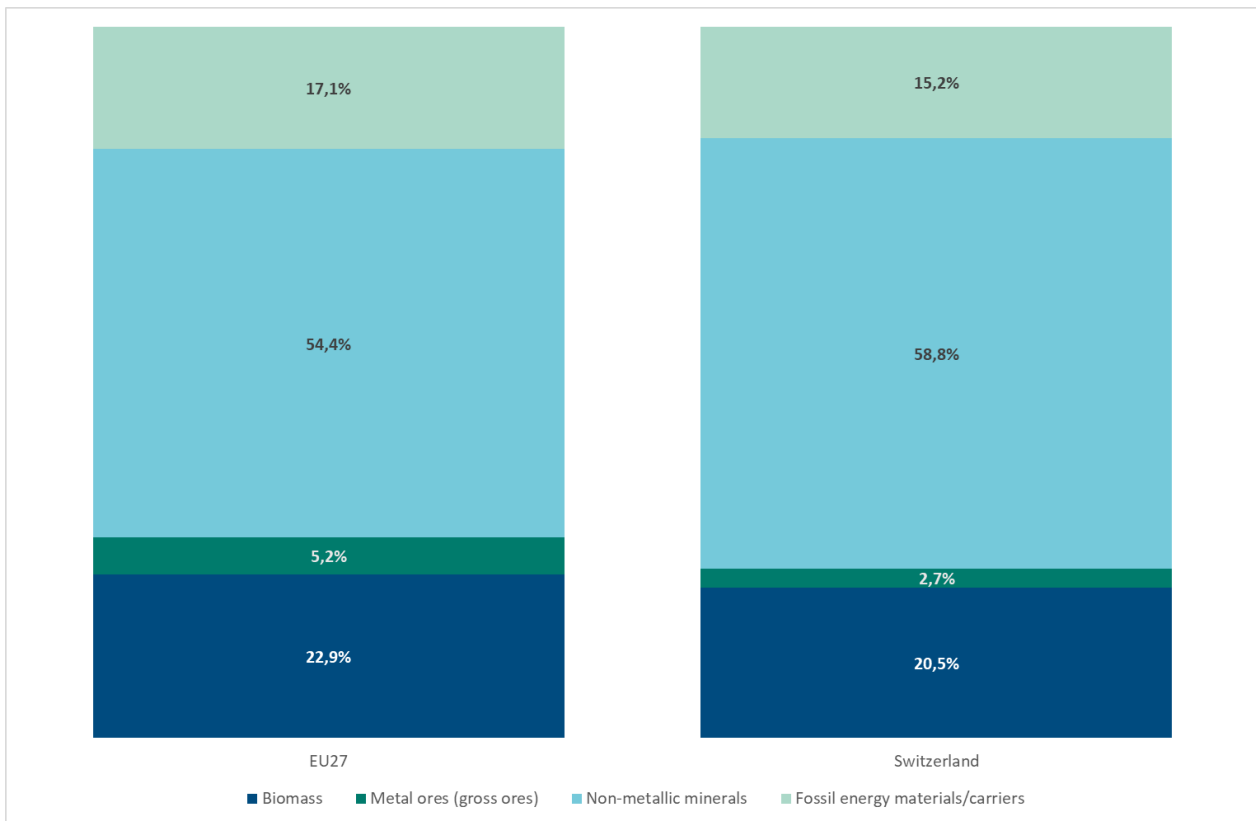
Source: Eurostat datasets, EU27 2020 (accessed 21 August 2024)

**Figure 1 Material footprint (raw material consumption), 2010 and 2019 and 2022, tonnes per person**



Source: Eurostat (2024) [env\_ac\_rme] (accessed 21 August 2024)

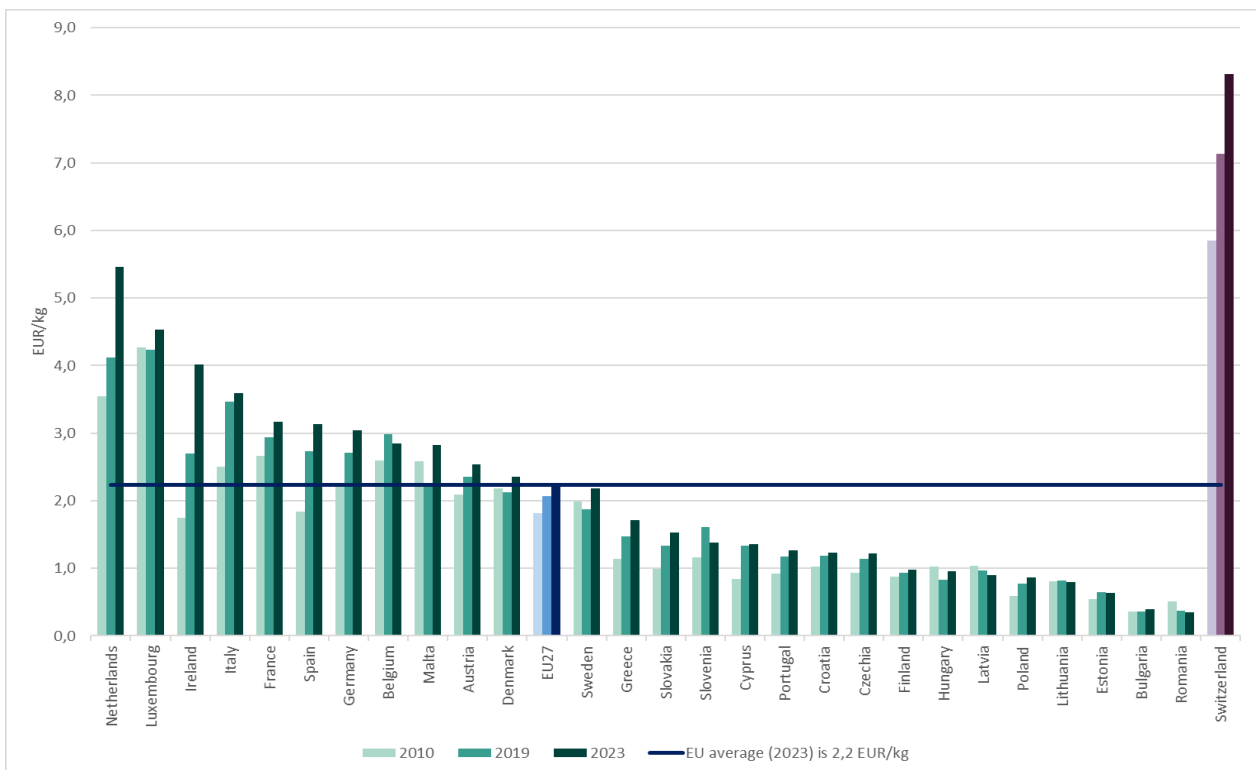
**Figure 2 Domestic material consumption by selected material category, EU27 and Switzerland, 2023, per cent**



Note: totals may not sum to 100 % due to rounding

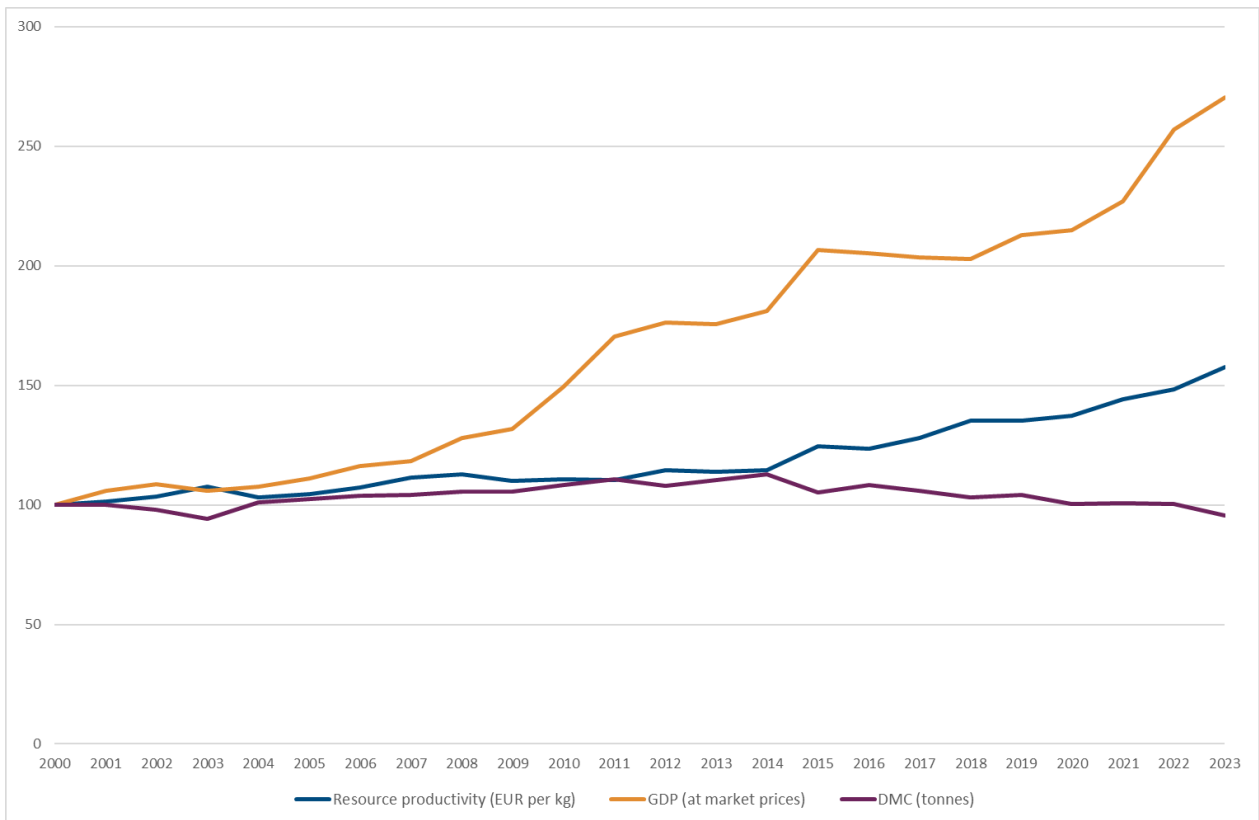
Source: Eurostat (2024) [env\_ac\_mfa] (accessed 21 August 2024)

**Figure 3 Resource productivity (gross domestic product/domestic material consumption), EU and Switzerland, 2000, 2010 and 2023, EUR per kilogram**



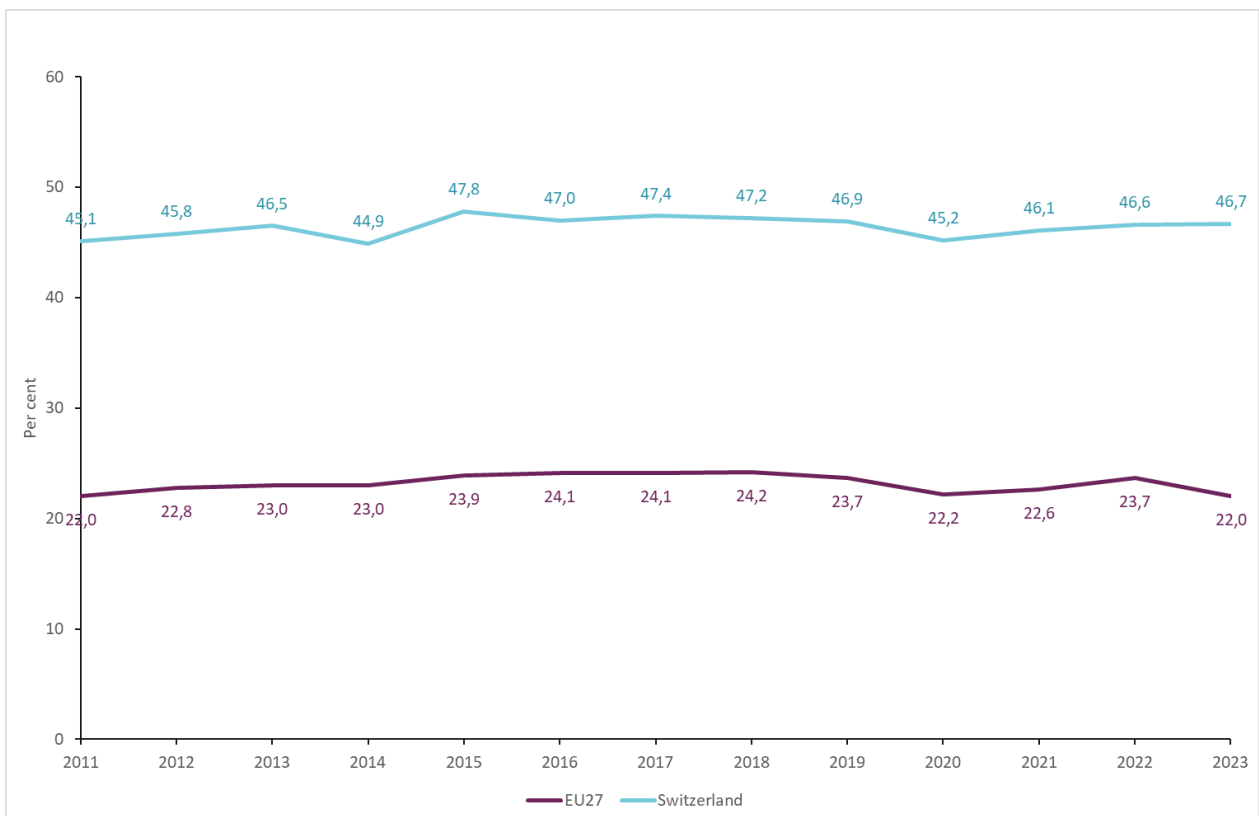
Source: Eurostat (2024) [env\_ac\_rp] (accessed 21 August 2024)

**Figure 4 Gross domestic product, domestic material consumption and resource productivity trends, Switzerland, 2000–2023, index (2000=100)**



Source: Eurostat (2024) [env\_ac\_mfa], [env\_ac\_rp] & [nama\_10\_gdp] (accessed 21 August 2024)

**Figure 5 Material import dependency in Switzerland, 2011-2023, per cent**



Source: Eurostat (2024) [cei\_gsr030] (accessed 21 August 2024)



## Existing policy framework

### Dedicated national and/or regional strategy, roadmap or action plan for circular economy

On 15.3.2024, the **parliamentary initiative 20.433 "Strengthening the Swiss circular economy"** was adopted by the Parliament <sup>(5)</sup>. It establishes notably the following:

- Depending on their environmental impact, **the Federal Council may set requirements for products and packaging** (Art. 35i para. 1 Environmental Protection Act EPA), in particular with regard to:
  - the recyclability, as well as the lifetime, availability of spare parts and reparability of products;
  - the avoidance of harmful effects and the increase in resource efficiency during the life cycle;
  - uniform, comparable, visible and comprehensible labelling and information;
  - the introduction of a repair index.
- Future **EU requirements**, as the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) for example, are to be examined for implementation.
- More waste should be returned to the cycle. **Reuse and material recycling are prioritized** ("waste hierarchy") (Art. 30d para. 1-3 EPA).
- The Federal Government should be able to support the circular economy with **financial contributions**: for training and further education, information and consultancy, as well as for platforms and the development of new processes (Art. 49a and Art. 49 para 1 and 3 EPA).
- The Federal Council is given the option to allow **voluntary collection for certain municipal waste**. So far concessions from each municipality were needed (Art. 31b EPA).
- The **Confederation should set an example in procurement and its buildings** (Art. 30 para. 4 Federal Procurement Act, Art. 35j para. 2 EPA).
- The construction sector is crucial to achieving climate targets. Circular economy measures can be an important lever, for example by extending the lifespan of buildings, reusing building components, using fewer materials and recycling them at the end. Limit values for embodied or life cycle greenhouse gas emissions from buildings can be one way of linking climate and the circular economy. The basic idea is to set emission targets per square meter of a building that become more stringent over time. This creates an incentive for circular economy measures.

Based on the above, the Federal Council is to be given the authority to set requirements for resource-conserving, **circular construction** (Art. 35j para. 1 EPA). Furthermore, **Cantons should set limits for the embodied energy / greenhouse gas emissions of new buildings** and thus create incentives for environmentally friendly and circular construction materials and methods (Art. 45 para. 3 let. e Energy Act).

In other countries limit values are set on a national level <sup>(6)</sup>. The revised EU Energy Performance of Building Directive addresses limit values over the whole life-cycle of buildings (i.e. operational emissions, e.g. heating, as well as embodied emissions, e.g. materials). Calculation and disclosure of life-cycle emissions in energy performance declarations will become mandatory for larger and government buildings by 2028 and all buildings by 2030. Furthermore, EU Member States will have to prepare roadmaps until 2027 for the introduction of limit values for life-cycle-emissions from 2030 onwards <sup>(7)</sup>. The Building Performance Institute Europe (BPIE) recommends to complement limit values for life-cycle emissions with values for both operational and embodied emissions. By this, it can be ensured that none of the two can be ignored completely <sup>(8)</sup>.

**After the referendum period, the Federal Council (Government) will decide on the entry into force of the law** and the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) will decide on the implementation work and ordinances.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2024/682/de> (in German, French and Italian).

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. <https://c.ramboll.com/reducing-whole-life-carbon>

<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_24\\_1965](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_1965)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bpie.eu/publication/regulierung-der-lebenszyklus-thg-emissionen-von-gebauten> (in German).

## Dedicated local strategy, roadmap or action plan for circular economy

The **cantonal government of Zurich** has defined a **strategy for the circular economy**. In doing so, it is showing how it intends to implement the cantonal constitutional article 106a “Material cycles”, which Zurich voters clearly approved in the fall of 2022 <sup>(9)</sup>.

The **city of Zurich** was the **first Swiss city to sign the “Circular Cities Declaration” in 2022**. Its “circular Zurich” strategy aims for the city administration, the economy, science and the population to work together to implement the circular economy and use resources intelligently, consume consciously and reduce environmental impacts <sup>(10)</sup>.

## Circular economy policy elements included in other policies

Circular economy policy element	Included in policy
Halve avoidable food losses by 2030 compared to 2017.	<a href="#">Action Plan to reduce food waste</a>
Parliament has mandated the Federal Council to modernize the warranty law (motions 23.4316 and 23.4345). Part of the mandate concerns the introduction of warranty-related elements of a right to repair.	<a href="#">Warranty law</a> (in German, French and Italian; see also the <a href="#">Swiss Confederation website</a> , in German, French and Italian)
Circular economy and resource efficiency requirements, such as availability of spare parts for certain products, regulated in the EU Ecodesign Directive, and future similar requirements, as those set by the forthcoming EU Ecodesign Regulation.	<a href="#">Ordinance on Energy efficiency</a> (in German, French and Italian)
Funding instrument for industrial projects, including circular economy or recycling: if a life-cycle assessment proves that a plant saves a certain amount of tons of CO <sub>2</sub> per year (depending on innovation stage) compared to a waste incineration plant, a project can be supported.	<a href="#">Climate and Innovation Act</a> , Art. 6, coming into force in 2025 (in German, French and Italian)
Legal goal to reduce life cycle emissions of public procurement: circular economy can contribute to achieving this goal (see more information below).	<a href="#">Climate and Innovation Act</a> , Art. 10, coming into force in 2025 (in German, French and Italian)

According to the **Climate and Innovation Act of 2023**, the Central Federal Administration should take on a role model and be climate neutral as early as 2040.

In doing so, it should also take into account emissions that arise over the whole life cycle from goods and services that the administration purchases. All scopes are covered, i.e. scope 1 emissions (i.e., direct emissions from owned or controlled sources), scope 2 emissions (i.e., indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy consumed by the reporting company), as well as scope 3 emissions (i.e., all other indirect emissions that occur in a company’s or organisation’s value chain) <sup>(11)</sup>. Circular economy can contribute to reducing especially scope 3 emissions and achieving this goal. The Confederation has to provide the necessary basis for this. An implementation regulation will be drafted to specify

<sup>9</sup> The Canton of Zurich inscribed the closing of material cycles into its constitution; popular vote on 25 September 2022, see Art. 106a <https://www.zh.ch/de/news-uebersicht/medienmitteilungen/2024/04/regierungsrat-setzt-strategie-zur-kreislaufwirtschaft-fest.html#contact> (in German); and [https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2006/14\\_fga/de](https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2006/14_fga/de) (in German, French and Italian).

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/gud/de/index/departement/strategie\\_politik/umweltstrategie/klw/strategie-klw.html](https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/gud/de/index/departement/strategie_politik/umweltstrategie/klw/strategie-klw.html) (in German).

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. [https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards/Corporate-Value-Chain-Accounting-Reporting-Standard\\_041613\\_2.pdf](https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards/Corporate-Value-Chain-Accounting-Reporting-Standard_041613_2.pdf)

responsibilities, reduction pathways and to establish a framework for possible measures. Circular solutions can play an important role, since they have the potential to reduce emissions over the whole life cycle. For example, reused instead of new building components or office furniture reduce scope 3 emissions. The new legal basis<sup>(12)</sup> provided by the parliamentary initiative 20.433 can help to achieve this goal as well: it stipulates that the Federal Government should act as a role model in the planning, construction, operation, renovation and dismantling of its own buildings (Art. 35j para. 2 EPA). Furthermore, technical specifications for the conservation of natural resources or the protection of the environment are to be included in procurement wherever possible, thereby strengthening the circular economy (Art. 30 para. 4 Federal Procurement Act).

## Monitoring and targets

### Assessment of circular economy performance

The European Commission has set up a [monitoring framework](#) to keep track of progress towards a circular economy. This framework provides a holistic view as it:

- measures direct and indirect benefits of 'becoming circular' and
- values the contribution of a circular economy in living well within the limits of the planet
- addresses energy and material supply risks.

It consists of **5 thematic sections** with a total of **11 statistical indicators**, some of which have additional sub-indicators. In some cases policy targets exist which should be achieved in the future, and the indicators monitor progress towards these targets. The current monitoring framework is a revision of the original framework which was set up in 2018.

This section elaborates on the assessment of the Switzerland's progress in terms of observed trends over the last 5 years and what country characteristics or policy actions may explain differences between the country its performance and the average EU performance.

As reported in the [2022 Country Profile](#):

The report "Federal Government measures for resource conservation"<sup>(13)</sup> is taking stock in the area of resource use and progress towards a green economy stated: *"Despite efficiency gains, Switzerland is currently far from achieving the sustainable use of resources. As a result of the rising global consumption of resources, climate stability and ecosystems are at the limits of their resilience worldwide. Switzerland is contributing to this through its high consumption of resources per capita. Additional measures are essential so that future-proof, resource-conserving consumption and production models can be strengthened."*

The country report<sup>(14)</sup> to the UN regarding the Agenda 2030 contains a reporting regarding SDG 12 (consumption and production) stated: *"Greater resource-efficiency and better air quality in Switzerland should not distract from the fact that there is still much to be done. In common with most other developed economies, current consumption and production patterns are based on very high levels of resource use. [...] Resource-efficient consumption and production patterns can be achieved only by decisive action. It will take the commitment of the government, including the cantons and communes, and the support of all sectoral policies, the private sector, the academic community and the whole of society."*

#### Latest updates (2024)

Regarding the revised EU monitoring framework for the circular economy: **not all indicators are available for Switzerland and hence comparability is limited.**

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2024/682/de> (in German, French and Italian).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/topics/economy-consumption/info-specialists/federal-government-measures-for-resource-conservation.html> (website in English, report in German and French).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/en/home/strategie/nationale-berichterstattung.html> (in English, German French and Italian).

## Circular economy monitoring frameworks and their indicators beyond the ones from Eurostat

As reported in the [2022 Country Profile](#):

In Switzerland, FOEN as well as the Federal Statistical Office publish indicators related to resource use. FOEN publishes, among other thematic areas, indicators in the field of Economy and Consumption <sup>(15)</sup>. Indicators related to resource use are:

- Environmental footprint indicators: Material (Raw Material Consumption, RMC), Biodiversity, Water, Greenhouse Gases and the Ecological Footprint, as well as the Total Environmental footprint <sup>(16)</sup>;
- Ecology in the construction sector: this indicator depicts the certified energy reference area and, hence, the demand for buildings certified by the minergie ECO standard <sup>(17)</sup>;
- Waste and Recycling: indicators on municipal solid waste and recycling rates.

In the future, the circular material use rate calculated by the Swiss Federal Statistical office will be integrated as well <sup>(18)</sup>.

The environmental footprints are also shown as efficiency indicators. The focus lies on per capita and national footprints in absolute numbers, because an increase of efficiency alone is not a sufficient information, since it can result from GDP growth alone. Instead, FOEN <sup>(19)</sup> provides a comparison with available limits derived from the planetary boundaries to communicate the need for action.

*Latest updates (2024)*

**No significant developments since 2022. The ecological footprint of the Global Footprint Network has been removed from the indicator set.** This indicator is not a fully comprehensive environmental indicator, as it is the case for the Total Environmental Footprint. It does not take into account freshwater consumption, biodiversity loss or the environmental impact of air pollutants, heavy metals and nitrogen. It also leads to an underestimation of the need for action and there is no reference to specific fields of action.

## Circular economy targets

As reported in the [2022 Country Profile](#):

The 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy contains the target “The materials footprint is reduced substantially and in harmony with the 1.5-degree target set in the Paris Climate Agreement” <sup>(20)</sup>. However, this goal is not legally binding and has so far not been specified.

There are recycling targets in the ordinance of beverage packaging, at least 75% of PET, Alu and glass beverage packaging have to be recycled.

*Latest updates (2024)*

**Since 2022, no additional targets have been defined.** The parliamentary initiative to strengthen the Swiss circular economy states that the Federal Council should propose targets on the level of products and construction (Art. 10h para. 2 EPA) <sup>(21)</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/daten--indikatoren--karten/indikatoren.exturl.html/aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kaWthdG9yZW4uYWRtaW4uY2gvUHVibG/ljL0FlbVNIYXJjaA==.html?findtitlesearch=&fTopic=150&Search=Y&Results=Y&tLang=en&IQuery=Subj%3DN&tCol=Topic%2CIndtitle%2CState%2CDev&tSortBy=Typ+DESC%2CTopic%2CIndtitle>

<sup>16</sup> Aggregated impacts related to Swiss consumption at home and abroad with ecopoints based on the “ecological scarcity method” (also known as UBP Method, (see [report](#) in German, French and Italian).

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.minergie.ch/de/standards/neubau/eco/> (in German, French and Italian).

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/catalogues-databases/graphs.assetdetail.17884673.html> (in German).

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/topics/economy-consumption/info-specialists/resource-consumption.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.are.admin.ch/are/en/home/sustainable-development/strategy/sds.html>, page 16.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2024/682/de> (in German, French and Italian).

## Innovative approaches and good practices

### Examples of public policy initiatives (national, regional or local)

#### → Good practice example: Financial support programmes targeting CE

##### *Financial support programmes, national level:*

- **Environmental Technology Promotion:** the Confederation has the option of promoting the development, certification and market launch of new technologies through **financial resources** for environmental technology promotion in accordance with Article 49 paragraph 3 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA). The promotion of the development of new technologies and processes includes the construction of an initial pilot plant on an industrial scale. An application must be submitted to the Federal Office for the Environment, which is examined by a group of experts with regard to environmental potential, innovation potential and market potential. Financial aid can cover a maximum of 50% of the costs of such a plant <sup>(22)</sup>.
- **Innosuisse:** Innosuisse, the Swiss Agency promoting innovation, supports **innovation projects** by companies and research institutes at national and international level. These projects can be carried out with national and international partners. Innosuisse also offers start-up support for projects, networking and knowledge transfer. The establishment of start-ups is supported with training and coaching offers <sup>(23)</sup>.

#### → Good practice example: CE-related regulations

##### *Recycling of tarmac, national level*

A revision of the Ordinance on Waste from 2022 has the goal to **incentivize the recycling of tarmac**. The possibility to dispose tarmac on landfills is therefore being restricted <sup>(24)</sup>.

#### → Good practice example: cantonal and municipal levels

##### *Incentive tax on landfilling of construction waste, cantonal level*

In the **canton Basel-Landschaft**, in **2023**, an **incentive tax on landfilled waste** has been accepted in a popular vote. An incentive tax is a simple and effective instrument with which the filling rate of landfills can be controlled and the building materials cycle supported if necessary. The incentive tax will be levied by the Cantonal Government if the building materials cycle is undermined by excessively low landfill fees or if there is a risk of a landfill emergency due to excessively rapid filling. The revenue of the “incentive tax” would be partly used for earmarked purposes and partly redistributed to the population <sup>(25)</sup>.

##### *Housing, municipal level*

One of the most efficient ways to reduce the environmental impact of the building sector is to reduce the living space per person. Programs to promote housing cooperatives can be a way in the right direction. The **city of Zurich** has set itself the **goal of increasing the proportion of**

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/de/home/themen/bildung/innovation/umwelttechnologiefoerderung.html> (in German, French, Italian and English, see also evaluation report for examples).

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.innosuisse.ch/inno/de/home.html>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/de/home/themen/luft/mitteilungen.msg-id-87306.html> (in German, French and Italian).

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.baselland.ch/politik-und-behorden/besondere-behoerden/landeskanzlei/medienmitteilungen/kanton-basel-landschaft-fuehrt-eine-lenkungssteuer-auf-die-deponierung-von-abfaellen-ein#:~:text=Die%20Stimmbeteiligung%20liegt%20bei%2025,pro%20Tonne%20deutlich%20zugestimmt%20hat> (in German).

**cooperative housing by a third by 2050.** This has the side effect that rising rents can also be tackled, which is an important issue <sup>(26)</sup>.

#### *Use of recycling concrete in public procurement, municipal level*

Since 2005, all **public buildings in Zurich** have been built with **recycled concrete** in accordance with city regulations, and since 2015 also with **CO<sub>2</sub>-reduced cement**, which uses granulated blast furnace slag and blast furnace slag instead of conventional clinker. **Around 90 % of the concrete used consists of recycled concrete** <sup>(27)</sup>.

## Examples of private policy initiatives (sectoral)

### → Good practice example for the construction sector

#### *Reuse initiatives*

There are **several initiatives for the reuse of building components**, examples are:

- **Cirkla**: an association of actors of reuse in the construction sector, supported by environmental technology promotion <sup>(28)</sup>.
- **Project on the “Re-Use of Steel Sections” (RUSS)** by the Swiss Business Council for Sustainable Development (oebu) and the steel and real estate industry <sup>(29)</sup>.

### → Good practice example for mattresses

#### *Alliance for the recycling and ecodesign of mattresses*

Various **players along the entire mattress value chain** have joined forces in 2021 to find a more sensible way of dealing with mattresses. In 2024, a **recycling pilot project** should be completed to show that a functioning recycling system for old mattresses can be implemented in Switzerland. In the following, it is planned to work towards the introduction of an **advance recycling fee**, similar to those already in place for PET bottles or electronic devices <sup>(30)</sup>. The project is being supported by the environmental technology promotion.

### → Good practice example for zinc

#### *Recycling Zinc from fly ashes*

The branch of **waste-to-energy plants** in Switzerland, encompassing over 30 regional exploitation sites in charge of the thermal treatment of domestic waste streams, have founded in common a **new company with the aim of recycling the Zinc metal contained in the fly ashes produced during the combustion of waste**. They will finance all together one factory with an investment of CHF 65 million and bring their fly ashes to this one place, so that it can be treated efficiently. Zinc metal will be produced in Switzerland at a rate of 7-9 tons per day, so that Switzerland will be self-sufficient in Zinc metal at a rate of 40-60% in 2026 <sup>(31)</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> [https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/portal/de/index/politik\\_u\\_recht/stadtrat/weitere-politikfelder/wohnpolitik.html](https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/portal/de/index/politik_u_recht/stadtrat/weitere-politikfelder/wohnpolitik.html) (in German).

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/hbd/de/index/ueber\\_das\\_departement/medien/medienmitteilungen/2019/september/190925a.html](https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/hbd/de/index/ueber_das_departement/medien/medienmitteilungen/2019/september/190925a.html) (in German).

<sup>28</sup> <https://cirkla.ch/en/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.oebu.ch/services/angebote/kreislaufwirtschaftsprojekt> (in German).

<sup>30</sup> (<https://www.matratzen-allianz.ch/>) (in German and French)

<sup>31</sup> <https://swisszinc.ch/index.html>

## The way forward

### Identifying and addressing barriers and challenges

As reported in the [2022 Country Profile](#):

From the FOEN point of view, there is a number of challenges for the implementation of resource efficiency, circular economy and raw material policies.

#### *Political reasons*

- In the past, there were no majorities for a political breakthrough in the field of green economy / circular economy.

#### *Economic reasons*

- Comparatively low prices for unsustainable products and primary resources (externalities are not internalised); there is no incentive / businesses underestimate the potential for cost cutting.
- Slow diffusion of resource-efficient technologies.
- Oftentimes low acceptance of secondary raw materials on the marketplace.
- Partly missing transparency in supply chains.
- Correlation of economic wealth and throwaway society.

#### *Political and socio-economic reasons*

- Missing sense of urgency in economy and among citizens.

Further information on obstacles for the circular economy:

- Report <sup>(32)</sup> of the Federal Council of 11 March 2022 in fulfilment of Postulate 18.3509 Noser "Dismantling the barriers to resource efficiency and the circular economy" of 13.06.2018.
- Status report of Swiss CE <sup>(33)</sup> at the company level.
- Stucki & Wörter (2021) <sup>(34)</sup> Entry into and expansion of the circular economy are primarily hampered by three factors: suitability of products and services for the CE, high investment costs and technical implementation difficulties.

Ways to address the barriers:

- Circular economy is an instrument to reduce environmental impacts and not a goal in itself. There should be a focus on those CE political instruments and measures that effectively and efficiently reduce environmental impacts as greenhouse gas emissions. For example, both an incentive tax on landfilled construction materials, as well as and limit values for embodied greenhouse gas emissions from buildings can incentivize some aspects of the circularity of buildings. However, limit values have a much higher effect on greenhouse gas reduction (see economic analysis <sup>(35)</sup> of CE instruments in the construction sector based on the parliamentary initiative 20.433, Art. 45 para. 3 <sup>(36)</sup> of the proposed change on the Energy Act or the existing regulation in France<sup>37</sup> or Denmark) <sup>(38)</sup>.
- Use financial support for information and consulting services as well as education and training (also included in the parliamentary initiative 20.433);

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.admin.ch/gov/de/start/dokumentation/medienmitteilungen.msg-id-87538.html#:~:text=Mit%20dem%20Postulat%2018.3509%20von,die%20Entwicklung%20der%20Kreislaufwirtschaft%20behindern> (in German, French and Italian).

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.bfh.ch/dam/jcr:c94f7cfb-250d-4c23-8cd1-45069da075d4/W\\_Brosch\\_Studie\\_Kreislaufwirtschaft\\_211126\\_W\\_def.pdf](https://www.bfh.ch/dam/jcr:c94f7cfb-250d-4c23-8cd1-45069da075d4/W_Brosch_Studie_Kreislaufwirtschaft_211126_W_def.pdf) (in German).

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.arv.ch/data/docs/de/5970/Kreislaufwirtschaft-2021-11-repr%C3%A4sentative-Studie-zur-Umsetzung-der-Kreislaufwirtschaft.pdf?v=1.0> (in German).

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.bafu.admin.ch/dam/bafu/de/dokumente/wirtschaft-konsum/externe-studien-berichte/vobu-kreislaufwirtschaftsmassnahmen-im-bauwesen.pdf.download.pdf/VOBU\\_Kreislaufwirtschaft\\_Bauwesen.pdf](https://www.bafu.admin.ch/dam/bafu/de/dokumente/wirtschaft-konsum/externe-studien-berichte/vobu-kreislaufwirtschaftsmassnahmen-im-bauwesen.pdf.download.pdf/VOBU_Kreislaufwirtschaft_Bauwesen.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.parlament.ch/centers/documents/de/vernehmlassung-20-433-urek-n-vorentwurf-d.pdf> (in German).

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/re2020-nouvelle-etape-vers-future-reglementation-environnementale-des-batiments-neufs-plus> (in French).

<sup>38</sup> [https://im.dk/Media/637602217765946554/National\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Sustainable\\_Construktion.pdf](https://im.dk/Media/637602217765946554/National_Strategy_for_Sustainable_Construktion.pdf)

- Consumer information, product declaration (general article, without specific implementation included in the parliamentary initiative 20.433);
- Use clear targets on different levels (recycling rates or content, consumption footprints etc.) for policymaking and measuring progress;
- Consider eco-modulation of anticipated fees <sup>(39)</sup>. However, be aware of limitations (fee modulation oftentimes only leads to a marginal price effect and thereby change of eco-design);
- Work towards internalization of external costs (long-term goal);
- Use life-cycle analysis and offer public access and information (e.g. information on construction materials <sup>(40)</sup>);
- Consider shifting tax burden from labour to resources to incentivize labor intensive circular economy activities, as e.g. repairing (low political chances, not an issue in the political discussion at the moment) (long-term goal);
- Besides anticipated fees and the extended producer responsibility consider obligations for a material recovery. In Switzerland, there is an obligation for the recovery of phosphorus from 2026 onwards. To be further analysed: material recovery for insulation material could make the recycling and phase out of harmful substances profitable (economies of scale) <sup>(41)</sup>.

### Ranking types of barriers

High barrier	Institutional challenge to develop policy for a complex cross-sectoral issue
	Companies' ability to grasp opportunities
	Market barriers for recycled resources
	Consumer behaviour and awareness
Low barrier	Good indicators and targets

#### Latest updates (2024)

**The above assessment has not changed overall.** A legal basis has been created in the meantime via the **parliamentary initiative 20.433 "Strengthening the Swiss circular economy"** which gives the possibility strengthen the regulatory framework via ordinances.

The **obligation for the recovery of phosphorus** has been specified by the above-mentioned parliamentary initiative, so that it covers only the quantity of phosphorus of Swiss demand (Art. 30d para. 4-6 EPA). Furthermore, in order to ensure the profitability of the recycling process and the investments, it has been laid down that the operating and capital costs not covered by the proceeds from the products, such as phosphoric acid, are to be borne by the originators of sewage sludge.

The status report of Swiss CE at the company level (Stucki & Wörter 2021) <sup>(42)</sup> is currently being updated. Moreover, the Study "Diffusion von Kreislaufwirtschafts-Lösungen - Lernen von Pionier-KMUs in der Schweiz» (sanu durabilitas, 2024) has been published <sup>(43)</sup>. The aim of the study is to support the diffusion of CE business models among SMEs.

<sup>39</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/08a892b7-9330-11ea-aac4-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> or [https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article\\_lc/LEGIARTI000043974919](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000043974919) (in French).

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.kbob.admin.ch/kbob/de/home/themen-leistungen/nachhaltiges-bauen/oekobilanzdaten\\_baubereich.html](https://www.kbob.admin.ch/kbob/de/home/themen-leistungen/nachhaltiges-bauen/oekobilanzdaten_baubereich.html) (in German, French and Italian).

<sup>41</sup> See e.g. <https://www.ivv.fraunhofer.de/en/recycling-environment/recycling-of-contaminated-plastics/polystyreneloop.html> or <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921344919305373>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.arv.ch/data/docs/de/5970/Kreislaufwirtschaft-2021-11-repr%C3%A4sentative-Studie-zur-Umsetzung-der-Kreislaufwirtschaft.pdf?v=1.0> (in German).

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/de/home/themen/wirtschaft-konsum/fachinformationen/kreislaufwirtschaft/schweizer-kmu.html> (in German with summary in French and Italian).



## Future policy plans

The EU Recovery Facility is for EU countries only.

European Topic Centre on  
Circular economy and resource use  
<https://www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-ce>

The European Topic Centre on Circular economy and  
resource use (ETC-CE) is a consortium of European  
institutes under contract of the European  
Environment Agency.

