Circular Valley Convention 2025 – Press Release No. 4 / February 2025

Circular Valley Convention 2025:
The countdown to the launch of the global platform for the circular economy is underway

**In just a few days, the Circular Valley Convention (CVC) will open its doors at the Areal Böhler in Düsseldorf. On March 12-13, 2025, this pioneering platform for the industrial circular economy will bring together leading figures from business, science, politics, and society under the theme "Uniting Industries for a Circular Tomorrow". With over 100 exhibitors, 200 top speakers, inspiring presentations, groundbreaking innovations, and premium networking opportunities, CVC provides a unique platform to actively shape the transition towards a circular economy.

Conference program bridging science and practice

A central pillar of the Circular Valley Convention is its comprehensive conference program. Key topics include the development of efficient value chains, core technologies for circular transformation, and sustainable material management. Across three stages, renowned thought leaders and industry experts will offer valuable insights into innovations, strategies, and global trends that are shaping the circular world of tomorrow. The Main Stage is structured into seven sessions covering circular plastics, packaging, construction, consumer goods, digitalization, logistics, and circular economy business models.

In addition to keynotes, panel discussions, and presentations on the Main Stage, attendees should not miss the Innovation Stage, where start-ups, researchers, and established companies will showcase cutting-edge strategies and technologies driving circular transformation. Hands-on masterclasses will provide in-depth knowledge of specific circular applications.

**For detailed information on the Main Stage program, please refer to pages 3-7 of this document.**

An innovative event format that encourages sharing and networking

The Circular Valley Convention seamlessly integrates conference, expo, and networking in a groundbreaking format. On March 12-13, 2025, Düsseldorf will become the global hub for the circular economy, offering a platform for international decision-makers across business, science, politics, and society. Designated networking areas will facilitate cross-sector collaboration and partnerships. The "Circular Night" event on March 12, 2025, will provide an exclusive setting for relaxed networking over music, drinks, and dinner.

A circular marketplace with a holistic approach

The Circular Valley Convention connects science and industry, theory and practice. It covers all dimensions of the circular economy and the entire value chain across industries and materials.

In the expo area, more than 100 exhibitors - including Canon, SAP, Epson, Ernst & Young, Pöppelmann, Fraunhofer CCPE, Siegfried Jacob Metallwerke, PGS Group, Brüninghoff, the Leonhard Kurz Foundation, and many more – will showcase concrete circular economy solutions. The CVC will serve as a global marketplace for circular innovations, featuring world-leading corporations, mid-sized enterprises, and start-ups presenting groundbreaking developments, market-ready products, forward-thinking materials, and digital solutions. These solutions span all phases of the circular economy, from the use of renewable raw materials to product design, manufacturing, logistics, product utilization, and end-of-life processes such as collection, sorting, and recycling.

"The Circular Valley Convention provides start-ups, mid-sized businesses, and global market leaders with a unique opportunity to position themselves as pioneers in the circular economy and engage with potential customers for their circular solutions", emphasizes Philip Scheffler, Project Lead of the Circular Valley Convention at Messe Düsseldorf GmbH. "At the same time, CVC serves as a content hub for the circular economy, delivering key impulses for a sustainable and resource-efficient economic model. This makes it a valuable event for all participants."

All speakers, all sessions: An overview of the Main Stage program

At the Main Stage of the Circular Valley Convention, renowned thought leaders and decision-makers from business, science, and politics will present their insights and visions for the future of the circular economy.

**Opening remarks at the CVC**

The CVC will open on Wednesday, March 12, with speeches from **Wolfram N. Diener, Chairman of the Management Board of Messe Düsseldorf GmbH**, the organizing body, along with key representatives from the event's partner organizations: **Dr. Carsten Gerhardt, Chairman of the Circular Valley Foundation**, and **Prof. Dr.-Ing. Manfred Renner, Head of Institute, Fraunhofer UMSICHT**; also present will be **Dr. Claas Oehlmann, CEO of the BDI-Initiative Circular Economy**. Moderator Chérine de Bruijn will guide the audience through the event.

Further keynote addresses will be delivered by **Steffi Lemke, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection BMUV**; **Hendrik Wüst, Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia**; and on the second day, **Oliver Krischer, Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Transport of North Rhine-Westphalia**, and **Dr. Stephan Keller, Lord Mayor of the City of Düsseldorf**. These contributions underscore the importance of the Circular Valley Convention.

Keynotes: "Enabling Circular Economy"

The keynote speeches on the first day will highlight innovative approaches to advancing the circular economy. **Prof. Dr.-Ing. Holger Hanselka, President of the Fraunhofer Society,** will discuss "The value creation potential of circularity: opportunities for innovation, efficiency and resource conservation". **Dr. Carla Seidel, Vice President at BASF SE**, will provide insights into BASF's strategies and initiatives. **Rebecca Tauer, Program Manager for Circular Economy at WWF Germany**, will showcase how conservation and business can collaborate to promote sustainable solutions. **Ulrike Sapiro, CSO at Henkel**, will present innovations for the circular economy transformation. **Karin Huber-Heim**, **City of Vienna Endowed Professorship for Circular Economy & transformative business models**, will discuss the importance of partnerships in developing transformative business models. **Joe Murphy, Executive Lead of the Business Network at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation**, will share lessons from a decade of implementing circular economy principles. **Dr. Martin Sonnenschein, Chairman of Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG**, will outline sustainable practices within his company.

On Thursday, the second day of the event, **Prof. Lars M. Blank from RWTH Aachen University** will discuss "Transforming the Chemical Industry into a Multidimensional Circular Economy". **Susanne Szech-Koundouros, Head of the sub-department: Raw Materials Policy, Circular Economy, Resource Protection and Environmental Law at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action**, will provide insights into "Perspective on Circular Economy in the Context of Federal Policy".

Panel Discussions

On the first day, experts will debate the topic **"From Green Deal to Industrial Deal: Economy as the basis for greater ecology and social stability"**. Panelists include **Ralf Düssel, Chairman of Plastics Europe e. V.**; **Prof. Dr. André Bardow, Department of Mechanical and Process Engineering at ETH Zurich**; **Prof. Dr. Henning Wilts, Head of Circular Economy Department at the Wuppertal Institute**; and **Ute Spring, EMEA R&D Director Packaging & Specialty Plastics at Dow Chemical**.

Thursday's panel will focus on "**How to make plastic packaging circular? Opportunities and Challenges in Medium-Sized Businesses"**. Participants include **Prof. Dr. Thomas Müller-Kirschbaum, Chief Scientist at the Circular Valley Foundation**; **Matthias Lesch, Managing Director of Pöppelmann Holding GmbH & Co. KG**; **Jens Stadter, CEO of Jokey SE**; **Andreas Vogt, Managing Director of Vogt Plastics**; **Georg Pescher, Managing Director DBNL, Alpla**; and **Gunda Rachut, Executive Board, Central Agency Packaging Register (ZSVR)**.

Thematic Sessions

Over both days, seven thematic sessions will explore circular business models, strategies, digital technologies, and the circular economy across various industries, including plastics, construction, electronics, packaging & printing, and logistics.

Session: "Value Chains for Plastics"

**Auguste Laurent, CEO of Der Grüne Punkt Holding GmbH & Co. KG**, will discuss key factors for the success of a fully circular value chain for plastics. **Nicola Lelli, Senior Advisor at the Alliance to End Plastic Waste**, will describe collaboration with stakeholders across the entire value chain to develop practical, globally scalable solutions. **Prof. Dr.-Ing. Manfred Renner, Head of Institute at Fraunhofer UMSICHT**, will provide a comprehensive overview of the circular economy with a focus on plastics. Additionally, **Dr. Daniel Schwaab, SVP Strategy at TOMRA**, will address solutions for closing the plastics recycling loop, and **Dr. Andreas Leitner, Senior Vice President of Innovation & Technology at OMV AG**, will present a case study on industrializing the circular economy.

Session: "Circular Construction Industry"

**Prof. Dr. Philip Leistner, Institute Director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics IBP**, will present solutions for addressing disruptions in the value chain. **Thomas Nyhsen, Member of the Executive Board at STRABAG AG**, will outline STRABAG's path toward a sustainable future. **Christian Hülsewig, CEO of Schüttflix Group**, will introduce approaches to circular construction. Other speakers in this session include**Felicitas Erfurt-Gordon, CEO, Erfurt & Sohn KG** discussing "Circular Economy in the wallpaper industry", and **Frederick Verhelst, Head of Materials - Business Innovation Center, Lhoist Europe**, presenting "Sustainability and circularity - core for the future in the lime industry".

Session: "Circular Packaging & Printing"

**Dr. Timo Fleßner, Senior Vice President Manufacturing API & Medical Devices Lead at Bayer AG**, will explain how Bayer promotes sustainable production and supports the transition to circular options. **Ralph Hopfensitz, Executive Senior Vice President Global Technology/CTO at LEONHARD KURZ Stiftung & Co. KG**, will introduce sustainable finishing solutions and a recycling program for PET carrier materials. **Prof. Dr. Andrea Büttner, Managing Director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Process Engineering and Packaging IVV**, will emphasize the necessity of a holistic approach to the circular economy. Other speakers in this session include **Dr. Jan Sültemeyer, Global Sustainability Leader, Avient Corporation** on "How additives and colorants can enhance plastic recycling", **Herwig Kirchberger, Managing Director, DELSCI GmbH** on "The myths and truths about fiber-based flexible barrier packaging solutions" and **Simone Mosca, CEO of Mosca GmbH**, discussing "First steps to enable circular loops for flexible transport packaging".

Session: "Electronic Products in a Circular Economy"

**Dr. Markus Seidel, Senior Expert and Head of Research Circular Economy at BMW Group**, will explain how the BMW Group implements circular economy principles and addresses key innovation areas. **Prof. Christian Eigen, Deputy CEO of Medion AG (Lenovo)**, will showcase how Lenovo integrates circular economy strategies into smart design, usage, and recycling. **Prof. Simon Lux, Managing Director, Battery Factory Münster Fraunhofer Research Institution Battery Cell Production FFB**, will explore the role of batteries in the circular economy.

Session: "Circular Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence"

**Sean Jones, Head of Sustainability at Microsoft**, will discuss Microsoft's sustainability efforts and how AI is being leveraged to support the circular economy. **Darren West, Global Head of Circular Economy Solutions at SAP**, will examine the role of digital solutions and AI in transforming the circular economy. **Jochen Bechtold, CEO, and Dr. Dorothea Pohlmann, CTO of Sustainability at Capgemini Engineering**, will present digital transformation strategies and AI applications in the circular economy. **Dr. Benedikt Brenken, Director R-Cycle at R-Cycle/ProData GmbH**, will introduce the R-Cycle Initiative. **Prof. Dr. Boris Otto, Director at Fraunhofer ISST**, will explain how data ecosystems support the circular economy.

Session: "Circular Business Models Strategies"

**Marcus Sagitz, Managing Director Marketing & Corporate Affairs PreZero International at PreZero**, will outline strategies and measures for implementing a zero-waste framework. **Liam Condon, CEO of Johnson Matthey plc**, will explore how circular business models and digital innovations accelerate the energy transition. **Henning Reuter, Managing Director at Siegfried Jacob Metallwerke**, will analyze the challenges of metal recycling in the global market. **Marc Hetzer, Director, Business Consulting, Circular Ecosystems, EY Consulting GmbH**, will talk about identifying circular value pools. **Claudia Wegener, CIO of Interzero Circular Solutions Germany GmbH**, will emphasize the key role of digitalization in transforming the circular economy. **Dipl. Ing. Gürsel Zorlu, Chief Growth Officer at PGS Group**, will present "Tailored Solutions for Pallet Pooling" an innovative system for efficient pallet management. **Smail Alhilali, Chief of the Division of Circular Economy & Green Industry at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**, will discuss UNIDO's circular solutions for greening industrial supply chains and SMEs in developing countries.

Session: "Circular Logistics"

**Markus Bangen, CEO of Port of Duisburg**, will highlight how the world’s largest inland port contributes to the transformation through optimized infrastructure. **Katja Busch, CCO DHL and Head of CSI (DHL Customer Solutions & Innovation) of DHL**, will emphasize the critical role of logistics in transitioning from linear to circular value chains. **Dietmar Focke, CEO of Lufthansa Industry Solutions**, will demonstrate how smart technologies improve efficiency and conserve resources in logistics processes. **Prof. Dr. Uwe Clausen, Institute Director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics (IML)**, will examine the importance of efficient logistics structures and processes for a successful circular economy. Other speakers in this session include **Pradeep Pinakatt, Managing and Labor Director at Flughafen Düsseldorf GmbH**, presenting "Exemplary Sustainability - The Path to a Sustainable Future for the Airport", and **Dr. Albrecht Haase, Spokesman of the Management Board of GEFA Bank GmbH**, alongside **Andre Rolfes, Head of Sustainability at GEFA Bank**, who will discuss challenges in financing battery-electric vehicles for commercial transport.

Tickets, the complete event program, and additional information about the Circular Valley Convention are available at <http://www.cvc-duesseldorf.com>.

About the Circular Valley Convention

The Circular Valley Convention is the new global platform for the circular economy, with an innovative event format combining a conference, an expo, and an exclusive networking event. It brings together decision-makers and experts from business, science, politics, and society to drive forward circular solutions and the transformation to a circular economy. The fair aims to promote sustainable, efficient, and cross-industry value chains and to present innovative technologies and materials. The event is organised by Messe Düsseldorf in cooperation with the Circular Valley Foundation and with the scientific support of the Fraunhofer Institute for Environmental, Safety, and Energy Technology UMSICHT.

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