

Cradle to Cradle NGO
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PRESSEMITTEILUNG

Berlin, 10.02.2020

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Climate Change and the urgency of more sustained environmental protection are key topics in the current public and political discussion. At the 6th International Cradle to Cradle Congress, held on January 31st and February 1st at the Urania in Berlin, seventy speakers in more than thirty panels and interactive fora discussed how Cradle to Cradle could be implemented through political frameworks. Nearly 1000 visitors participated in the event and were able to learn about real circular economy best practice examples thanks to insight from dozens of companies that are implementing C2C.

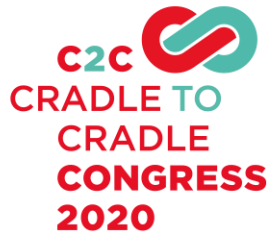
"The 6th International Cradle to Cradle Congress was an absolute success for C2C NGO! Never were we able to discuss true circular economy based on the C2C principles with so many people at once before. Berlin, home of our C2C LAB and now the Congress, has proven to be the perfect location to establish C2C in society. For the first time, we not only welcomed the Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety, Svenja Schulze, but also high-level representatives from the entire political spectrum in Germany as well as the European Parliament. This means that C2C has gained broad political awareness. Also, many CEOs and high-ranking managers from international companies already working with C2C enriched the Congress and made C2C tangible for the participants."

Tim Janßen, Executive Director and Member of the Board, C2C NGO

"We need to achieve more than the 1.5 degrees goal. Society now understands the urgency of environmental protection. Now it is time to move from this recognition towards action. For C2C NGO this means: Designing products for a specific use case, using healthy and recyclable materials as well as regenerative energy in production, and complying with social standards. This is the only way that will lead to a real circular economy based on C2C."

Nora Sophie Griefahn, Executive Director and Member of the Board, C2C NGO

The protection of our environment and the climate has finally reached the top of society's priority list. Nora Sophie Griefahn and Tim Janßen, Executive Directors and Members of the Board at C2C NGO said in their opening address on Friday. "45% of emissions could be axed in production if production would be oriented to the criteria of Cradle to Cradle," Griefahn added. Cradle to Cradle starts with the design and development of a product or service and defines a specific use case. Based on this use case, healthy and recyclable raw materials are chosen. Production runs on regenerative energy and complies with high social standards. For C2C NGO, it is obvious that this approach must be established in every sector: from plastic production, construction and architecture, and textiles, to energy production and distribution, the agricultural sector, and its value chain.



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"I am convinced that a solution to climate change and the environmental problems we face will not weaken the economic sector," Federal Minister Svenja Schulze said during her keynote and in the subsequent panel discussion. It is important to talk about chances and opportunities that go hand in hand with environmental protection, she added. "I was very pleased when I saw the title of this event: Beyond a climate positive economy. I find this to be very optimistic, very visionary", Minister Schulze said.

For Minister Schulze, there are three key points for the implementation of a sustainable environment protection:

1. A solution will only be feasible if all stakeholders contribute to it. "The industry can and should be part of the solution as well", Minister Schulze pointed out. The world market share of green technologies from Germany is around 15%. "By 2025, the demand for green technologies is supposed to double from the current 3200 bn Euro to 5900 bn Euro," she added.
2. Solutions need to be socially balanced. "Climate protection must be affordable for everyone", Minister Schulze said.
3. The assertions made by various climate protection groups, namely that democracies are too weak to enforce environmental protection and to put words into actions are „threatening“. "Climate protection has to work within a democratic system", concluded the Federal Minister.

In the panel discussion with Nora Sophie Griefahn, **Sabine Nallinger** (President of Stiftung 2° - Deutsche Unternehmer für Klimaschutz) and **Reinhard Schneider** (Managing Partner and Owner of Werner & Mertz GmbH), Minister Schulze said she does not assume that the climate package approved by the German Government in 2019 is enough to set the necessary political frameworks. "We need to continuously refine the package and implement further measures", declared Minister Schulze.

"Sustainability does not need to mean sacrifice and it does not need to be expensive", Mr. Schneider added. He pleaded for a fine adjustment of taxation as a governance tool. "There are still two industries that work with crude oil and are not being taxed – kerosene and virgin plastic", he stated. For C2C NGO, Mr. Schneider mentioned a crucial reason why the current recycling system is not working properly: as of today, recycled materials are more expensive than the production of material from primary resources.

Sabine Nallinger also took businesses up on their promises. German companies need to face their responsibility for climate and the environment, she said. "Climate friendly technologies are a possibility to gain a competitive advantage in the global market. We need to work on C2C product design and continue sharing business models and new solutions for organizations", she added.



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The second political panel with Ministers of the European Parliament **Sarah Wiener** (Greens) and **Delara Burkhardt** (Social Democrats) as well as **Ladeja Godina Košir** (Chair of the Coordination Group of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform) expanded on C2C in European politics, with a special focus on the agricultural sector. For C2C NGO, the main contents of the Green Deal, which were presented in December of 2019, are moving in the right direction. However, they are certainly not enough to tackle the problems and ensure a Europe-wide circular economy based on C2C.

Burkhardt and Wiener agreed to the Green Deal, declaring “we needed to start somewhere”. But both agree that there is the need for amendments. “I was outraged by the fact that Agriculture and Trade do not figure in the package at all. There won’t be a sustainable economic system if the agricultural sector is excluded. The lack of biodiversity and social standards as well as poisoned soils are extremely complex problems for the European agricultural sector”, Sarah Wiener said. “European politics can learn from Cradle to Cradle by leaving silo thinking behind: Not only looking after specific policies for specific sectors but taking into consideration the interdependencies between them. Especially when it comes to international supply chains”, Delara Burkhardt added.

The presence of **Elisabeth Winkelmeier-Becker**, Parliamentary State Secretary in the **Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy**, and **Gunther Beger**, Under Secretary in the **Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development**, demonstrated that political parties from all over the democratic political spectrum are aware of the need for environmental protection and a real circular economy.

Ms. Winkelmeier-Becker commented that she is surprised that her Ministry has engaged so little with C2C until now. This is supposed to change, she added, calling the C2C approach economically wise. She promised to tackle the topic of taxation of in-kind donations as it pertains to the destruction of products still suitable for continued use. This kind of taxation is „a complete disincentive“, she said. Moreover, „business models that implement C2C or circular economy require stronger support from the beginning“, she added.

The “Grüner Knopf” (“Green button”) has already been implemented by the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. It is the first state signet for ecologically and sustainably produced textiles and recognizes the C2C standard as one of a few „credible signets.“ Mr. Beger explained that the Ministry faced strong headwinds during the development, even though the textile industry was involved in the process. Regarding the waste statistics of the textile sector, closing the loops is a key focus in the further development of the signet. “C2C is a lighthouse approach“, Mr. Beger concluded.

Best regards
Isabel Gomez & Birgit Goldbecker