

Join Europe's Circular Transformation – Empowering Macedonian Industry through Innovation and Funding Opportunities

Gala event: Innovation in circular economy and creative industries (28 October 2025)

Venue: [Boris Trajkovski Sport Hall](#), Skopje, N. Macedonia

Description:

North Macedonia stands at the threshold of a new industrial transformation. The [Business Accelerator UKIM](#), on behalf of the [EIT Community in North Macedonia](#), has launched a 2025 initiative aimed at **strengthening the country's circular economy by connecting industry, academia, and policymakers and helping companies unlock access to European and national funding opportunities**. In partnership with **leading universities and research centres**, new laboratory projects and innovation initiatives are **advancing recycling technologies, waste valorisation, and sustainable materials**, paving the way for a more competitive and circular Macedonian economy.

As part of this initiative, the Gala Event will **Discover, Connect, and Shape the Future of Sustainable Growth in North Macedonia** by gathering **local and European experts, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers** to showcase practical solutions and inspire the **Macedonian industry** to integrate circularity into their operations. The event will spotlight available financial instruments from the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#), a body of the European Union, and national programmes supporting circular transformation, encouraging Macedonian companies, startups, and municipalities to **take action, apply for funding, and scale sustainable innovations**.

Co-organised by the [French Institute in Skopje \(IFS\)](#) and the [Macedonian Association of Metal and Electrical Industry \(MAMEI\)](#), and held as a combined event with [EnergoTehnoma \(27–30 October 2025\)](#), the programme will feature international, French, and Macedonian experts sharing best practices and successful examples of industrial circularity.

The event will include an **opening ceremony** and **five thematic panels**, featuring over **40 distinguished speakers** presenting the latest **industrial applications, creative innovations, and funding mechanisms** driving the circular economy forward. Discussions will run from **10:30 to 17:00**, followed by a **networking session (17:00–18:00)** offering participants the opportunity to connect directly with international guests, experts, and potential investors.

A dedicated session will introduce the [Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub](#) with aim of **strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing transparency, and positioning Macedonian industry as a driver of sustainable growth and innovation**.

Target Audience

Leaders from the **Macedonian cement, steel, construction, textile, glass recycling, and manufacturing sectors; startups and entrepreneurs** developing circular and creative solutions; **EIT-supported ventures; academia and researchers** focused on sustainability and materials science; creative professionals in fashion, design, and digital art; **public institutions and policymakers; international organisations, civil society, and investors** supporting green transition and innovation in the Western Balkans.

AGENDA

Description	Time
Welcome and registration	10:00
Official opening: 1. Mr. Steffen Hudolin, Head of Cooperation in the EU Delegation to N. Macedonia 2. EIT HQ representative (video addressing) 3. HE Mr. Christophe Le Rigoleur, Ambassador of the French Republic to the RN Macedonia 4. Ms. Daniela Dimovska, Director of the Agency for Innovation Activity, Scientific and Technological Development and Entrepreneurship (INOVA) 5. Prof. Dr. Valentina Gecevska, Vice Rector of Science at University Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje (UKIM) Moderator: Mr. Aleksandar Stamboliev , EIT Community Officer in N. Macedonia	10:30
PANEL 1: Circular Economy in N. Macedonia? Reality or myth? Speakers: 1) Mr. Goce Cvetkoski, Transformational Plant Director, TITAN: Textile and other waste in the Cement Production 2) Mr. Viktor Mickovski, Acoustics Consultant, M-akustic: Textile Waste in Construction Materials (Insulation) 3) Ms. Evgenija Najdoska, ComfyAngel: Reuse and recycling the textile waste in the production process (video addressing) 4) Ms. Marija Dukovska - Pavlovska, President of CEC ECNM, General Manager of Makstil, Circularity processes in steel industry Moderator: Ms. Natasha Sivevska , Executive Director of Textile Trade Association Description: This panel will examine the current state and future potential of the circular economy in North Macedonia, focusing on real industrial practices and the challenges of implementation. Industry leaders from the cement, steel, construction, and textile sectors will share practical examples of integrating waste—particularly textile and industrial by-products—into production cycles and new materials. By highlighting the experiences of TITAN, M-akustik, ComfyAngel, and Makstil, the discussion will showcase how circular principles are being applied in practice and outline pathways for scaling sustainable production models across industries.	11:00
PANEL 2: Digital Art and Creative Industries Speakers: 1) Mr. Anthony Frémaux, co-founder of Ligamen, creator of Talent Trees, a platform that helps organizations map and grow collective intelligence: Sharing the France perspectives 2) Ms. Aleksandra Filipova, BlackBello; Want your next collection in 3D? 3) Prof. Dr. Sanja Risteski, Department of Textile and Clothing Design and Technology, University Goce Delcev (UGD): Showcasing the design process and their experimental work 4) Ms. Irina Tosheva, Fashion Designer, Atelier Irina Tosheva: Sharing the Macedonian perspectives 5) Yova? Moderator: IFS N. Macedonia representative Description: This panel explores the intersection of creativity, digital innovation, and sustainability in digital art and the creative industries. French and Macedonian experts, designers, and entrepreneurs will share insights on how digital tools – from collective intelligence platforms and 3D design to experimental textile work – are transforming creative processes, education, and market opportunities. The discussion will highlight innovative approaches that merge technology and art, demonstrating how digital creativity can serve as a driver of circular, sustainable, and cultural transformation.	11:45

Description	Time
PANEL 3: Innovative solutions in Curricular Economy and Creative Industry Speakers: 1) Ms. Ana Trifković, Bifrost, Serbia: New biomaterial for a sustainable future 2) Mr. Aleksandar Penev, CEO, Akron Glass Recycling: New products from recycled glass 3) Ms. Aleksandra Karaevska - Dimovska, GIZ N. Macedonia: Presenting Macedonian cases in circular economy and bio-waste 4) Mr. Abhinav Agarwal, Founder & CEO Frugal Company, Fluid AI Transforming Enterprises with Agent AI, France: Sharing the France perspectives 5) Trajche? Moderator: Ms. Marta Naumovska-Grnarova, Founder and President of MAMEI, CEO of ZAVAR Description: Startups are driving transformative change across the circular and creative industries by merging innovation, technology, and sustainability. This panel gathers pioneering entrepreneurs and experts from France, Serbia, and N. Macedonia who are advancing AI-driven business solutions, biomaterials, glass recycling, and circular economy models. Panellists will share how their initiatives are reshaping production systems, establishing new value chains, and leveraging support from EIT Business Creation programmes. The session will highlight how creative design, industrial innovation, and international collaboration can accelerate the transition toward a more sustainable and circular regional economy.	12:45
Lunch break	13:45
PANEL 4: Funding Opportunities for the Circular Economy and Creative Industries Speakers: 1) Mr. Emil Bethe, Investment Portfolio Manager, EIT Climate-KIC: Funding opportunities 2) Mr. Jacky Ouziel, Financial Expert & Adviser, France: Sharing the France perspectives 3) Ms. Irena Gjorgievska, Responsible for project management and coordination of technical assistance, INOVA: Portfolio achievements and future calls for funding 4) Mr. Zlatko Samardjiev, National Program Coordinator, GEF SGP Macedonia: Funding opportunities 5) Mr. Lazar Nedanoski, Director, Macedonian Enterprise Development Foundation (MEDF): Funding opportunities Moderator: Mr. Aleksandar Stamboliev, EIT Community Officer in N. Macedonia Description: This session will provide a comprehensive overview of available funding opportunities for startups, SMEs, and organisations active in the circular economy and creative industries. The speakers will present current and upcoming grant schemes, investment tools, and support mechanisms at both European and national levels. The discussion will emphasise practical approaches to accessing funding, building partnerships, and leveraging international best practices to strengthen the innovation and sustainability ecosystem in N. Macedonia.	14:45
Presentation: Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub activities	15:45
Panel 5: Waste Management Practices Speakers: 1) Mr. Darko Blinkov, General Environmental Inspector, State Environmental Inspectorate: Challenges in the system for waste management and opportunities for the circular economy 2) Mr. Pance Angelov, Consultant at Matreso & Mareko: Packaging waste management practices 3) Mr. Luka Lukovski, Director, Euro-Ekopak: Packaging waste management practices 4) Ms. Sanja Momirovska, Ekocentar97: Packaging waste management practices 5) Mr. Martin Strezoski, CEC ECNM: Presentation of the Center for Circular Economy Moderator: Mr. Boris Sharkovski, Director, Local Community Development Foundation, Stip Description: This final panel will examine the connection between waste management, regulation, and circular economy practices in North Macedonia, focusing on enforcement challenges, packaging waste management, and opportunities for stronger institutional coordination. The session will conclude with the presentation of the Waste Management Platform — a new digital tool designed to improve transparency, data exchange, and sustainability across the national waste management system.	16:15 17:00