

## THE NEW EUROPEAN COMMISSION COLLEGE: A CHANCE TO MAKE A FAIR DEAL FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET.

**Brussels, 27 November 2024** - As the European Parliament decision-makers approved the 2024-2029 College of Commissioners presented by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, RREUSE is committed to engaging with upcoming policies that can strengthen the solidarity-based reuse and repair activities of our social enterprise network. Improving frameworks for social economy actors active in the green transition can unlock positive spillovers across different policy realms, including boosting competitiveness and resource efficiency objectives.

As Europe's largest network of social enterprises in the circular economy we welcome the appointment of a dedicated commissioner for the Circular Economy, Jessica Roswall. It signals that circularity will be a key priority in the coming years, with a new focus on effective implementation and the development of the announced Circular Economy Act. However, we note the continued excessive emphasis on recycling that is not aligned with the EU's own waste hierarchy. Focusing on recycling is a missed opportunity to improve environmental protection while also unlocking new economic opportunities through increased job creation, value retention and resource efficiency that come with higher levels of the waste hierarchy. We therefore call on the new Commissioner to prioritise reuse and reduction strategies instead of defaulting to End-of-Life measures such as recycling.

We also welcome EC Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu's new official title emphasising quality jobs and social rights. Yet, given the strong economic framing of social rights in her mission letter, we urge Commissioner Mînzatu to keep her confirmation hearing promise to boost the EU social economy. Namely, the ongoing EU Social Economy Action Plan (2021-2030) has been key in upscaling circular social enterprises, whether via new legislation or funding opportunities. The EC should not halt its trajectory but continue delivering enabling measures that help meet the 2030 Social Headline targets and create inclusive and local green jobs.

RREUSE and our members will also continue engaging for a stronger social and circular public procurement landscape that recognises reuse, repair, and recycling social enterprises. We applaud EC Vice-President on Industrial Strategy Stéphane Séjourné for his commitment to ensuring new EU public procurement rules allow social enterprises to tap into such opportunities via legislative and guidance efforts. The next file revision should be an opportunity to foster socially responsible and green public procurement, simplify SME access, and shift the focus from the lowest price to quality goods and services for people and the environment.

While the College priorities signal some encouraging reforms, a stronger commitment to a convergence of social and circular policies is critical to tackle unemployment and green skill shortages and to strengthen a just transition. The Commission must ensure that competitiveness does not overshadow the broader goals of circularity and social inclusion. Concrete actions on supporting social economy enterprises, reducing reliance on recycling-centric approaches, and bolstering a truly inclusive Clean Industrial Deal will be preconditions to measure the success of the next five years' College.

**Notes to editors:**

For more information, please contact Florence le Levreur, Communications and Events Officer at [florence.lelevreur@rreuse.org](mailto:florence.lelevreur@rreuse.org)

RREUSE is Europe's largest network of social enterprises active in reuse, repair and recycling. The 1,100 social enterprises in RREUSE network provide work opportunities for more than 110,000 employees, volunteers and trainees, the majority of whom face barriers in the mainstream labour market. Every year they collectively divert 1,205,000 tonnes of goods from landfills. In 2022 alone, social enterprises in RREUSE network collected over 360,000 tonnes of textiles and created 20-35 local, inclusive, jobs per 1,000 tonnes.



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