

EU GREEN WEEK PARTNER EVENTS 2025

The 3Cs of Circularity: Who's Really Winning?

Intergenerational Perspectives on Clean, Competitive & Circular to Rethink the Future of Raw Materials Policy

The 2025 edition of the EU Green Week, the European Commission's flagship environmental event, is centered on the "three Cs" — Clean, Competitive, and Circular. These principles align with key EU policy initiatives, including the Clean Industrial Deal, the Competitiveness Compass, and the upcoming Circular Economy Act, which will shape Europe's circular economy ambitions moving forward. However, tensions emerge as these policies attempt to balance economic competitiveness with environmental integrity, particularly in the context of deregulation and red tape reduction versus the need for strong, enforceable environmental legislation.

One of the most striking examples of this tension is the EU's approach to raw materials policy, especially the **Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA)**, which entered into force in May 2024. While the regulation aims to streamline permitting procedures for strategic projects, it also raises concerns about potential trade-offs, as accelerated extraction risks bypassing essential environmental and social safeguards. These concerns extend beyond the EU's borders, affecting Third Countries with which the EU has established Strategic Partnerships, often exacerbating issues of resource exploitation, environmental degradation, and social injustice.

As the largest youth-led coalition on climate and environmental issues in Europe, **Generation Climate Europe (GCE)** has been at the forefront of advocating for resource justice. As a member of the **EU Raw Materials Coalition** and an observer within the **Critical Raw Materials Board**, GCE has consistently brought the perspective of youth into policy discussions on sustainable resource use. Given the urgency of addressing these challenges, GCE is hosting a dedicated side-event at **EU Green Week 2025** to critically examine what "**Clean, Competitive, and Circular**" truly mean in practice.

Titled "**The 3Cs of Circularity: Who's Really Winning?**", this event will explore who benefits from the EU's circular economy ambitions—and who may be left behind. Through a dynamic **artistic activation and an intergenerational debate**, we will challenge dominant narratives and reframe the conversation through the lens of **youth, justice, and systemic change**. A key focus will be on ensuring that the **three Cs** not only drive sustainable and ethical sourcing but also promote practices that **extend product lifespans, reduce waste, and uphold the Right to Repair**. By blending critical discussion with creative expression, this event seeks to empower young voices and rethink the role of youth in shaping circular economy policies for a just and sustainable future.

Details

- **Date:** 24 June 2025
- **Time:** 18.00 - 20.00 CET
- **Location:** Online

Agenda

Opening Statement (15 min)

The moderator will introduce the event explaining the current European policy framework around the circular economy. Then they will ask the audience: *What's "clean, competitive, and circular" about current EU policies?* Participants interactively vote on different policies presented.

Artistic Activation & Documentary Shorts (30 min)

An artistic activation will expose the impacts of current policies on the environment. It could be a short spoken word piece or visual installation illustrating issues such as e-waste and raw material exploitation. Participants will also be presented with key excerpts from short films that offer an overview of the state of circular economy in Europe.

Fishbowl Debate: "How Circular Means Fair?" (40 min)

A debate will take place with an inner circle discussing key issues while the outer circle listens and challenges arguments. Key discussion questions are:

- What are the real impacts of circular economy policies?
- How can youth drive a more just and effective circular economy?
- Are we truly closing the loop, or just shifting the problem elsewhere?

Inner Circle Participants:

- Raw Materials Coalition representative
- Youth activist
- Repair café entrepreneur
- EU policymaker (DG ENV/DG GROW)
- Industry expert

Closing and Call to Action (15 min)

The moderator will synthesise key takeaways from the discussion. Attendees will select the most impactful ideas from the event. Insights will feed into GCE's Youth Manifesto on Raw Materials (2025), shaping future advocacy efforts on resource justice.