

# Attualità

## ETHICAL CONCERNS OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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*Discussion Contribution. Zoom Meeting on Tuesday, 3rd October 2023 Ethics Aspects of Circular Economy, on the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> October, The International Day of the Older Persons.*

## Professors Emeriti Network

Professors Emeriti Network. We walk, what we talk.

The scientific base of circular economy starts from observing humans and their mechanisms assuming that also the economic systems have to function as organisms where the feeding substances are elaborated, consumed and recycled both biologically and technically so giving origin to what is called closed cycle.

Circular economy so must be assumed as a reference for the thinking of alternative model and as answer to the old time. This should guide us toward products belonging to sustainable design and to repairable goods (right to repair, a new one!) going to ethically behave in favor of long-life objects and to ethically influence the market. Ethics also plays a role in sharing of goods so that their exploitation is increased.

The World Economic Forum has studied about which are the advantages of circular economy model in the business world compared to linear model. The result is 8 advantages - products more appreciated by consumers as these ones have so impression to contribute the environmental improvement:

- a better management with the consumer as the sharing economy as component of circular economy is based on a continuous dialogue of producers with consumers
- lower costs as the products are produced to be reused, recycled with a longer lifetime;
- waste of an industrial chain become raw material of another chain;
- more resilience as the recovery of parts of the disposed systems allow to resist to the unstable chains and to the laciness of raw material;
- prolonged and increased use of the products as these are not conceived to be used by a single user;
- time saving as the not more functioning parts can be rapidly substituted as the full system was created looking at this option;
- respect of environment as all the procedures looking at the reuse and recycle have a less request of energy and so are more environmentally friendly.

Well, if you reflect these advantages, you easily understand how not ethical behaviors can result in just personal not social advantages. So, for instance life is prolonged to ill functioning pieces that on the contrary should be fully substituted time is not saved as the ill functioning parts are

not replaced with new ones, but with other ones already exploited, the sharing of services and products is managed without any respect of circularity criteria and so on. Substantially the circular model of economy has the aims of lengthening the life of object saving raw materials and of reducing the produced wastes. The ways to this target are different: reuse, repair, recycle. So, the final of an industrial chain becomes the raw material of another chain. This is certainly a virtuous option, but its application cannot work without an ethical vision. The waste goods of very poor value, but this value is increased if they become or are looked at as the raw material of an industrial process. This can pull dishonest person to falsify the chemical composition of the wastes in order to let them pass as suitable for being raw material of another industrial chain. This behavior permits this dishonest person to gain "dirty" money. Obviously just for this gain they make any possible effort to show the suitability of waste to act as second raw material in an industrial process different from that one responsible for their production. So, without an ethical vision, the reason is that these operators manipulate the chemical data of the wastes to let them appear as exploitable second raw material. Ethics of chemistry so becomes the needed approach in order to contrast these bad behaviors. Another reason is that dishonest associations come forward to manage the transport of waste from the site of their production to the new plant where they will act as raw material. What can occur during transport is easily hypostatized. The original waste can be modified by additions and other treatments in order to appear ideal second raw material, always with an income gain for the operators of this guilty transport service. To contrast and limit such dishonest actions, chemical composition and its monitoring must be entrusted to enterprises where ethics is well known and applied.