

EU Global Gateway Multi-Stakeholder Consultation in Central Asia: Second Regional Dialogue on Circular Economy in Central Asia



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13-14 October 2025 • Almaty, Kazakhstan
EVENT SUMMARY REPORT

Acknowledgement

This event was organised by the EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component (PSC) in partnership with the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC). The organisers thank the Parliament and Government representatives, and other stakeholders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan who join the event and for their active participation and commitment to advancing a circular future for the region.

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Date & Venue	13–14 October 2025, Holiday Inn Almaty, Kazakhstan
Organisers	EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component (PSC) and The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)
Participants	45+ delegates from five Central Asian countries – parliamentarians, ministries, businesses, academia, and partners
Objectives	Strengthen parliamentary leadership for CE transition; showcase business innovation; develop regional Framework Programme and Parliamentarians’ Platform
Key Outputs	Draft Framework Programme for Partnerships on CE; MoU for Inter-Parliamentary Platform; field-visit insights; policy and investment recommendations
Next Steps	Presentation and endorsement at the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026 (Astana)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Second Regional Dialogue on Circular Economy in Central Asia, held on 13–14 October 2025 in Almaty, Kazakhstan brought together over 45 participants from five Central Asian countries to advance regional cooperation on circular economy (CE) policy and practice. Co-organised by the EU SWITCH-Asia Policy Support Component (PSC) and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), the event convened over 45 participants – including Parliamentarians, government officials, business leaders, and development partners – from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Building on the first dialogue held in Bishkek earlier in 2025, the Almaty meeting moved the regional agenda from policy dialogue to collective action. It focused on strengthening parliamentary leadership, scaling business-driven circular solutions, and consolidating momentum for a Framework Programme on Partnerships for Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA) – to be launched at the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026 in Astana.

Opening remarks from the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan, CAREC, and SWITCH-Asia PSC reaffirmed Europe’s continued partnership under the EU Green Deal and Global Gateway, linking regional policy reforms to sustainable investment pipelines.

The event featured three main sessions:

- 1. National Parliamentary Leadership** – Parliamentarians from all five countries showcased CE integration into national laws and strategies, including Kazakhstan’s *Circular Economy Transition Strategy*, Kyrgyzstan’s *Green Development Strategy 2030*, Tajikistan’s *Green Economy Strategy 2023–2037*, Turkmenistan’s renewable-energy reforms, and Uzbekistan’s *Year of Green Economy 2025* initiative.
- 2. Business and Community Innovation** – Enterprises in the region such as Holiday Inn Almaty, Kazwaste, Kyrgyz Agroholding, Tojikkement, HAJTEX Group, and UNISON demonstrated real-world CE applications across sectors like hospitality, waste management, agriculture, construction, and textiles.
- 3. Regional Framework Development** – Policymakers and experts from the Central Asia Climate Foundation and SWITCH-Asia PSC unveiled the Framework Programme on Partnerships for Circular Economy, outlining joint working groups, financing platforms, and a knowledge-sharing hub to drive coordinated action.

A field visit in Almaty provided participants with tangible examples of CE implementation, including the MG City Green Residential Complex – the first in Almaty to achieve *OMIR Gold Certification for Green Building* – and First Recycling, Central Asia’s first lithium-ion battery recycling facility reducing CO₂ emissions by up to 80%.



The Dialogue concluded with Parliamentarians agreeing to establish the Inter-Parliamentary Platform on Circular Economy in Central Asia (IPP-CECA) and to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding on coordinated CE legislation and policy alignment. The outcomes – including draft proposals for sectoral roadmaps and financing models – will be elevated to the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026, serving as a regional contribution to the Global Framework Programme for the Transition to a Circular Economy.

Overall, the Dialogue underscored that circular economy in Central Asia is shifting from policy aspiration to operational reality – driven by national commitment, regional cooperation, and strong EU partnership under the SWITCH-Asia PSC in partnership with CAREC and other partners.

1. OVERVIEW



Central Asia's economies face rising resource pressures amid climate change, water scarcity, and urban growth. Transitioning to a circular economy is becoming a strategic priority for all five countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Through the EU's SWITCH-Asia Programme, the region is strengthening policy dialogue and investment coherence under the EU Green Deal and Global Gateway.

The Dialogue in Almaty was structured around three sessions: (1) national policy progress and parliamentary leadership; (2) business and community innovation; and (3) regional cooperation and the Framework Programme. A field visit to Almaty's circular enterprises illustrated practice on the ground. Outcomes collectively signal that CE is shifting from policy rhetoric to implementation and investment.

A key outcome of the Dialogue was the consultation on a Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia, paving the way for the establishment of the Central Asia Circular Economy Alliance (CACEA). The framework—set to be launched at the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026—will coordinate regional roadmaps, financing mechanisms, and sectoral initiatives in agrifood, construction, textiles, tourism, and mining. The Dialogue concluded with parliamentarians agreeing to develop national CE roadmaps and strengthen collaboration under a shared regional vision, reinforcing Central Asia's commitment to transitioning toward sustainable, circular, and resilient economies with EU support.

2. OPENING SESSION – SETTING THE VISION



Chair: Mr Kanat Sultanaliyev, Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC | **Moderator:** Ms Loraine Gatlabayan, Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC

Mr. Bauyrzhan Abenov, Deputy Chairman of the Board, International Center for Green Technologies and Investment Projects (Kazakhstan)

Mr. Abenov highlighted Kazakhstan's commitment to advancing the green and circular economy as a driver of national modernization. He outlined the International Center for Green Technologies and Investment Projects' role in promoting clean technologies, renewable energy, and eco-industrial zones that turn waste into economic value.

He emphasized the importance of linking innovation policy, environmental regulation, and investment, noting that this approach enhances competitiveness and job creation while reducing reliance on extractive industries. Mr. Abenov expressed full support for the Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia, calling it a vital mechanism to harmonize regional standards and attract sustainable investment. He stated, *"Circular economy is the engine of Kazakhstan's green industrialization – it connects environmental responsibility with technological progress and investment growth."*



Mr. Johannes Baur, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan

Mr. Baur reaffirming the EU's strong commitment to supporting Central Asia's circular economy transition. He highlighted that circular economy is no longer an environmental add-on but an economic transformation agenda, central to achieving sustainable, low-carbon growth under the EU Green Deal and Global Gateway.

Mr. Baur stressed that the SWITCH-Asia Programme acts as a bridge between policy, business innovation, and investment, helping countries design enabling laws and attract sustainable financing. He commended the partnership between SWITCH-Asia PSC and CAREC for developing the regional Framework Programme on Partnerships for Circular Economy, describing it as a concrete mechanism to align national efforts and leverage green investment.

He concluded by calling on Parliamentarians to drive policy reforms that reward innovation and resource efficiency, positioning the circular economy as both an economic opportunity and a foundation for deeper EU–Central Asia cooperation.

Mr. Batyr Mammedov, Executive Director, CAREC

Mr. Mammedov highlighted the pivotal role of CAREC in fostering regional cooperation and legislative alignment for sustainable development. He emphasized that circular economy offers a pathway to resilience and shared prosperity across the five Central Asian countries, uniting environmental protection with economic modernization.

He stressed the important partnership with the EU SWITCH-Asia PSC on establishing the Inter-Parliamentary Platform on Circular Economy, which serves as a coordination hub for Parliamentarians to exchange knowledge, harmonize CE legislation, and monitor progress. Mr. Mammedov also underscored the forthcoming Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy (FP-CECA) as a cornerstone for regional collaboration and investment mobilization.

He concluded by affirming CAREC’s commitment to host the Platform’s secretariat and facilitate multi-stakeholder cooperation, stressing that Central Asia is ready to move from dialogue to implementation through unified action and EU partnership.

Dr Zinaida Fadeeva, Team Leader, SWITCH-Asia PSC

Dr. Fadeeva welcomed participants to the Second Regional Dialogue on Circular Economy, emphasising the strong partnership between the EU SWITCH-Asia PSC and CAREC, supported by the EU Delegations in Central Asia in promoting sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and circular economy (CE).

She highlighted that SWITCH-Asia has supported the region for over a decade through initiatives in tourism, textiles, construction, and green public procurement – helping SMEs improve resource efficiency and competitiveness. Dr. Fadeeva explained that the SWITCH-Asia PSC is as a bridge between EU technical expertise and national priorities, fostering policy coherence and legislative alignment.

She stated that “Circular economy is about redesigning how value is created, shared and sustained across societies. Through SWITCH-Asia we connect Central Asia’s innovation with the EU Global Gateway to build resilient and inclusive economies.” She encouraged parliamentarians to champion legislative frameworks that enable green markets and fair transitions.

She underlined the crucial role of parliamentarians in embedding CE principles into national laws and creating an enabling policy environment. Dr. Fadeeva concluded by reaffirming SWITCH-Asia’s commitment to helping Central Asia translate dialogue into coordinated regional action, leading to the Framework Programme on Partnerships for Circular Economy to be launched at the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026.

Key note Address: Hon. Arman Kalykov, Deputy, Mazhilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan

Hon. Arman Kalykov welcomed participants and reaffirmed Kazakhstan’s commitment to advancing the CE as a pillar of the country’s sustainable development and green growth agenda. He emphasized that CE is not only an environmental necessity but a strategic imperative for national modernization and economic diversification. He outlined Kazakhstan’s ongoing reforms to integrate CE principles into legislation, referencing the Circular Economy Transition Strategy 2025–2030 and the country’s work on updating Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mechanisms, waste management standards, and green industrial zones to attract CE-aligned investments.



“Transitioning to a circular economy is not just an environmental necessity – it is a strategic imperative for modernization and diversification.” Hon. Kalykov highlighted the Parliament’s growing role in driving the green agenda through new laws that promote waste reduction, recycling, and renewable energy integration. He underscored the importance of regional cooperation and praised the creation of the Inter-Parliamentary Platform on Circular Economy, viewing it as a means to harmonize policies, share data, and strengthen investment readiness across Central Asia.

He concluded by thanking the EU SWITCH-Asia PSC and CAREC for their support in fostering knowledge exchange and policy alignment, expressing confidence that Kazakhstan will continue to serve as a regional leader and example in the shift toward a circular, low-carbon economy.

3. SESSION I – NATIONAL INTERVENTIONS: PARLIAMENTARIANS’ PANEL



Moderator: Dr Zinaida Fadeeva

This session spotlighted how Central Asian legislatures are embedding CE principles into law and development plans. Dr. Fadeeva opened Session 1 by emphasizing that CE is not just an environmental initiative but a transformative economic model that links resource efficiency, innovation, and social well-being. She highlighted the EU SWITCH-Asia Programme’s support in helping Central Asian countries turn CE commitments into legislative and investment-ready actions, stressing that parliaments play a crucial role in ensuring policy coherence across laws and budgets.

Dr. Fadeeva concluded by calling for stronger regional collaboration, linking Central Asia’s efforts with the EU Green Deal and Global Gateway to mobilize investment and accelerate the circular transition. She outlined SWITCH-Asia’s strategic approach to linking policy coherence with investment mobilisation.

Kazakhstan: Hon. Arman Kalykov, Deputy, Mazhilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan

Hon. Arman Kalykov presented Kazakhstan’s progress in embedding CE principles into national policy and legislation. He detailed that the Circular Economy Transition Strategy 2025–2030 serves as the central framework guiding reforms toward sustainable industrialisation, waste reduction, and green innovation.

He explained that Kazakhstan is updating its Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system to improve accountability, expand recycling markets, and encourage producers to redesign products for durability and reuse. The government, he noted, is also piloting industrial symbiosis projects – particularly in Karaganda and Pavlodar – where waste from one enterprise becomes raw material for another. *“Parliament must ensure that resource efficiency is rewarded and waste is penalised – legislation should make circularity the default,”* he stated.

Hon. Kalykov emphasised that achieving CE transition requires coherence between legislation, investment, and education, and he urged parliaments across Central Asia to coordinate efforts under the emerging Inter-Parliamentary Platform on Circular Economy (IPP-CECA).

He further proposed the creation of a regional CE data and innovation platform to track material flows, measure resource efficiency, and share good practices. Concluding his intervention, Hon. Kalykov expressed Kazakhstan’s readiness to contribute technical expertise and legislative experience to help shape a common regional framework, ensuring that Central Asia’s circular transition is both inclusive and investment-ready.



Kyrgyzstan: Hon. Amankan Kenzhebaev, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture, Water Resources, Environment and Regional Development, Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan

Hon. Kenzhebaev presented Kyrgyzstan's progress and priorities in advancing CE, emphasizing its strategic value for sustainable development, job creation, and competitiveness. He underscored that for Kyrgyzstan, CE is not just an environmental issue but a new model for economic modernization, offering opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and innovation. *He stressed, "Circular economy opens opportunities for sustainable economic growth without putting pressure on natural resources."*

He highlighted Kyrgyzstan's efforts to improve waste management through the development of a major recycling facility in Bishkek, capable of processing up to 800 tonnes of waste per month and generating 460 megawatts of energy potential. The facility demonstrates the integration of technological innovation with circular principles, ensuring that waste is filtered, recycled, and reused in environmentally sound ways.

Hon. Kenzhebaev described the Bishkek waste plant as a national breakthrough in responsible waste management, showing how Kyrgyzstan is moving from pilot projects to systemic implementation. He also called for regional coordination, noting that the CE transition can only succeed through joint frameworks, knowledge sharing, and harmonized policies among Central Asian countries. He expressed strong support for the creation of the Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA), stressing that such cooperation would help build a practical mechanism for circular transition – one that delivers real value, strengthens national capacities, and ensures equitable benefits across all countries.



Tajikistan: Hon. Orif Hamid Amirzoda, Chairman of the Environmental Commission of the Majlisi Namoyandagon, Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan

Hon. Amirzoda outlined Tajikistan's growing commitment to embedding circular economy (CE) principles in national development and legislative frameworks. He explained that Tajikistan views CE as a key driver of economic modernization, environmental protection, and energy efficiency, particularly in addressing waste management, water resource use, and industrial sustainability.

He noted that the Majlisi Namoyandagon (Parliament) is actively reviewing and strengthening environmental legislation to promote waste recycling, introduce producer responsibility, and create incentives for sustainable production and consumption. Tajikistan has been integrating CE priorities into its National Development Strategy 2030, linking them with renewable energy expansion and green job creation.

"Circular economy is not only an environmental measure – it is a foundation for economic independence and resilience in Tajikistan." Hon. Amirzoda emphasized the importance of education, scientific research, and innovation in promoting CE awareness and capacity among citizens, institutions, and local governments. He mentioned collaborative research programmes with universities and international organizations to pilot circular models in agriculture, construction, and municipal waste management. He also underscored the significance of regional cooperation, suggesting that Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan could enhance coordination in circular education and innovation – for example, through initiatives at the American University of Central Asia and shared research on digital and circular solutions.

In conclusion, Hon. Amirzoda reaffirmed Tajikistan's full support for the Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia, viewing it as a platform for harmonizing standards, mobilizing investments, and fostering innovation

across the region. He stressed that such frameworks will enable Central Asia to move beyond isolated national actions toward a cohesive, resource-efficient regional transition.



Turkmenistan: Hon. Begenchgeldi Bayrammyradov, Deputy of the Committee of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan on Economic Issues

Hon. Bayrammyradov delivered a detailed intervention highlighting Turkmenistan's growing commitment to advancing a CE as a national necessity for sustainable development. Representing the "Mejlis of Turkmenistan", he noted that in a country facing a dry climate and limited water resources, particularly dependent on agriculture and energy, adopting circular approaches is not a trend but a strategic requirement for resilience and efficiency.

He highlighted Turkmenistan's legislative progress, citing key laws on renewable energy, environmental protection, ecological auditing, and energy efficiency, which together provide an enabling legal foundation for CE practices. He also pointed to the engagement of the private sector, mentioning several enterprises that recycle household, industrial, and plastic waste to produce construction materials and consumer goods. These initiatives, he said, demonstrate how domestic companies are transforming waste into new economic value, while reducing CO₂ emissions in agriculture and textile sectors. "Circular economy is not just a phase – it is a necessity. With our natural constraints, Turkmenistan must use resources wisely and efficiently," he emphasized.

Hon. Bayrammyradov further noted Turkmenistan's international engagement, referencing its proposal at the UN Ministerial Summit in Dubai (2025) and the BRICS Summit (2024) to develop a Global Framework Programme for a Closed-Loop Economy. He said the country advocates for global CE standards, a shared innovation fund, and unified sustainability reporting. Turkmenistan also integrates CE education into university curricula—with courses such as "Basics of Circular Economy" and SCP now part of higher education programmes.

He concluded by reaffirming Turkmenistan's readiness to cooperate closely with its Central Asian neighbours under the proposed Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA). He stressed that only through joint regional action and knowledge exchange can we ensure sustainable resource use and safeguard prosperity for future generations.



Uzbekistan: Hon. Shukhrat Aslanov, Member of the Senate Committee on Youth, Women, Culture, and Sports, Republic of Uzbekistan

Hon. Shukhrat Aslanov presented Uzbekistan's recent progress in advancing CE and its integration into national reforms on environmental protection and sustainable development. He reported that 2025 has been officially declared the "Year of Protecting the Environment and Green Economy" in Uzbekistan, marking a strong national commitment to CE-driven growth.

He outlined the establishment of a Special Agency under the Ministry of Ecology tasked with developing unified CE standards, introducing modern waste treatment technologies, and expanding recycling capacity. The agency coordinates inter-ministerial cooperation and the adoption of international practices to modernize Uzbekistan's waste management system.

Hon. Aslanov highlighted the government's goals to process 60% of household waste by 2028 and achieve 54% of total electricity generation from renewable energy sources by 2030. He reported that as of 2024, 33% of solid waste is being processed, covering 94% of urban and 87% of rural areas, involving over 23 million people in waste sorting initiatives. These reforms, supported by projects with partners such as Japan and the European Bank for

Reconstruction and Development, are also helping reduce emissions and promote bio-gas and alternative energy projects.

“Uzbekistan views the circular economy not as an isolated trend but as a key tool for creating employment, attracting investment, and achieving sustainable economic growth,” he stated. He emphasized ongoing efforts to align Uzbekistan’s legal and institutional frameworks with regional partners through harmonized CE laws and initiatives under the Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA). Hon. Aslanov concluded that only joint regional action and international cooperation will ensure the transition toward a competitive, resource-efficient, and sustainable Central Asian economy.

4. SESSION II – SHOWCASING CIRCULAR PRACTICES FROM BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES



Moderator: Mr. Zafar Makhmudov, Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC; **Chair:** Dr René van Berkel, SWITCH-Asia Expert

The second session showcased how enterprises are putting CE into action. Dr van Berkel opened by noting that “the private sector is no longer waiting for legislation – it is driving innovation itself.” He urged policymakers to match this momentum with supportive incentives.



Kazakhstan: Mr. Roman Akhmetov, General Manager, Holiday Inn Almaty – Circular Hospitality in Practice

Mr. Akhmetov shared how Holiday Inn Almaty has become a model for applying CE principles within Kazakhstan’s hospitality sector. He explained that the hotel’s sustainability plan focuses on energy, water, and waste efficiency – cutting electricity and water consumption through LED systems, automation, and low-flow technology, and eliminating single-use plastics.

He noted that the hotel has introduced waste-segregation and recycling programmes, sending paper, glass, and plastics to certified recyclers, and that collaboration with local food and supply producers supports shorter, greener value chains. “Sustainability is not a luxury – it is a responsibility. Circular practices make hotels more resilient, cost-efficient, and appealing to environmentally conscious guests.”

Mr. Akhmetov also described how staff are trained in CE practices and guests are engaged through awareness campaigns. The hotel plans to pursue Green Key and LEED certifications to formalise its achievements. He concluded that hospitality enterprises can lead by example, demonstrating that circular operations strengthen both environmental performance and business competitiveness.



Kazakhstan: Ms. Vera Mustafina, Executive Director, Kazwaste Association – Building a Recycling Network

Ms. Mustafina outlined Kazakhstan’s progress in building a national recycling network that anchors the country’s transition toward a circular economy (CE). Representing the Kazwaste Association, which unites more than 200 companies across the waste-management value chain, she explained that the organisation has been instrumental in supporting reforms to the EPR system and developing standards for waste segregation and secondary-material use.

She reported that member enterprises now collectively recycle over 110 000 tonnes of plastics each year, showing how recycling has evolved from an informal activity into a regulated, economically viable sector.

“Circularity is not just about managing waste – it is about creating a new industry that generates jobs, investment, and innovation.” Ms. Mustafina stressed that to scale up circularity, Kazakhstan must attract investment in infrastructure, introduce public-procurement incentives for recycled products, and establish regional standards that enable cross-border material flows. She concluded that with continued EU cooperation through SWITCH-Asia, Kazakhstan’s recycling sector is ready to become a regional leader in the circular materials economy, driving both environmental progress and economic diversification.

Kyrgyzstan: Mr. Aziz Kirgizbaev, Director, Kyrgyz Agroholding - Circular Farming in Practice (Online)

Mr. Kirgizbaev presented how Kyrgyz Agroholding, one of Kyrgyzstan’s leading agricultural enterprises, is applying CE principles in farming to achieve both environmental and economic sustainability. He explained that the company’s operations are built around resource efficiency, focusing on waste reduction, renewable energy use, and sustainable value chains that connect farmers directly with local markets.

He shared that Kyrgyz Agroholding has introduced organic composting systems that turn livestock and crop waste into bio-fertiliser, reducing chemical input dependency and improving soil health. The enterprise also utilises solar-powered irrigation systems and closed-loop water management, enabling year-round agricultural productivity even in semi-arid conditions. “Circular agriculture means turning every by-product into a new resource – nothing should go to waste in nature or business,” he highlighted.

Mr. Kirgizbaev emphasised the importance of training rural communities on CE-based farming practices, noting that Kyrgyz Agroholding works closely with cooperatives and youth groups to build skills in sustainable production. He underlined that such models improve rural incomes, reduce environmental degradation, and contribute to food security. He concluded by stressing that policy support and access to green finance are essential to scale up these initiatives, and expressed readiness for Kyrgyz Agroholding to collaborate with regional partners to replicate circular farming practices across the region.



Tajikistan: Mr. Daler Shukurov, Tojkcement CJSC - Industrial Circularity in Practice

Mr. Shukurov, representing Tojkcement CJSC, Tajikistan’s largest cement producer, shared the company’s comprehensive approach to industrial circularity, highlighting how efficiency and sustainability are being embedded in one of the region’s most resource-intensive sectors. He outlined several key circular practices already in place as follows:

- Local sourcing of raw materials from company-owned quarries, which lowers transport-related emissions and ensures production stability.
- Cableway transportation connecting quarry and plant – a low-emission alternative to motor vehicles, reducing both CO₂ and noise pollution.
- Closed-loop dust recovery systems and modern energy-efficient kilns that recycle cement dust back into production, cutting energy costs and waste.
- Exploration of industrial symbiosis, substituting part of the clinker with by-products such as thermal power plant ash and blast furnace slag, which reduces CO₂ intensity per tonne of cement.

He further highlighted Tojkcement’s digital transformation using platforms like Alibaba to expand exports and promote sustainable trade transparency. On barriers,

Mr. Shukurov emphasized that the lack of harmonized regional standards for waste recycling, limited access to green finance, and insufficient technology exchange slow progress. He urged for regional cooperation to create shared infrastructure for secondary materials and harmonized emission standards. He proposed that the Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia should prioritize developing an industrial circularity mechanism linking enterprises, research institutions, and financial organizations for technology transfer and resource integration.

Finally, he underscored the strategic role of the cement sector in regional competitiveness: by adopting CE principles, Central Asian producers could meet EU ESG standards, unlocking green export opportunities and positioning the region as a responsible industrial hub.



Uzbekistan: Mr. Shermukhammad Achilov, Founder, HAJTEX Group - Circular Textile Innovation (Online)

Mr. Achilov shared HAJTEX Group's pioneering journey in promoting circular textile manufacturing in Uzbekistan, highlighting how the company is transforming the traditional textile value chain into a model of resource efficiency and innovation.

He explained that HAJTEX has implemented closed-loop textile production systems, ensuring that fabric scraps and offcuts from garment manufacturing are recycled into new yarns and fabrics. The company uses mechanical recycling technologies to recover fibres and blends them with organic cotton to maintain product quality while reducing virgin resource use. "Circular textiles are not just about recycling – they are about redesigning how fashion is made, used, and re-used."

Mr. Achilov noted that the company's efforts are aligned with Uzbekistan's national green development priorities, including waste reduction, efficient water and energy use, and compliance with emerging EU sustainability and traceability standards. He also underscored that HAJTEX has begun exploring eco-labelling and digital product passports, positioning its products for access to EU and global sustainable textile markets.

He emphasized that regional collaboration is essential for scaling textile circularity, particularly in building shared recycling infrastructure and harmonising quality standards. He invited regional partners under the Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA) to jointly develop textile recovery and innovation hubs, which would promote sustainable manufacturing and green jobs across the region. In closing, Mr. Achilov stressed that the transition to circular textiles offers Central Asia a competitive advantage, helping the region shift from being a raw-material supplier to a producer of high-value, low-impact sustainable products.

Kyrgyzstan: Mr. Zhanibek Kulumbyetov, UNISON Group - Green Finance for Transition

Mr. Kulumbyetov, an expert from UNISON Group (Kyrgyzstan), presented an insightful overview of how green finance can serve as a catalyst for circular economy transformation across Central Asia. Drawing on UNISON Group's experience in climate, energy efficiency, and sustainable development financing, he emphasized that access to green and blended finance mechanisms is one of the most significant enablers of circular transition for businesses and municipalities in the region. He introduced the "Green Alliance of Kyrgyzstan", a growing network of leading organizations from business, civil society, and policy sectors that work collectively to promote environmental protection, green growth, and sustainable innovation. Through this platform, UNISON supports the development of green credit lines, concessional loans, and investment partnerships that can help SMEs transition to resource-efficient and circular operations.

Mr. Kulumbyetov stressed that green finance frameworks must evolve beyond project-based grants to integrated investment pipelines that combine policy incentives, private sector partnerships, and capacity building for banks and financial intermediaries. He highlighted successful examples of EU-supported sustainable energy financing facilities (KyrSEFF) and EBRD initiatives that have proven how targeted incentives and technical assistance can drive private investment in energy efficiency and waste reduction.

He concluded that embedding CE principles in financial systems – through national taxonomies, sustainability-linked loans, and regional funds – will be critical to achieving long-term decarbonisation and resilience goals. UNISON Group, he affirmed, remains committed to partnering with SWITCH-Asia and regional actors to mobilise the financial ecosystem for the green and circular transition in Central Asia.

Summary and Conclusion for Session II

Dr. René van Berkel, serving as moderator and concluding speaker for Session 2 synthesised the session's insights by underscoring that circular economy innovation in Central Asia is already advancing through both business leadership and cross-sector partnerships. He highlighted that examples from across the region clearly demonstrate that circularity is both feasible and profitable. Each case, he noted, reflects how companies are transforming waste into resources, reducing environmental footprints, and enhancing competitiveness through innovation and efficiency.

Dr. van Berkel also observed that many of these businesses emerged in environments with limited regulatory incentives or financial mechanisms, meaning their achievements underscore the power of market-driven innovation. However, to sustain and scale these efforts, he reiterated recommendations such as enabling policy frameworks, harmonised standards, and blended-finance instruments linking private initiatives with public policy and supported investment pipelines. He stressed that these real-world examples should inform national and regional policymaking, ensuring that future Circular Economy Partnership Frameworks align with actual business realities. He encouraged parliamentarians and policymakers to build on such successes to create an ecosystem where sustainable enterprises can thrive, integrating lessons from this dialogue into legislative, financial, and educational reforms that accelerate the region's circular transformation.

5. SESSION III – FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME ON PARTNERSHIPS FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN CENTRAL ASIA



Moderator: Mr. Zafar Makhmudov, Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC; **Chair:** Dr Zinaida Fadeeva, Team Leader, SWITCH-Asia PSC

Session 3 served as the strategic anchor of the Second Regional Dialogue, focusing on the design and adoption pathway of the Framework Programme on Partnerships for Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA).

Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva highlighted that FP-CECA will serve as Central Asia's contribution to the Global Framework Programme for the Transition to a Circular Economy, ensuring the region's voice and achievements are reflected in international dialogues on green growth. She stressed how the Framework could institutionalise cooperation through the creation of the Central Asia Circular Economy Alliance (CACEA) – a platform bringing together parliaments, ministries, the private sector, and academia to coordinate projects and monitor implementation. The Alliance will oversee the Framework's roadmap, develop progress indicators, and facilitate annual policy dialogues.

Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva presented the operational model and governance structure of the Framework. She explained that FP-CECA would be coordinated jointly by CAREC and the Central Asia Climate Foundation, with technical guidance from SWITCH-Asia PSC and the Inter-Parliamentary Platform on Circular Economy (IPP-CECA).

Dr. Fadeeva outlined the Framework's three main pillars:

- **Policy and Legislation Alignment:** Supporting governments and parliaments to integrate CE principles into national legislation, climate strategies, and sectoral policies;
- **Finance and Investment Mobilisation:** Creating blended finance instruments and green investment facilities to scale circular innovation;
- **Knowledge, Education, and Capacity Building:** Establishing a regional knowledge hub hosted by CAREC to provide research, policy data, and training for decision-makers and businesses.



Presentation of Mr. Yerlik Karazhan, CEO, Head of the Project Office for Central Asia on Climate Change and Green Energy of the Central Asia Climate Foundation (CACF)

The session opened with Mr. Karazhan's presentation on the conceptual foundations and purpose of the Framework Programme on Partnerships for Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA). He described FP-CECA as a regional cooperation and investment mechanism designed to translate individual national initiatives into joint regional action. He explained that the Framework would help align policy, finance, and technology to accelerate the circular transition across Central Asia. Its ultimate goal is to foster an integrated regional ecosystem for circular economy development, linking parliaments, businesses, and research institutions under one collaborative structure. *"This Framework is a long-term cooperation mechanism connecting our national ambitions with regional partnerships and international investment,"* he stressed.

Mr. Karazhan explained that the Framework is designed as a **regional platform feeding into national roadmaps** and international cooperation agendas, such as the EU Global Gateway and CAREC Green Development Programme.

Key Components and Working Groups

1. **Sectoral Working Groups** – covering *Agrifood & Rural Economy; Construction & Infrastructure; Textiles & Manufacturing; Tourism & Cities; and Extractives & Industrial Waste Management*. Each group will develop regional action plans and policy briefs, anchored in national priorities.
2. **Regional Financing Platform** – establishing a pipeline for green investments under the EU Global Gateway, with support from the European Investment Bank, EBRD, and local development banks. Azhigaliyeva announced plans for a dedicated **Circular Economy Facility** to blend EU technical assistance and private capital.
3. **Knowledge and Monitoring Hub** – to be hosted by CAREC, serving as a digital platform for policies, research, and statistics on CE indicators. It will link to the EU's Knowledge Centre on SCP and CE and enable annual progress reporting.
4. **Governance Structure** – anchored in the **Inter-Parliamentary Platform on CE** and a Steering Committee composed of national ministries, private-sector representatives, and development partners.

Mr. Karazhan elaborated that FP-CECA will be structured around five sectoral working groups:

1. **Agrifood and Rural Economy** – promoting bioeconomy, waste valorisation, and sustainable food systems;

2. Construction and Infrastructure – encouraging resource-efficient buildings, urban circularity, and reuse of construction materials;
3. Textiles and Manufacturing – supporting eco-design, recycling, and sustainable value chains;
4. Tourism and Cities – integrating CE principles in urban management, green tourism, and waste reduction;
5. Extractives and Industrial Waste Management – enabling industrial symbiosis and secondary material markets.

He added that the Framework would also establish a Regional Financing Platform to attract investments from development banks, international funds, and private investors, leveraging the EU's Global Gateway and SWITCH-Asia investment pipelines. The platform would serve as a marketplace for regional projects, linking innovative SMEs with financiers and public agencies.

Summary of Discussion and Reflections from Participants on the Framework Programme on Partnerships for Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA)

Parliamentarians welcomed the Framework as a tool for policy harmonisation. They called for capacity-building and access to green finance for SMEs. The following were highlighted as priorities:

- Harmonising regional legislative and technical standards for CE sectors (waste, construction, and industrial symbiosis);
- Expanding access to green finance for SMEs and local governments;
- Developing a regional data platform for CE indicators and material flow analysis;
- Strengthening education and awareness to foster behavioural change.

The discussion reflected on the draft Framework Programme and the institutional mechanisms needed to make it operational. The exchanges revealed broad consensus on the urgency of creating a coordinated regional architecture to guide Central Asia's circular transition, while also surfacing diverse national priorities and implementation perspectives.

1. Shared Vision and Political Commitment

Parliamentarians from **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan** reaffirmed their collective commitment to advancing CE principles through legislative and budgetary mechanisms. Several participants praised the Framework Programme (FP-CECA) as a unifying tool to link national CE strategies to regional cooperation and global partnerships. They stressed that parliaments have a central role in translating CE concepts into law, particularly in developing regulatory definitions, fiscal incentives, and standards for waste, water, and energy efficiency.

2. Focus on Harmonisation and Standards

Speakers from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan underlined the challenge of non-harmonised CE terminology, data, and standards across the five countries. They called for the establishment of regional indicators and shared material-flow databases to enable cross-border trade in recyclables, secondary materials, and eco-products. Members proposed that FP-CECA include a technical task force under CAREC to support harmonisation and standard setting, learning from EU experience through SWITCH-Asia.

3. Financing and Private-Sector Engagement

Business representatives and parliamentarians alike stressed the need for financing mechanisms to make circular practices economically viable. They proposed that FP-CECA integrate green finance instruments – such as concessional loans, sustainability-linked bonds, and risk-sharing facilities – supported by EU and multilateral development banks. Delegates from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan also called for tax reforms and investment incentives to support SMEs adopting resource-efficient technologies.

4. Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building

Participants agreed that parliamentary capacity building and regional knowledge platforms are essential to institutionalising CE. Several MPs welcomed SWITCH-Asia's ongoing technical support and requested training on CE legislation drafting, budget tagging for sustainability, and cross-sector coordination. The group proposed establishing a Central Asian Circular Economy Knowledge Hub, hosted by CAREC, to document and share legislative, business, and educational practices.

5. National and Regional Implementation Linkages

Delegates emphasised that the Framework should remain flexible to accommodate different levels of national readiness while maintaining a shared vision. Tajikistan and Turkmenistan representatives called for country-specific roadmaps within FP-CECA, while Kazakhstan's delegation proposed a joint monitoring system to track regional progress. Several participants suggested aligning FP-CECA milestones with the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026, where the Framework will be officially endorsed.

"This programme must not remain a declaration – it should have clear milestones, funding windows, and accountability," concluded by MP representative from Tajikistan.

In the concluding reflections, participants endorsed the Framework as a living platform for cooperation. They recommended that subsequent dialogues focus on drafting model legislation, identifying flagship regional projects (e.g., waste-to-resource industrial parks, circular agriculture, and green tourism), and integrating CE indicators into national development strategies.



6. Reflections and Way Forward

Dr. Arab Hoballah, Senior Expert, SWITCH-Asia PSC, closed the panel with a reflection on implementation needs. He emphasised that FP-CECA must be both politically owned and technically driven, ensuring that parliaments, ministries, and private-sector actors each play a defined role in operationalising CE across value chains. *"Circular economy is not a parallel agenda – it is the architecture for sustainable development and regional resilience,"* Dr. Hoballah concluded.

The session ended with a shared commitment to refine FP-CECA through national consultations in 2025, with the consolidated Framework to be formally endorsed at the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026 in Kazakhstan. The participants agreed that Session 3 marked a turning point from conceptual dialogue to structured regional cooperation, positioning Central Asia as a rising leader in the global circular transition.

Delegates agreed to develop national contribution papers and joint declarations for presentation at the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026. CAREC and SWITCH-Asia will compile these into a regional status report and action matrix.

6. MEETING OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AND FUTURE GOVERNANCE



Following Session III, an Internal Meeting of MPs convened moderated by Mr. Zafar Makhmudov and an Expert discussion among experts led by Mr. Arab Hoballah to further discuss the elements of the Framework Programme on Partnerships for Circular Economy in Central Asia.

7. FIELD VISIT – CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN ACTION



A highlight of the Dialogue was the **field visit showcasing circular economy in practice** – providing Parliamentarians a firsthand view of how circular principles are being applied in Kazakhstan’s urban and industrial settings. Parliamentarians commended the private sector’s initiative and requested that such site visits become a standard component of future dialogues. On 13 October, delegates visited two Almaty enterprises showcasing CE in practice:

- **MG City Eco-District:** green construction, low-carbon materials, and smart energy management saving up to 35 % of annual consumption.
- **Technic Destroy / First Recycling:** Central Asia’s first lithium-ion battery recycling facility, achieving 70–80 % CO₂ reduction through metal recovery.

Green City Residential Complex (MG City)

Located in Almaty’s Duman-2 district, *Green City* demonstrates how sustainability can be built into modern housing. The 25.9-hectare site, comprising 27–29 nine-storey buildings, has achieved **OMIR Gold Certification for Green Building** – the first residential complex in Almaty with official **energy labelling**.

The project integrates circular economy principles through:

- **Durable, energy-efficient materials** (facades, insulation, windows).
- **Flexible layouts** that allow modernization without demolition.
- **Efficient waste management systems** and recycling points.
- **Green public spaces** and easy access to public transport.

Green City stands as one of Almaty’s pioneering examples of sustainable urban living, combining environmental responsibility with comfort and resource efficiency.

Technic Destroy / First Recycling

The visit also included *Technic Destroy*, operating under the brand *First Recycling* – **Central Asia’s first lithium-ion battery recycling plant**, launched in 2024. With 15 years of experience in waste management, the company processes up to **30 tonnes of batteries per month** and recovers valuable materials such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, and aluminum.

By replacing raw extraction with closed-loop recycling, the facility:

- **Reduces CO₂ emissions by 70–80%** compared to primary lithium mining;
- **Prevents toxic contamination** of soil and water; and
- **Saves up to 250 kg of lithium per tonne of batteries processed.**

This initiative exemplifies Kazakhstan’s growing circular industry – turning hazardous waste into economic value while protecting the environment.

8. CLOSING REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS



The event concluded with closing reflections from representatives of the EU SWITCH-Asia PSC, CAREC, and participating Parliamentarians, all underscoring the Dialogue's role in strengthening regional cooperation and legislative leadership for the circular transition.



Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva thanked participants for their active contributions and reiterated the EU's long-standing commitment to supporting SCP and CE in the region. She emphasised that the outcomes of the Dialogue – particularly the consensus on the Framework Programme for Partnerships on Circular Economy in Central Asia (FP-CECA) and the formation of the Inter-Parliamentary Platform on CE – represent key milestones toward regional policy coherence and investment readiness.

Mr. Dilovarsho Dustzoda, Adviser to the Executive Director of CAREC highlighted the growing political will and technical expertise emerging across the five Central Asian states. He reaffirmed CAREC's readiness to serve as the regional secretariat for the CE Platform and the forthcoming Framework Programme, ensuring that cooperation continues beyond this Dialogue. He stated, "The Parliamentarians' Platform reflects our shared commitment to a sustainable and resilient future for Central Asia. Together with SWITCH-Asia, we are empowering legislative leaders to drive real change for people and the planet."

Parliamentary representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan each shared brief closing reflections, expressing appreciation for the Dialogue's focus on practical implementation, cross-sector collaboration, and learning from EU experience. They collectively underlined the need for continued technical support, capacity building, and access to financing instruments to ensure that circular economy policies translate into measurable progress on the ground.

Hon. Kalykov affirmed Kazakhstan's readiness to champion regional legislative coherence. The EU Delegation to Kazakhstan confirmed continued support through SWITCH-Asia and the Global Gateway investment pipeline.

In her final remarks, Dr. Fadeeva commended participants for their openness to partnership and reaffirmed that the SWITCH-Asia PSC will continue to facilitate follow-up consultations leading up to the Central Asia Ecological Summit 2026, where the FP-CECA is expected to be formally endorsed.

Participants unanimously endorsed a joint statement expressing resolve to "advance circular economy cooperation as a pillar of green and inclusive growth in Central Asia." The Dialogue closed with a shared recognition that Central Asia has moved from conceptual discussions to a unified action framework, marking a decisive step toward a regional circular economy alliance that connects policy, business, and investment under a shared sustainability vision.

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