

CIRCULAR (Chain for Innovative ReCycling): a case study on the juridical complexity of circular economy in the food sector

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Abstract

Directive n. 2018/851/UE carried out a historic reform of the European discipline on waste management, "*with a view to protecting, preserving and improving the quality of the environment [and] protecting human health*". The key concept of the mentioned reform can be found is circular economy, intended as a re-conceptualization of our model of production and consumption based on waste reduction, innovative applications for disposable materials and the stimulation of cycles of bio-economy. Despite the clarity of the intents of the European strategy, its implementation in the Member States is being seriously hindered by an often vague or unclear normative, which overcomplicates the procedures and poses numerous issues of interpretation. In order to accompany an effective promotion of circular economy, it is therefore necessary to address and solve the systemic issues that characterize the implementation of the European policies, starting by concrete experimentations. In this light, an interdisciplinary team of research of the University of Milan has recently launched a project entitled CIRCULAR aiming at recycling sea urchin wastes originating from food industry and transform them into a feed supplement for animal farming. Since its beginning, the juridical research team focused on the aspects related to the regulations on (i) end of waste procedures; (ii) animal feed's standards and requirements. This contribution aims at discussing the first results of said research in the wider context of circular economy policies in the food sector. The study is of particular scientific interest as it constitutes one of the first academic experimentation on circular economy after the implementation of the Directive n. 851/2018. Therefore, its outcomes may be used to outline the main juridical issues facing procedures of waste valorisation and transformation in added-value products.

Keywords: circular economy, end of waste, food law, health, environment