



**Port Network Authority
of the Eastern Adriatic Sea**
Port of Trieste

PRESS RELEASE

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS IN PORT CITIES

25 October 2017 - The current economic context and demographic growth are creating increasingly pressing challenges for cities and their hinterlands. One response is the so-called circular economy, an innovative new development model based on collaborative processes of industrial symbiosis and new business models. In the circular economy, products are not conceived merely as goods to be sold, but also as possible raw materials to be re-used at the end of their natural consumption cycle. As early as the design phase, the most efficient ways to re-use each single component are identified, so that waste can turn into a resource.

These issues were at the heart of the meeting that was held a few days ago at Trieste's Stazione Marittima and organized by AREA Science Part and the Trieste Port Authority, in collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo and the European Commission's Enterprise Europe Network.

Experts and businesses came together to discuss the innovative models and solutions proposed by the circular economy. In particular, part of the meeting was dedicated to the development opportunities that these innovative models can bring to port cities, particularly Trieste. With a view to achieving this, AREA Science Park and the Trieste Port Authority are working towards the creation of an innovative industrial hub building upon and integrating assets already present in the city and its surroundings: from port logistics to the high concentration of research centers with highly qualified staff.

The goal of the project is to attract innovative hi-tech firms that can boost the area's economic development and attractiveness. The first company is expected to establish itself within the year. An initial important step for the creation of the hub was the recent proposal by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region to re-define the Trieste SIN (land reclamation area of national interest). This proposal, which shall soon be adopted in a decree by the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Land and Sea Protection, will speed up the administrative processes related to the reclamation of the areas currently considered contaminated and which directly back up onto the Trieste industrial canal.

In light of its specific legal status, the free port can provide interesting and as-yet unexplored solutions for companies working in the circular economy that revolves around the products that move along logistics chains. Additionally, a project for a centre that collects and recycles strategic raw materials is currently under study. Such materials are very important for key sectors of the European economy, such as consumer electronics, environmental technologies, automotive, air and space, defense, health, and steel. However, there is a high degree of risk concerning the procurement of these materials, since they strongly depend on imports and since many of these raw materials are concentrated in countries that apply protectionist policies. The existence of facilities where such materials can be recycled and re-inserted into the productive cycle thus becomes very important.

For this reason, AREA Science Park, the Trieste Port Authority, and SamerCo&Shipping are working to implement a project that includes an observatory on rare earth minerals and provides a series of services and incentives to bring about the creation of pilot facilities. This will have a positive economic impact on the local area, especially in terms of jobs