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Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius  
on behalf of the European Commission  
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The potential of transitioning to a more circular economy for the wellbeing of the people, the planet and economic prosperity (the three elements of sustainability) has been recognised by the Commission since 2015<sup>1</sup>. The report on the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan<sup>2</sup> finds that this Action Plan has helped to accelerate this transition which in turn has helped putting the EU back on a path of job creation. In 2016, sectors relevant to the circular economy employed over 4 million workers, an increase of 6% since 2012. It has also given rise to new business models and developed markets in and outside of the EU. Circular activities such as repair, reuse and recycling generated almost EUR 147 billion in value added and account for around EUR 17.5 billion worth of investments. It has also caused an increase in recycling of waste and increased energy efficiency of certain appliances.

The report notes that while the circular economy is now an irreversible, global mega trend, much is still needed to scale up action at EU level and globally. A stronger, shared vision of the circular economy will boost ongoing and new efforts to modernise the EU industrial base in order to ensure its global competitive edge and preserve and restore the EU's natural capital. Reports such as the one referred to by the Honourable Member provide a valuable contribution to the public discussion on scaling up the transition to a Circular Economy. The long-term strategic vision for climate neutrality 'A Clean Planet for All'<sup>3</sup> that the Commission has presented, recognises the role of competitive, more circular and healthy industries in the transition towards climate-neutrality.

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<sup>1</sup> COM (2015) 614: Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy.

<sup>2</sup> COM (2019) 190 and SWD (2019) 90, summarised in press release IP/19/1480.

<sup>3</sup> COM (2018) 773.