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Naslov: Circular Economy and the Challenges of the Green Transition

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SERBIA GOES GREEN 2026

by Bojana Bačić

Circular Economy and the Challenges of the Green Transition

Business, institutions and diplomacy united around sustainable development

Organised by Color Media Events, the conference "Serbia Goes Green 2026 – Green Economy" was held on June 25 at the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, bringing together representatives of the diplomatic corps, business community, public institutions, and civil society with the aim of promoting sustainable development and the green economy.

Now in its eighth consecutive year, the Serbia Goes Green conference, dedicated to environmental protection and sustainable development, opened with a clip from the film *The Day After Tomorrow*, illustrating the consequences of climate change and mass migration caused by environmental disasters.



THE REAL BATTLE FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT IS FOUGHT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Addressing the audience, Robert Čoban, Founder and CEO of Color Press Group, emphasized the importance of continuously bringing together key stakeholders in the fields of environmental protection and sustainable development.

Čoban noted that, as a small economy, Serbia cannot significantly influence global climate processes, but it can—and must—take action to improve environmental conditions within its own communities.

"As a small country and economy, we certainly cannot have a major impact on global warming or planetary-scale processes. However, we can influence what happens in our immediate surroundings, ensuring that we no longer see rivers covered in waste, that our cities are not among the most polluted during the winter



Nenad Ivanišević, Provincial Secretary for Economy and Tourism of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and Robert Čoban, Founder and CEO of Color Press Group

months, and that companies manage wastewater responsibly," Čoban stated.

He added that the role of media organisations is to bring together decision-makers from government institutions, the diplomatic corps, international organisations, and the business sector in order to foster dialogue on sustainable solutions.

Čoban also observed that attitudes in Serbia are gradually changing for the better, with environmental protection increasingly viewed not as a cost, but as an investment in quality of life, local communities, and long-term development.

The conference was officially opened by Radovan Arežina, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government.





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Radovan Arežina, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government



Plamena Halacheva, Outgoing Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IS NOT A COST, BUT AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

He stressed that air pollution, waste management, and the cleanliness of waterways represent shared challenges for everyone.

"Environmental problems are not happening somewhere far away—they are happening here, on our streets and in our rivers.

While the state adopts strategies and international agreements, the real battle for a clean environment is fought at the local level. Municipalities and cities are the first and most important line of defence in environmental protection," said Arežina.

He emphasised that even the most advanced environmental standards and legislation will remain ineffective if local governments lack the capacity, commitment, or resources to implement them.

Nenad Ivanišević, Provincial Secretary for Economy and Tourism of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, compared environmental responsibility to patriotism.

"I firmly believe that anyone who throws a bottle, a piece of paper, or chewing gum onto the street does not truly love Serbia. No one can convince me otherwise, because caring for your country is demonstrated through such everyday actions," Ivanišević said.

He reminded participants that the Government of AP Vojvodina

actively supports environmental protection through several secretariats and noted that Vojvodina is the only region in Serbia offering non-refundable grants of up to €30,000 for the purchase of electric vehicles.

Plamena Halacheva, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, addressed conference participants and highlighted the importance of EU support for Serbia's green transition and alignment with European environmental standards. ●



Nenad Ivanišević, Provincial Secretary for Economy and Tourism of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

