



press release

Bologna, 28 September 2022

CIRFOOD and Hera Group: a pact for sustainability

These two Emilia-Romagna companies have signed a three-year agreement to launch circular economy initiatives and boost sorted waste collection and recovery

CIRFOOD, a leading Italian cooperative company active in the collective and commercial catering and welfare services sector, and the Hera Group, one of Italy's largest multi-utilities, signed a memorandum of understanding today – one day before the International Food Loss and Waste Awareness Day – to collaborate on projects aimed at fostering circular economy, environmental sustainability and sustainable mobility, consistent with the sustainable development goals set out in the UN 2030 Agenda.

The agreement signed today between Hera and CIRFOOD, which for years have both been committed to promoting initiatives aimed at sustainability, will last three years and will be developed by gradually implementing a series of environmental projects and initiatives. This will begin with catering outlets located mainly in the areas served by Hera, and will gradually expand its scope of action to other regions. Extensive awareness-raising activities will also be jointly developed, targeting both employees and customers, to whom specific campaigns will be dedicated.

This collaboration is even more significant if one considers the figures represented by the two companies. In 2021 alone, CIRFOOD, Italy's foremost company in collective catering, prepared more than 77 million meals, employing almost 12 thousand people and managing 1,700 kitchens and 120 public establishments. As of today, this large organisation will benefit from the Hera Group's twenty years of experience in the field of waste management: Hera is in fact the leading national operator in terms of waste treated and in 2021 reached over 65.3% of sorted waste collection on average in the areas it serves (over 180 municipalities with 3.2 million citizens). Moreover, Hera was the first utility in Italy to join the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a prestigious international network that brings together the world's most active players in the transition towards the circular economy.

Projects in the circular economy, environmental sustainability and sustainable mobility

In the current economic and environmental context, waste is an increasingly urgent issue which must be addressed, and to which the Italian and European political agenda is also focused, making those involved in its production and management increasingly responsible.

With this agreement, Hera and CIRFOOD have launched a collaboration concerning several specific projects in the field of environmental sustainability, from countering food waste to finding solutions for sustainable mobility, without forgetting research on solutions consistent with the principles of the circular economy both in choosing between types of packaging and in managing their end-of-life, up to the most advanced solutions in valorising discarded materials, whether food or otherwise.

The organic waste produced in catering outlets will thus be used to produce biomethane and compost in the Hera Group's plant near Bologna, in Sant'Agata Bolognese, while exhausted vegetable oils (those that remain at the end of food preparation, e.g. frying oils, or those used to preserve food) that are separately collected can be used to produce hydrogenated biofuel, thanks to the partnership signed by Hera with Eni.

Hera and CIRFOOD will also collaborate in studying the best materials to use as an alternative to single-use plastic, combining food safety with the lowest possible environmental impact, and in developing projects to recycle the plastic used in catering outlets. Hera will furthermore be able to provide support on how to sort and treat the waste produced.



Over 260 CIRFOOD outlets potentially involved

The number of CIRFOOD catering outlets potentially involved in the various projects covered by the protocol signed today comes to **269**. More specifically, as of 1 September, **245** kitchens send their used cooking oil to Hera, while the organic waste produced in **24** catering outlets can be used to produce biomethane and compost at the Hera Group's plant in Sant'Agata Bolognese.

"The transition to the circular economy is first and foremost a cultural challenge. This agreement with CIRFOOD provides a virtuous example of this fact, and bears witness to how even companies that are apparently quite distant as regards their daily activities can find common ground and bring about this important change together", says **Orazio Iacono, CEO of the Hera Group**. "The challenges currently facing us require an ever greater valorisation of what, until quite recently, we used to call waste. Today, it must be increasingly considered as a resource, or an opportunity to consume fewer raw materials and to create and sustain an efficient recovery industry that contributes to the well-being and prosperity of our communities."

"The scope of the economic, social and environmental changes we are now undergoing requires us to become even more aware of the role each of us plays in safeguarding our planet's resources", comments **Chiara Nasi, Chairman of CIRFOOD**. "CIRFOOD is committed every day to implementing solutions that can guarantee sustainable development, to the benefit of all its stakeholders, the company and the area served. We also know, however, that the action of one single company is not enough. Sustainability can only be seen as a common goal, and the joint commitment of CIRFOOD and HERA on circular economy issues is intended as a response to the needs of communities and the challenges faced by society, from an intergenerational perspective."

Hera Group

The Hera Group is one of Italy's largest multi-utility companies and operates in the environment, energy and water sectors. The Group's over 9,000 employees work every day to meet the multiple needs of approximately 5 million citizens, located mainly in the Emilia-Romagna, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Marche, Tuscany and Abruzzo regions. Publicly listed since 2003, it is among the top 40 Italian companies in terms of capitalisation (and is part of the FTSE MIB index) and since 2020 has been included in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, World and Europe.

www.gruppohera.it



forehead of Media Relations, Hera S.p.A.

Cecilia Bondioli

+39.051 287595 – +39 320 4790622 - cecilia.bondioli@gruppohera.it – ufficiostampa@gruppohera.it

CIRFOOD Italian Catering Cooperative

With over 50 years of experience, CIRFOOD is one of Italy's largest companies involved in collective and commercial catering and welfare services. Thanks to the work of approximately 12,000 people, who are the real strength of this company, CIRFOOD is present in 17 regions and 74 provinces of Italy, as well as in the Netherlands and Belgium. "Feed the future" is the vision that has always inspired CIRFOOD in its way of doing business and looking to tomorrow to improve people's lifestyles while respecting the environment. Every day, CIRFOOD is committed to feeding the future with ideas and solutions that guarantee sustainable development, from an economic, environmental, social and cultural point of view, for society as a whole.

Press office for CIRFOOD – Weber Shandwick Italia: CIRFOOD@webershandwickitalia.it - +39 02 573781

Giulia Calamia – gcalamia@webershandwickitalia.it – +39 335 5798895