



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Department  
of Management

## Research Seminars Series A.Y. 2025-2026 2nd Term

June 30th 2026, 3 p.m. (CET)  
In room 13, via dei Caniana 2  
AND Online on [Microsoft Teams](#)

### Presenter:

**Prof. María-Pilar García-Alcober & Teresa Pastor Gosálbez**

### TITLE

Has the attitude of European SMEs changed following the new circular economy action plan?

*Environmental sustainability concerns within the European Union have been further intensified by recent geopolitical conflicts, which have driven up energy prices and disrupted the supply of key raw materials. In this context, energy efficiency and resource conservation have gained increasing prominence. The development of a viable Circular Economy has thus become a central priority in recent EU policy reforms, particularly regarding small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which represent approximately 99% of the non-financial business sector in the EU (European Commission, 2018).*

*The Circular Economy Action Plan (2020) introduced more stringent waste reduction targets and eco-design requirements, while the European Green Deal and the "Fit for 55" package (2021) have further reinforced sustainability commitments through extended producer responsibility schemes and funding instruments under Horizon Europe.*

*This study draws on data from the Flash Eurobarometer 456 survey, "SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets," focusing on waves 4 and 6. Wave 4 was conducted in 2017, prior to the implementation of the new Circular Economy Action Plan (2020), whereas wave 6 was carried out in 2024. This temporal comparison enables an assessment of whether firms*



*have adapted their behavior following the introduction of these policies. The sample covers EU-27 countries and includes 12,616 firms in 2017 and 13,795 in 2024.*

*The empirical analysis is conducted in two stages. First, a k-modes clustering approach is applied to group firms according to their environmental practices in both periods.*

*In the second stage, a multinomial model is estimated to examine the determinants of cluster membership.*

*The results reveal significant differences between the two waves. Firms are more active in the second wave. Moreover, there are differences in firm behaviours depending on the receipt of private support—both financial and non-financial—as well as public support.*

TYPE OF RESEARCH – empirical

STAGE OF RESEARCH – in progress

For further information please refer to: [seminars.dipsa@unibg.it](mailto:seminars.dipsa@unibg.it);

This initiative is implemented within the framework and under the coordination of the TRANSET project of the Department of Management, department of excellence for the period 2023-2027, as per L.232/2016