



CONFERENCE

European Dialogue on Non-State Climate Action Dialogue européen de l'action non étatique pour le climat

23/04/2018

JDE62 | EESC/CESE | Rue Belliard 99 | 1040 Brussels/Bruelles

Event Report and Conclusions

The shift towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy has been driven largely by bottom-up initiatives led by citizens, innovative businesses and various civil society stakeholders, as well as by local and regional authorities, collectively referred to as non-state and sub-national actors. In recent years, the number, scope and scale of non-state climate actions has grown rapidly. However, non-state actors still encounter obstacles that make it difficult for them to initiate and implement their climate actions successfully.

The purpose of the event, organised jointly by the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions and the Climate Chance Association on 23 April 2018, was to put forward an action plan aimed at assessing, recognising, accelerating and supporting positive climate actions by non-state actors (civil society, business, workers) and subnational authorities (regions and cities).

The event was part of the European Talanoa Dialogue¹, a participatory process launched at COP 23 in 2017 under the Fijian presidency to allow countries to assess the progress made so far towards achieving the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement, and to help them increase the ambition of their Nationally Determined Contributions by 2020. The Talanoa Dialogue seeks to answer three questions, around which the event was structured: "Where are we?", "Where do we want to go?" and "How do we get there?"

In her opening address, EESC Vice-President, **Isabel Caño Aguilar**, underlined the importance of the International Climate Governance coalition which the EESC had established to mobilise, promote and support non-state climate actors (NSAs). In particular, the coalition aims to identify the barriers that limit non-state actors' role in climate change mitigation with the aim to propose policies and measures for an effective enabling framework.

1. Where are we?

Thomasz Chruszczow, High-Level Climate Champion, who is tasked by the UN to promote a wider engagement of civil society, local and regional authorities in the achievement of the Paris Agreement, highlighted that the Marrakech Partnership is an example of how bottom-up initiatives can help achieve top-down goals of a low-carbon and climate resilient economy. He stressed that climate change is a threat

¹ Talanoa is a traditional word used in Fiji and across the Pacific to reflect a process of inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue. The process of Talanoa involves the sharing of ideas, skills and experience through storytelling.

if left unmanaged, but - with the right political framework - it can become a great opportunity to create an environment that is sustainable, secure and conducive to economic and social development.

To make this happen, non-state actors must be seen as equal partners to the state representatives, not merely an adjunct, as stressed by **Ronan Dantec**, President of the Climate Chance Association. More synergies between state and non-state actors are therefore needed. By connecting the capacity of governmental structures, resources and expertise with the active power of NSAs, climate actions can be greatly enhanced. Finding the right framework for multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance is therefore necessary, along with providing adequate access to funding for NSAs.

2. Where do we want to go?

Referring to the large number of successful projects undertaken by SMEs, farmers, cooperatives, communities and civil society in general, **Mindaugas Maciulevicius**, EESC Member and rapporteur of a recent EESC opinion on "[Boosting climate action by non-state actors](#)", stressed the importance of raising awareness and spreading knowledge on these initiatives in order to encourage more citizens to follow in the pioneers' footsteps. In this context, the EESC has proposed the creation of a "European dialogue on non-state climate action" as a way to boost the richness and variety of small-scale projects. In particular, youth buy-in and education are key to the transformation of our economy into a sustainable one.

CoR member **Toby Biwer**, Vice-Chair of the Commission for Environment, Climate Change and Energy of the European Committee of the Regions, added that the design of national and international policies cannot be successful without participation of municipalities and regional authorities, which should be an integral part of the governance system and should receive adequate financial and technical support. It is therefore essential that the UNFCCC formally recognises the role of bottom-up and subnational action in the drafting and implementation of strategies to combat climate change.

A role that is of utmost importance also for **Elina Bardram**, Head of Unit in the European Commission's Directorate General for Climate Action, especially in the context of this year's negotiations. For the first time, governments and non-state actors will come together to assess the status of achievement of the climate goals set in Paris, starting from the first Talanoa Dialogue to take place in Bonn on 6 May. The outcome of the Dialogue should be injected in the governmental discussions, along with the findings of the "1.5 degree report" to be produced by the scientific community in the coming months. The EU should demonstrate its leadership and promote its experience of non-state engagement and social dialogue also in other parts of the world.

3. How do we get there?

Five circles (participatory workshops) were organised to develop the functions of the European Dialogue on Non-State Climate Action called for in the EESC opinion [Boosting climate actions by non-state actors](#). The table below gives the concrete solutions that participants put forward (please see Annex I for the overall outcome of circles):

| Function | Proposals |
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| (1) Assessing actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data for tracking and monitoring progress and action needs to be easily available and transparent (including that data collected by EU and International institutions). The type of data, and the level it applies to (i.e. international, local, etc.) needs to be agreed upon• Finer grained data is necessary to allow for territorial and sectoral disaggregation of data• Climate data also have to be more articulated with SDGs progress indicators |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A protocol for managing the data needs to be established • Capacity building is needed for initiatives to be able to track and report their progress |
| (2) Recognising actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue is not over, but it is time to take action on all sides • Taking account of the bottom-up climate actions and broadening the current environmental legislation at the European level is essential if we want to move forward • Opinion from the EESC or Committee of the Regions with concrete proposal before Katowice • Sectoral entities should be invited to COP24 in Katowice, and they must bring concrete actions, especially based on sectoral roadmaps • EU institutions should formally establish an on-going consultation process of proactive coalitions capable of proposing and substantiating an actionable vision of how to meet the Paris agreement objectives |
| (3) Improving governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote decentralised solutions (e.g. energy), policy innovation and regulatory simplification • Design EU climate and energy consultation in a participative way that is public and transparent • Life-long learning through the integration of climate change recognition in the education system, skills development and training of new "know-how", and promotion of new sectors |
| (4) Accelerating actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create enabling conditions that allow authorities to become facilitators to help local initiatives and develop capacities • Experiment with transnational and transdisciplinary projects • Have accessible funding with easy to understand guidelines for applying • All actors to reach out to communities to see what their obstacles are, and how to overcome them |
| (5) Financing actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building – have a one-stop-shop for help on how to access finance in order to build capacity and knowledge for those applying • Promote project aggregation in funds application process, as mentioned in the “13 priority actions to increase access to climate finance for non-state actors” • Increase the availability (and ease of obtaining) financial instruments, particularly for smaller projects of non-state climate actors • The financial process needs to be adapted so that small scale projects from non-state actors are not in disadvantage when applying for funding • Manage the risk issue for those awarding the financing – either as an investor, grant provider or procurement official |

Summarising the conclusions of the different participatory workshops, EESC member **Cillian Lohan** stressed that small non-state projects definitely need more support – and not only as regards financing. Acknowledgement of the work happening at a community level must be recognised.

The proposals from the event will be presented at the COP24 in Katowice, calling for more citizen engagement in the fight against climate change.

The closing session of the day provided an opportunity to refresh the points made during the participatory circles, and to discuss them with a wider audience. **Tine Heyse**, Deputy-Mayor for Environment, Climate, Energy and North-South, City of Ghent, expressed the view that: "*We need to be really involved as co-partners,*" she said, and "*ambitions must not be too low.*" In view of this, she emphasised the need for technical and financial support, especially for frontrunners who want to test creative and innovative approaches and face major obstacles.

The importance of non-state actors was stressed by several speakers – **Ronan Dantec** and **Yvon Slingenberg** among them – and **Sander Chan** recognised the strength and leadership that the EU has in this regard. However, in order for the targets to be met, and for the transition to low-carbon, those actors from the agricultural and rural sectors will need to become more involved.

It was announced by **Yvon Slingenberg**, Director International, Mainstreaming & Policy Coordination, that there will be a second part of the Talanoa Dialogue following the EESC, which DG CLIMA will organise on the 13th June 2018 with the participation of the Energy and Climate Commissioner, **Miguel Arias Cañete**. As **Ms. Slingenberg** noted: "*we want the Paris Rule Book agreed this year and the Talanoa Dialogue will trigger a discussion on advocacy to deliver on the 1.5°C target. We need robust rules: there should no longer be a divide between those countries that will implement the agreement and those that don't.*"

Finally, the afternoon was wrapped up by **Niclas Svenningsen**, of the UNFCCC Sustainable Development Mechanisms, who reiterated the Talanoa process as being one of story-telling, trust-building and a constructive dialogue. While this was new to some parties within the UNFCCC network, Niclas Svenningsen was confident that any doubts could be allayed and those with questions could be convinced of how good an idea the process is. He closed the day with a reminder to everyone that decisions are not taken at COP – decisions are taken all over the world at events like this one.

Annex I: Outcome of the Participatory Circles

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| Circle 1 | Assessing and Tracking Non-State Climate Action |
| Facilitator | Sander Chan, of the German Development Institute |
| Example(s) | Anne Barre, of Observatoire Climate Chance |
| Guiding Question | What, in your view, is vital information about (your) climate action that should be reported on? - Does this entail data on emissions, and/or other aspects of your climate action? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to note that national averages do not make sense for some countries, such as Brazil and India • Track the impact of producing armaments on the climate • Track the actions on responsible consumption • Disaggregated data is important for gender policies • Synergies between climate action and the SDGs should be highlighted, including the social benefits • Crowd-sourced data may be of assistance, using smartphone revolution and blockchains • While there should be a focus on adaption and resilience (for disaster responsiveness), there needs to be caution on information from hospitals • Need to find information that matters to people – reporting on emissions does not seem to • The NSA should try to cooperate with the UNFCCC and national governments |
| Guiding Question | Do you think you have enough capacity to report and provide relevant data e.g. to national governments and EU-level institutions on progress of climate action? If not, how can we address challenges to reporting or the tracking of progress on your climate commitments? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with blockchain discussed, including the potential it has to enable actors to hide data – those that own technology, own the data – there should be a P2P protocol • More analysis is called for, rather than more data • National level statistics are missing out on local data • The purpose of the data must be clear – this is needed for global action, but local government and sectoral levels need to review their own needs |
| Guiding Question | If EU-level institutions, such as the EESC, would collect data and track progress on climate action, how could that benefit non-state actors? – How, in your opinion, could better data and transparency lead to better performance and/or more climate actions? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated databases and climate reduction measurement tools would help actors • There is a need for commitments, greenhouse gas reporting and targets, along with local actions • Data on the impact of mining and sea transport needs to be collected (based mainly outside of the EU) • EU and International institutions should be pushing for transparency |
| Proposals | <p>Taken from the above discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data for tracking and monitoring progress and action needs to be easily available and transparent (including that data collected by EU and International institutions) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type of data, and the level it applies to (i.e. international, local, etc.) needs to be agreed upon • Climate data also have to be more articulated with SDGs progress indicators • A protocol for managing the data needs to be established |
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| Circle 2 | Recognising Non-State Climate Action |
| Facilitator | Krystof Ostrowski, EESC Member |
| Example(s) | Patrick Oliva, Paris Process on Mobility and Climate |
| Guiding Question | What could be the benefits of better recognition of grassroots climate action? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition is a cost-effective means to promote ongoing actions and to motivate non-state actors to go further • There is no labelling or certification at present, just monitoring and/or verification • An holistic approach is needed – everything is connected to everything else (i.e. urbanisation, transportation, etc.) • A legal framework to facilitate sharing would help • Recognition would allow for an inclusive process to move forward, and for sectoral authorities to be mobilised • There is a need to stop the fragmentation of efforts – recognition could help stop this |
| Guiding Question | How should the recognition function be organised? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be reliability of information – in terms of source information and concrete success stories • Credibility is also important – who is behind any recognition or award? Lobbying needs to be dissuaded • Means for organising the recognition function – prizes/awards, high level events and a special online platform |
| Proposals | <p>Taken from the above discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue is not over, but it is time to take action on all sides • Taking account of the bottom-up climate actions that exist already and broadening the current environmental legislation at the European level is essential if we want to move forward • Opinion from the EESC or CoR with concrete proposal before Katowice • Sectoral entities should be invited to Katowice, and they must bring concrete actions, especially based on sectoral roadmaps • EU institutions should formally establish an on-going consultation process of proactive coalitions capable of proposing and substantiating an actionable vision of how to meet the Paris agreement objectives |

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| Circle 3 | Improving Governance |
| Facilitator | Andy Deacon, Climate Alliance |
| Example(s) | Andrew Cooper, CoR Member |
| Guiding Question | What are the main legislative and regulatory stumbling blocks that inhibit acceleration of bottom up climate initiatives (give concrete examples)? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of information on how to participate • European bureaucracy |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in experimenting, making it difficult to innovate • Decentralised solutions – should get rid of unique energy tariff |
| Guiding Question | How should these stumbling blocks be addressed so that the EU climate governance can be improved and the bottom up climate action supported and accelerated? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to build a large stakeholder base, with stakeholder mapping • More should be done to contribute to policy development through inclusive stakeholder participation • The outcomes of the any participatory processes need to be public • Look at economic models – what model would solve the problem of climate change? • Regulations should be simplified to allow for innovation, with voluntary agreements as alternatives when the enabling environment is weak • A life-long learning approach to training and education |
| Proposals | <p>Taken from the above discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote decentralised solutions (e.g. energy), policy innovation and regulatory simplification • Design EU climate and energy consultation in a participative way that is public and transparent • Life-long learning through the integration of climate change recognition in the education system, skills development and training of new "know-how" and promotion of new sectors |

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| Circle 4 | Enabling Conditions for Action |
| Facilitator | Wendel Trio, CAN-Europe |
| Example(s) | Meera Ghani, Ecolise; Philippe Naudet, ACR+ |
| Guiding Question | What are the main stumbling blocks (except for legislative and regulatory barriers) that inhibit acceleration of bottom up climate initiatives? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of concrete support on how to engage in local initiatives • Lack of objective system to recognise the initiatives (for example, from the European Commission) • Lack of user-friendly system for gaining funding – there is funding, but often it is difficult to obtain if an organisation is not part of a large coalition • Difficulty in seeing where the funding goes, and who defines where it goes (should have citizen participation) • Lack of connection between decision-makers and what is happening on the ground • Lack of support from local actors – public and private – including at local authority level for communities • Lack of willingness from NGOs to share with others |
| Guiding Question | How should these stumbling blocks be addressed so that the bottom up climate action can be supported and accelerated? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to change the way of thinking from a silo approach to handling problems • Training, education and upskilling is needed, starting as early as possible (i.e. pre-University) • Learning from each other – sharing experiences, good practices, partnerships, networking and open consultations, including between public |

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| | <p>authorities and local actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of initiatives from national and local authorities • There should be better guidelines for funding • Actors should have a systemic perspective, and not just look at their own agenda – help to create linkages between citizens' and organisations' initiatives, and what local and national authorities are doing • Expand the number of people involved – create movement |
| Proposals | <p>Taken from the above discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create enabling conditions that allow authorities to become facilitators to help local initiatives and develop capacities • Experiment with transnational and transdisciplinary projects • Have accessible funding with easy to understand guidelines for applying • All actors to reach out to communities to see what their obstacles are, and how to overcome them |

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| Circle 5 | Facilitating Access to Finance |
| Facilitator | Charlotte Boulanger, FMDV |
| Example(s) | Ronald van Meygaarden, Climate Alliance and Deputy Mayor of the city of Geldermalsen |
| Guiding Question | What are the main stumbling blocks as regards access to finance? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller projects can have issues accessing finance • An investor will always look for a Return on Investment • Difficulty with defining what is a green investment – what are the indicators, and how is a project categorised as green? • Difficult for investors to assess the climate impact of a project, as well as the technicality of the project itself • There is a complexity in the reporting requirements, and a lot of red tape (particularly if the project is small) • Green procurement – there are different capacities in knowledge and different mandates facing procurement staff • The political agenda is based on short-term, and not long term |
| Guiding Question | How should these stumbling blocks be addressed so that the bottom up climate action can be supported and accelerated as regards access to finance? |
| Response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance and support for smaller projects would help • Have a standardised approach, including tools, for assessing green criteria • Should have independent committees to check the viability of a project, which should also take account of the environmental and social impact • Institutions for the provision of micro-financing, to help smaller projects • Increased dialogue within institutions to involve local communities as fund-providers |
| Proposals | <p>Taken from the above discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building – have a one-stop-shop for help on how to access finance in order to build capacity and knowledge for those applying • Promote project aggregation in funds application process, as mentioned in the “13 priority actions to increase access to climate finance for non-state actors”. Increase the availability (and ease of obtaining) financial instruments, particularly for smaller projects of non-state climate actors |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The financial process needs to be adapted so that small scale projects from non-state actors are not in disadvantage when applying for funding• Manage the risk issue for those awarding the financing – either as an investor, grant provider or procurement official |
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