

Conference of the Bureau of the Civil Society Organisations' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and of Irish Rural Link  
Tullamore, Ireland, 9 June 2022

*'Just Transition'*  
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Extraordinary meeting of the Bureau  
of the Civil Society Organisations' Group

## Just Transition

 @CSOGroupEESC | #JustTransition

**09.06.2022 | 10:00 – 17:30**

Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore, Ireland



### *Working towards a just transition in full respect and partnership*

- The transition to net zero emissions in the Irish Midlands will necessitate **profound changes in vision, attitudes and perceptions of the future**, with the greatest challenge being how to deliver a **just transition for the many and not only for the few**;
- First and foremost, this just transition must be about **people, place, respect and partnership**, building on the **deep historical connections** of peatland communities with the bog and directly involving and **empowering local communities** in the long-term planning for the **regeneration of the region**;
- It is essential that **all local stakeholders** are directly involved in a **bottom-up process**, identifying challenges and opportunities, jointly developing **creative and sustainable solutions** and actively participating in the **decision-making and implementation** of these solutions;
- **Civil society organisations** are **key to delivering the just transition**, through their interactions with local government and by their capacity to bring the topic out of the policy arena and into communities. At the same time, **local government** has an essential responsibility to **support the most vulnerable** and those who are less able to adapt to change;
- **Respect, partnership and honest communication** with communities on possible future options, must underlie this joint approach, which should aim to **reduce, share and manage the risks of the transition in a just and fair way**.

### *Delivering a new social contract firmly rooted in the sustainable development goals (SDGs)*

- If not well managed, the transition to carbon neutrality through the cessation of peat extraction in the Irish Midlands could lead to **long-term and trans-generational disadvantage and marginalisation**;
- In this context, the **overriding objective** of the just transition must be to **not leave behind any individual, community, economic sector or region**;
- Moreover, the environmental dimension of the just transition must be addressed in parallel to the social and economic dimensions, under the **all-encompassing objective of the SDGs**, of which **poverty eradication is the principal objective**;
- Ultimately, the closure of the peatlands requires a **new social contract to protect the most vulnerable**;
- This will necessitate **specific and targeted actions**, e.g. **adapted life-long learning, re-training and upskilling opportunities**, which should offer **real economic opportunities** and allow local communities to **sustainably support their livelihoods**;
- **High level and long-term investment in the education sector** and in **economic diversification**, e.g. in tourism (recreation, heritage and biodiversity), will also be crucial to effectively managing the just transition;
- The overall objective should be to **create and attract a significant number of new jobs**, as well as to successfully **integrate into the labour market both young people and women**, as well as vulnerable individuals, such as **persons with disability** and the **long-term unemployed**.

*Taking ownership of the opportunities and challenges of the just transition*

- **Poverty** is not only about income, it is also about access to **affordable energy** and **quality services**. In this context, and if the just transition in the Irish Midlands is to be successful, it will have to be **enacted by citizens in their homes, schools** and at the **workplace**;
  - This will necessitate a **holistic** and **integrated approach to rural** and **regional development** across a number of key sectors, e.g. **transport, digitalisation** and **energy**, as well as **equal treatment among the regions**;
  - Two sectors which are particularly effective in enhancing **local supply chains** and **job creation**, are the **social economy** and **community led renewable energy projects**;
  - Such **locally owned enterprises**, with either social and/or carbon-free objectives, will directly contribute to **sustainable wealth, social solidarity** and more **sustainable consumption levels**;
  - Crucially, they will encourage **peer-to-peer learning, community empowerment** and **ownership of the just transition**, all of which will be pivotal to the **effective** and **long-term management** of the just transition in the Irish Midlands.
-