



## **Minutes of the Copenhagen Round**

**Table 11 March 2022**

The participants of the Round Table were:

- EESC: Dorthe Andersen from Group II and Martin Salamon from Group III
- Employers' side: Bertil Egger Beck, Confederation of Danish Industry
- Workers' side: Lise Lotte Toft, FH; Katrine Rafn, HK; Flemming Overgård, 3F; Kristina Aaltonen, DLF
- Diversity Europe: Julie Rosenkilde, New Europe; Dan Belusa, 92 Group
- European Commission: Trine Koch Jakobsen

### **13h-14h:**

In the first round, the participants introduced themselves, after which the Commission representative made a presentation focusing on the general RRF, and with 4 slides specifically on Denmark's plan, approved by the Council in July 2021.

The following points were noted:

- There was much consensus between the different participants
- The Commission had much more understanding for the central administration's way of handling the process than the other participants
- The EU's main role in the future must be to ensure that the rules of the recovery plans are followed – in all Member States
- Support for the EU and the recovery project could be strengthened if the €1,5BN from the package were spent on clearly identifiable projects, but instead the amount is included in the normal budget.

In addition, there was a discussion of how the 37% and the 20% targets had been established at EU level, the time pressure when preparing the plan, and the resulting shortcomings, how Denmark avoided to address the point "preparing the workforce for the digital future", and the general taxonomy in the definition of "green" and "digital".

The absence of the Ministries of Finance and of Foreign Affairs – both of whom had signed up for the event – was regretted, but understandable, given the recent invasion of Ukraine. A dialogue between organised civil society, the Commission and the central administration was one of the main objectives of this event.

### **14h-15h:**

In the second part of the discussion, participants were asked how the involvement of organised civil society should ideally take place and the following views were noted:

- There needs to be transparency well in advance about where the money is actually going

- Proposal to have fewer fixed criteria (e.g. the 37 and 20%) and instead broader frameworks and concrete negotiations on how to fill them. Taxonomy example with fully electric vs hybrid cars
- Especially when things are moving fast, it is even more important that the potential end-users are asked how they would like to participate. Instead, the plan was based too much on the National Reform Programme
- The Danish RRP should have been in a wide public consultation with an established roadmap. If there had been a public debate the money could have been better spent
- Examples were given of a very fast consultation of e.g. climate groups, meaning that the consultations became pro forma and not real
- The Danish focus is on the impact in the other Member States and not on the €1,5BN
- The consultations in the Semester process worked better in terms of involvement than in the NRRP
- There should be a right to monitor other Member States as well
- The next step in the Semester process in the country reports and recommendations in April and May, and the NRRP must interact with these. The Semester method is an obvious opportunity to engage in dialogue with organised civil society and it is important to maintain this opportunity for dialogue, also in the new RRF set-up. The NRRP must be integrated into the Semester and vice versa
- There should have been consultations and public debates with the parties in Parliament, interest groups, etc. The process has been under fire, even if the content of the plan is actually OK. One participant used the expression “a very un-Danish process”
- There is a lack of centralised advice and counselling on what the plan can fund, and this advice therefore becomes fragmented and less effective. For example, employers’ organisations advise their members on how to use the pool, but only their own members
- The Contact Committee already exists and could have been involved in the preparation of the plan, but at the same time there were diverging views on whether this CC could cover all viewpoints in a meaningful and balanced way, especially the very varied interests of “diversity Europe”. The Special Committee of the Danish Parliament could also play a role here.

More individual comments included: The absence of Pillar 6 (Policies for the next generation) in the Danish plan.

The Commission signalled an acceptance of Danish assurances that problems linked to money laundering and education would be solved even without being an explicit part of the Danish plan, that certain countries and sectors have been requested more specific numerical and detailed actions that Denmark has, and that the Council’s implementing decision with its focus on principal milestones and targets rather than specific spending in individual areas is central. The uniqueness of the situation surrounding the preparation of the Plan was also highlighted and characterised as a one-off situation, aggravated by the lack of resources.

### **Preliminary conclusions:**

The process was unsatisfactory, although the end result was acceptable. Some of this was probably due to time pressure and lack of resources.

The good experiences from the Semester process should also be used in the RRF process, especially as the RRF and the Semester are very closely linked.

It is difficult to define a participation that meets all legitimate interests in a balanced and fair way.

There are mechanisms – Contact Committees and Special Committees of Parliament – to improve consultation, as well as various well-established formats for stakeholder involvement that could and should have been used.

Advice – and preferably centralised, for all parts of the pool and for all of society – on how to obtain funding from the pool was asked for.

There is very little debate and very little awareness of the Plan in Denmark.