



Workshop 6

A Social Green Deal for a sustainable recovery

4 March 2021 | 10:00 – 12:00 | EESC - Brussels

Organised by: the Social Platform, SOLIDAR and the EESC section for the Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO).

This workshop explored the ways in which we can ensure that the European Green Deal is not only a roadmap for a green and sustainable future, but also a socially inclusive future for all in the recovery after COVID-19. It opened with an input session from the audience, followed by a plenary debate with speakers from EU institutions, social partners, civil society organisations and actors from the social economy sector. Participants were finally involved in an interactive Q&A session and expressed their preferences regarding the recommendations formulated and that would be presented in the Civil Society Days closing session.

Opening and gathering input from the audience:

Piotr Sadowski, President of the Social Platform, opened the event. He stressed the intrinsic link between the environmental and socio-economic crises and the consequent need to address both equally to make a just Covid recovery possible. In this process, CSOs should be involved both in the decision-making phase and at the evaluation and monitoring stage, he claimed, and urged EU institutions to set structural mechanisms to enable them to actively participate.

Participants were then invited to provide their input with regard to their level of familiarity with the European Green Deal and to share ideas on how to render the European Green Deal more social through the participatory platform Slido.

Panel debate:

The panel debate was introduced and moderated by **Mikael Leyi**, Secretary General of SOLIDAR.

The first panelist to intervene was **Javier Doz Orrit**, President of the European Semester Group, EESC. After drawing the difference between EU's reaction to the current crisis and the austerity approach applied in response to previous ones, he listed a series of recent environmental and social measures introduced at the EU level. He then focused on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 and Next Generation EU (NGEU) and pointed out the great difference between the European Green Deal funding initially mentioned by the European Commission (1 trillion EUR in 10 years) and the actual budget allocated through the approval of



NGEU and the MFF (half trillion EUR) and the Just Transition Fund (10 billion). He commented the new figures as disappointing. Mr. Orrit then mentioned critical measures that in his view should be implemented in order to accompany the European Green Deal, such as employment protection, fair taxation, vocational training, strengthening collective bargaining, strengthening health and science sectors. CSOs and social partners, Mr. Orrit proposed, should be structurally involved in all phases of the delivery of the European Green Deal, as well as of national Recovery and Resilience Plans. He mentioned the unsatisfactory results of 27 national reports received by the EESC on the involvement of civil society in the formulation of the national plans and pleaded national authorities to modify their plans integrating civil society's requests by the deadline. To conclude he mentioned three areas that are key for the future of Europe: recovery, transformation of the economic model and reinforcement of a democratic Europe.

Alice Kuhnke, MEP and Vice-chair of the intergroup on the Green New Deal, intervened as second panelist bringing her perspective as a policy-maker working at the intersection between climate, gender and social justice. She highlighted the unjust nature of climate change and its unequal consequences across society and countries, with the most vulnerable groups, including girls and women, being the most impacted by it. Ms. Kuhnke pointed out that without integrating the gender equality dimension within EU measures, including the flagship European Green Deal, we cannot ensure that no one will be left behind in the just transition process. For this reasons, she explained that the Greens in the European Parliament are pushing for the creation of a compulsory gender equality mechanism to be applied in national Recovery and Resilience Plans. Moreover, she stressed the need for a horizontal mainstreaming of the (gender) equality dimension within both the European Green Deal and the national Recovery and Resilience Plans. To conclude, she warned about the consequences in terms of exacerbating inequalities that poorly designed reforms would have and urged a holistic approach.

Anna Krozers, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at EAPN, in her intervention highlighted the importance of the window of opportunity created by the Recovery and Resilience Facility to prioritise the fight against poverty and to learn from the mistakes done in past crises. Ms. Krozers noticed that despite the European Green Deal being a long-term growth strategy, it does not have a specific focus on poverty reduction. She claimed that the European Green Deal and the Just transition must benefit the most vulnerable groups and not only avoid to penalize them. To do so, she stressed the importance of massive public investments, also in order to create green jobs, as well as the central role of fair taxation. In conclusion, she joined previous speakers in the request for a more structural involvement of civil society in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and reiterated the central role that the fight against poverty, including energetic poverty, must have in the post-Covid society.

Ludovic Voet, Confederal Secretary of the ETUC, focused on the work of the ETUC and listed 5 key social challenges that, according to the ETUC, the European Green Deal should acknowledge. 1) The new green jobs will not correspond, in terms of sectoral and geographic distribution, to the jobs that will be lost. A European industrial strategy and socio-economic support from the EU are needed to create work for everyone. 2) The transition will concern also sectors that are not necessarily unionized and that are characterized by poor working conditions. It is important that the creation of quality jobs for all. 3) Upskilling and re-skilling processes are essential, as well as social protection measures in the transition process. 4) Green policies will cause a regressive distributional effects and risks to increase energetic poverty and inequalities between countries,



regions and citizens. Adequate policy instruments to ensure a fair redistribution and protect low-income households must be in place. 5) Health and safety risks will increase as a consequence to climate change (e.g. in agriculture) and public services, health sector and social protection services will be more under stress due to extreme natural events. EU institution should act to protect and support these sectors, which will be key in the recovery. Mr. Voet concluded stating that in order to achieve social acceptance of the green transition, we need more integration with the European Pillar of Social Rights and just transition road maps in all key policy sectors of the European Green Deal.

Giuseppe Guerini, President of CECOP (European Confederation of Worker and Social Cooperatives) member of the EESC, in his speech illustrated the link between sustainability, cooperative organisations and social economy. He observed that sustainability should be “a way of living” rather than a way of working, and therefore be at the core of our society. In this sense, he added that cooperative organisations are a great example of actors joining forces to achieve shared gains that benefit society. Mr. Guerini stressed the need for the creation of an alternative model that reverse the course of economy. In his view, the Europe of the future must have these three priorities: technological innovation, social justice, green economy. Moreover, he mentioned the pivotal role of social economy in terms of jobs creation, quality of both life and jobs and care of the environment. He concluded his intervention reminding the importance of shared intergenerational responsibility and the disruptive effects that giving responsibility for a more just future exclusively to youth would have.

Interactive session:

After the panel discussion, another interactive moment followed. Participants were invited to reply to the following questions:

- How can we ensure that no one is excluded from the labour, market and society due to the transition to a more sustainable economy?
- How can CSO contribute to a Social Green Deal?

The answers from participants were collected by the organisers and integrated in the final recommendations. A Q&A session followed.

In conclusion of the event, the participants voted for the three recommendations that they considered the most pressing among the list presented by the organisers. The most voted options were:

1. Put in place structured and meaningful stakeholder engagement in the Just Transition process and ensure strong **social and civil dialogue** at all its levels.
2. The European Green Deal should be accompanied by strengthened **social protection** systems in all countries.
3. Climate action should contribute more strongly to eradicate **poverty**, injustice and **gender inequality**.

The three selected recommendations, together with the reflections emerged from the different discussions, have been shared by Mikael Leyi during the closing session of Civil Society Days on 5 March.

