



European Economic and Social Committee
The President

Brussels, 6 September 2012, Brussels, Charlemagne's Building

European Commission's conference
'Jobs for Europe: The employment policy conference'

Staffan Nilsson's intervention in the Green Economy panel discussion

Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
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Check Against Delivery

Dear Mr Commissioner, dear Janez, Dear Mrs Evans-Klock, Dear Mr Combet.

Please allow me first to make a couple of observations regarding the Employment Package as such.

It is good that the Commission with the Employment Package puts the employment at top of the agenda and calls for a job-intensive recovery. I also would like to pay tribute to the capacity of our commissioners Andor, Potocnik, Dalli and Kroes to work hand in hand within the college, to make EU policies more efficient.



European Economic and Social Committee
The President

At the EESC, we believe that the prospects for employment growth depend on the EU's capacity to generate economic growth. Ambitious industrial and innovation policies should be set up. And they should be complemented with a job-rich recovery employment policy.

This also implies that many of the positive proposals in the Employment Package will amount to nothing, if the policy of cuts continues unabated in the EU. Employment policy measures cannot compensate for mismanagement of macroeconomic policy.

Here clearer words and recommendations to the Member States would be welcome. Moreover, many proposals need to be binding but they are not. And they lack the relevant financial funding.

The EESC has always advocated for **a new kind of growth** – a sustainable type of growth which achieves economic prosperity with less use of natural resources and which reduces economic and social inequality. The green economy has been one of the major topics of the **Rio+20** conference of the United Nations before the summer and the European Union and in particular you, Janez, have put a lot of effort into promoting this concept on the global scale. Let me re-use your words, dear commissioner. In Rio, you said: 'The challenges are global and so are the solutions, so we need to keep working with our international partners in the future'. We at the EESC, think that now the **European Union should walk the talk** and **put the green economy into practice**.

The challenges of the **transition to a resource efficient and low carbon green economy** are huge. But, they will certainly pay off economically and socially. Investing in energy saving and renewable energies reduces our dependency on fuel imports. It creates new fields of economic activity. Using waste as a resource in a circular economy helps to keep value chains and manufacturing processes in Europe.

Greening the economy can **help to overcome the current deep crisis of European economies**. But this requires that we take serious measures to **accelerate investment into the green economy**. The **European growth and employment package** should be used to boost the green economy. The EESC believes that we need a kind of new Marshall Plan to push for green growth. We have to find ways to make abundant private capital accessible for long-term investment into



European Economic and Social Committee
The President

green economy sectors. Member States have to set the right incentives by ecological tax reforms. Also, we need to overcome market fragmentation by creating a European Energy Community. I don't say it is easy to make reality, but it should become a common goal.

Already now, green economy activities contribute substantially to employment – and there is still a huge job creation potential to be used. Since all sectors are called upon to contribute a resource efficient and low carbon economy, it would be better to talk about **the greening of jobs than green jobs**.

This process must be accompanied by an intensive **social dialogue and active employment policy measures**. The implications of addressing the challenges posed by climate and environmental policies in terms of skills required are huge. The labour market will face big challenges posed by this changeover. At the same time, to find new jobs for those employed in obsolete sectors and **provide training in the new professional skills needed**. That is why social dialogue is essential in this process

Also important is the **quality of green jobs**: green jobs must provide decent work in terms of income, working conditions, social security, social rights and gender equality.

Let me conclude: greening the economy should be a key element of European initiatives to regain growth and employment security. Thus, the implementation of the European compact on growth and employment should focus on green economy. Active employment policy and social dialogue has to make sure that the green economy actually creates decent work.

Thank you for your attention.

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