

#COP24: EESC president Luca Jahier calls for new EU governance on climate action



Non-state and subnational actors have so far played a decisive role in action on climate, but they often face unsurmountable obstacles. At the COP 24 climate change conference in Katowice, Poland, on 2-14 December 2018, the president of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Luca Jahier, stressed how urgent it was to tackle climate change and underlined the fact that Europe needed to embrace a new mechanism for sustainability that included multi-stakeholder governance.

“When we look at where we are today,” said **Mr Jahier**, “seeing how strong the disconnect is between the absolute urgency to act now and the slow pace in which the governments are moving or even regressing in some cases, we understand how important it is for others to assume leadership and demonstrate the strong determination and huge potential from the bottom-up movement.” Sending a clear message at COP 24, the EESC president highlighted the absolute necessity of urgent climate action: “We either invest in concrete action against climate change or we will have to bear serious consequences. It will be too late to save our planet and our future generations. We need to involve civil society. We have to act now and we have to do it quickly!”

It is essential to embrace a new EU governance structure on climate action and sustainability by adopting a coordinated and multi-stakeholder approach. “Europe must be sustainable – or it will simply cease to be,” declared **Mr Jahier**, adding that only by combining efforts from local communities, non-governmental and civil society organisations, businesses, researchers and multi-level governments would it be possible to spur robust climate action and effect positive change and thus speed up both low-carbon development and sustainable development. “Climate action must become the new ‘business as usual’ and must involve all actors in the transformation,” **Mr Jahier** went on to note. “Nobody must be left behind. We cannot develop solutions without including the voices of those who are most impacted and vulnerable.”

The EESC delegation at COP 24 also included EESC vice-president for communication **Isabel Caño** and EESC members **Stefan Back**, **Rudy De Leeuw**, **Tellervo Kylä-Harakka-Ruonala**, **Cillian Lohan** and **Mindaugas Maciulevičius**. They discussed the vital contribution of bottom-up initiatives and how to fund climate action with representatives of civil society and other organisations from all over the world.

- **Permanent involvement of grass-roots organisations**

Local governments, business and civil society networks have played a central role in the shift towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy through

their bottom-up initiatives. They have made commitments in a number of areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They should therefore be continuously involved in climate change negotiations and in the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

These non-state and subnational actors face many difficulties when it comes to stepping up climate action. For this reason, the EESC has called for a [“European Dialogue on Non-State Climate Action”](#) to strengthen such climate action by European non-state organisations. Multi-stakeholder dialogue, policy instruments and toolkits, for instance through the [International Climate Governance Coalition \(ICGC\)](#), could help their climate action to take place worldwide.

• Funding a sustainable Europe

In order to guarantee the appropriate funding needed to achieve the transition to a zero-carbon economy and a sustainable Europe by 2050, we need to support projects that can unite Europe’s strengths in the interests of workers, businesses and all Europeans. The EESC has recently proposed a finance-climate pact for high-quality jobs. The aim is to redirect the money that could otherwise bring about a new financial bubble towards the fight against climate change and the real economy, providing a new roadmap and an integrated plan. In the words of **Mr De Leeuw**, author of the [EESC opinion](#): “40% of the EU budget should be devoted to the fight against climate change and its consequences from the environmental, economic and social perspective.”

It is important not only to provide financial support, but also to make existing financing mechanisms accessible for non-state climate actors. “We need to unlock more and better climate action by shifting the approach to climate finance access,” said **Mr Lohan**, who drafted the [EESC opinion](#) that will be put to the vote at this week’s plenary session. He went on to conclude: “It is crucial to develop and adapt financial mechanisms, provide access to information and knowledge sharing on sources of finance, adapt finance allocation criteria to the specific needs of local actors and, finally, propose a strategy for financing micro-projects.”

Background

For further information on the work carried out by the EESC on climate change, please consult our website: