

La transition énergétique est une opportunité exceptionnelle de placer la société civile au cœur du processus décisionnel de l'UE

The energy transition offers huge potential for cities and regions to pursue new, innovative, and effective policies at regional level. At the July plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Energy Union, stressed how important it was to link the EU's energy initiatives to regional policy and development and to strengthen cooperation between EU bodies and civil society.

In the EESC plenary debate on decentralised energy provision, regional economic development and sustainable transport, Mr Šefčovič emphasised the important role that EU regions and cities can play in the Energy Union initiative as a rich source of innovative solutions. "It is at the local level that plans and political commitments are turned into concrete projects. The Energy Union cannot be built here in Brussels, but in our cities and in our villages. It has to be a collective effort, where we come up with creative solutions."

A number of actions will be developed locally, from rolling out charging points for urban electric vehicles to constructing smart buildings, not to mention decentralised renewable energy production and energy cooperatives. All this, in turn, will help boost local growth and jobs.

EESC President Luca Jahier pointed out that civil society had an important role to play. "The involvement of the EESC in the EU energy and transport policies is an opportunity to ensure that citizens are put at the heart of the Energy Union initiative", he echoed.

"The first priority of the Energy Union", added Mr Šefčovič, "is security of supply. Once we make sure that in Europe we have enough energy, then we need to meet our climate obligations. Once our energy is greener, we need our companies to use it and our industry to remain competitive in Europe, promoting innovative ideas". The central idea of the Energy Union is not to look at energy in isolation from the rest of the economy. This is why, for the first time, the Commission has adopted a unifying approach to energy and climate, which includes all related policy fields and where one of those fields – transport – has become more and more central, especially in recent years. Sustainability is key: transport is responsible for almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions and, in comparison with other sectors, this share is growing.

Referring to the ongoing closures of coal mines across the EU, the issue of social justice for the energy poor and the need to modernise transport, Mr

Šefčovič highlighted the various actions that the Commission had so far carried out:

- providing support and technical assistance to former coal mining areas, through the creation of the **Platform for Coal Regions in Transition** (the EESC supported the initiative, organising several roundtables for discussion);
- setting up the **EU Energy Poverty Observatory**, which monitors and tackles the root causes of the energy poverty affecting approximately 50 million EU citizens (the EESC put forward the idea of creating such a body in 2013 and will shortly become a member of the consortium underpinning its work);
- structuring the recently adopted **3rd Mobility Package** around the three pillars of sustainability, safety and smart mobility (the EESC followed the developments closely and actively contributed to shaping the new policies, both at its own initiative and following referrals from other institutions). The **vice-president** stressed the strategic importance of the mobility package proposals and the need to act fast. Europe must implement innovations, and invest in new and clean technologies in order to offer better transport solutions, reduce air pollution and ensure a safer and healthier environment for its citizens, not to mention the economic dimension. Europe must become the leader in **battery technology** as an important basis for the energy and transport transition.

The commitment to the regional level and the cross-cutting approach to energy from the economic, social and environmental perspective is, however, not enough. Legislative measures need to be matched by cooperation among stakeholders across all sectors and borders, because, **Mr Šefčovič** concluded, “our goal is to make sure that no region – no citizen – is left behind”.

Mr Jahier outlined the work of the EESC on the matter, in particular the two opinions adopted at this plenary session, highlighting the often positive regional economic effects of the energy transition and the need to link energy and cohesion policies more systematically (opinion [TEN/660](#) on the effects of the energy transition on regional economies, rapporteur **Lutz Ribbe**).

On the role of transport, the **EESC president** underlined the need for a new and more integrated approach that considered the economic, social and environmental aspects and was geared towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs (opinion [TEN/661](#) on the role of transport in realising the UN sustainable development goals, rapporteur **Tellervo Kylä-Harakka-Ruonala**).

Some EESC members voiced their concerns on social and political aspects of the Energy Union. **Mr Šefčovič** reaffirmed the Commission’s commitment to future action aimed at removing the current barriers preventing people from active and full participation as “prosumers” in the energy transition and at building trust in green energy investors.

Mr Jahier concluded by emphasising the vision of the EESC and its role in ensuring that everybody’s voice was heard: “The EESC tries to make sure that

by bringing together the expertise of organised civil society from across Europe no one is left behind in the modernisation of Europe's economy, neither in terms of environment, jobs, opportunities to create economic value nor as a consumer".

Background – EESC opinions:

- [TEN/657](#) – Third report on the State of the Energy Union
 - [TEN/643](#) – Clean, competitive and connected mobility for all
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Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos following the Informal Justice and Home Affairs Council in Innsbruck

Dear all,

First of all, allow me to express my thanks to Minister Herbert Kickl for hosting this Council and the excellent way he steered it. I'm also more than happy that Minister Seehofer is joining us for this press conference.

To be frank with you, when I arrived in Innsbruck this morning I was optimistic but the results are better than expected. I said before that I'm sure some were disappointed, but the majority of European citizens are happy with the outcome of this very important meeting. This morning, we had an important open, frank, constructive and political exchange on migration following the European Council.

I will be brief and direct with you.

First of all, the essence of our discussions this morning built on the conclusions of our Leaders' discussion two weeks ago. We can only continue to proceed with a common European approach on this matter. There has been a lot of reporting and statements made on this topic over the past weeks, you all know that, but I want to be clear once again: we are no longer in a migration crisis.

If you look at the figures: we have gone from 1.8 million irregular crossings in 2015 to 200,000 last year and even less this year. Clearly, this shows that what we have been doing over the past three years, under very difficult circumstances both inside the EU and in our neighbourhood, has delivered results.

We must now build on that progress, structurally and sustainably.

There are three areas where we will do more to:

Firstly, to better protect our external borders;

Secondly, working with our partners outside the EU – including by improving our search and rescue coordination;

And internally, to ensure that we will have a modernised European asylum and return system.

All these elements go hand in hand.

Concerning our external borders: we will soon propose to enhance the capacities and the mandate of the European Border and Coast Guard to protect our external borders. We will propose a genuine European Border Police and set up a standing corps of 10,000 European Border guards by 2020 already. This will notably allow the Agency to boost its support to all Member States at all times.

In the meantime, I have called on ministers to address existing gaps in human and technical resources.

On search, rescue and disembarkation: there has been a lot of speculation on this in the press lately. I want to be crystal clear: we are not outsourcing any of our responsibilities; and any future plans will fully respect the Geneva Convention and EU and international standards. What we want is to reduce dangerous journeys and that lives are lost.

For those of you hungry for a *deus ex machina* today: I have to disappoint you. We are still discussing and exploring the concept of regional disembarkation platforms, together with the International Organisation for Migration and the UNHCR.

Nothing will be imposed in Europe or outside. Let me say it again: our neighbours are our partners. We are confronted with the same challenges. We have to support each other and work together to our mutual benefit.

Similarly, within the EU, we discussed how Member States can ensure that when migrants disembark;

- they do not abscond,
- they are quickly screened and,
- they are quickly channelled towards the asylum or return procedures,
- or they are voluntarily transferred to other EU Member States.

The solidarity component will also be essential to this approach and this I have made clear to ministers today.

For this to work, the EU is ready to provide the necessary financial support. The EU Agencies – European Border and Coast Guards, the Asylum Agency and Europol, will provide the human and technical support.

It is exactly in this spirit and with these objectives in mind that we work on the concept of controlled centres.

That brings me to the third point: return and asylum. The return of those having no right to stay in the EU must be significantly stepped up. I intend to propose some important improvements to our return rules to increase the coherence and effectiveness of our policy in this area.

In particular we need to streamline the return procedure at the border. I will also propose to give the European Border and Coast Guard an even stronger mandate to carry out returns.

But all of the elements that I mentioned will be worthless if we don't have a well-functioning common European asylum system. That is why I have once again called on the ministers this morning to proceed with agreeing and adopting the five files of the reform of the Common European Asylum System which are close to finalisation.

A speedy solution must also be found on the two remaining files, the Dublin regulation and the asylum procedure regulation. This will also allow us to curb secondary movements within the EU. The next six months will be crucial for us to make progress on these files and I count on the Austrian Presidency to make progress. At the same time we have to continue to be operational.

I look forward to cooperating closely as we have already started doing with Minister Kickl and the Austrian government over the next six months. In this very beautiful town between the mountains and that lies between to 2 other important Member States – I am pleased that unity, solidarity and common sense have prevailed.

Thank you.

Indicative programme – Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 13 July 2018

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ESMA updates Q&A on EMIR data reporting

The amendments to the existing General Q&A 1 on identification of counterparties to a derivative confirm that a portfolio manager could be a counterparty to a derivative when entering into a derivative on its own account and own behalf.

The amendments to the existing TR Q&A 40 on Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) amendments simplify the description of the existing process. The amendments also explain other processes TRs should follow in different scenarios where the reports must be updated in relation to the LEI.

A new case for reporting derivatives has also been added to the Part IV of the Q&A which explains the procedure for reporting to TRs in a transaction scenario involving portfolio management

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