



THE NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT: A JUST TRANSITION

Summary of debate

Wednesday 28th September

The Foundation for European Progressive Studies and Change Partnership, have outlined the practical steps needed to undertake and manage the transition to ensure it is fair, dignified, inclusive and meaningful. This document offers an insight into some of the main issues discussed at the debate and publication launch in Brussels.



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Main messages from the discussion:

1. **The Paris Agreement now provides a global framework for the first time, for all countries that they will transform to low-carbon societies.**
2. **There is a real need to plan and organise a Transition and to ensure it is Just.**
3. **The European Union can be pivotal in providing the necessary framework, finance and a positive message and one of hope, not fear in this process.**
4. **Various financial policies exist which would help distribute the effects of the Transition to decarbonisation.**



Going into more detail on some of the issues discussed one of the main things highlighted by all the discussants from the beginning was the need to organise the Transition. In this sense clarity and orientation is key to achieving this effectively.

On finance and investment it was agreed that more is required than is currently on the table if we are to reach our climate targets. However we shouldn't be complacent as there is already significant sums of money going towards this. The next upcoming issues on this though will be

the Multi-annual financial framework (the MFF). Commissioner Šefčovič mentioned that 20% of the MFF goes toward climate change but recognised that this should be revised at the next upcoming negotiation phase at the end of this year if we want to achieve the agreed 2030 targets.

Regarding skills and jobs the speakers gave many different tangible policy offers. Upcoming EU policy proposals and current ones were discussed on this issue. This was rather positive as the speakers see many opportunities that can come of a move to transform our society. Energy efficiency in particular is developing into an interesting sector in Europe but also in other energy sectors already there are many new jobs being created. Training and education are important but it's useful also to point out that many existing skills can be used in new areas. Where some fear the loss of jobs disappearing this might not necessarily be the issue. However in some cases it will not be enough, new social measures will be undoubtedly required to help support some people.

Whilst discussing challenges to the Transition and obstructions to such economic and social policies that would have an impact on this it was markedly clear that many in the room believed the national governments to be the main force holding back sustainable development. Some felt it was the

Member States in Europe that are lowering the ambitions. **If national governments would realise the benefits more of leading a Just Transition**, with good planning and organisation, this barrier would no longer exist. Consequently the role of social partners is very important in securing a Just Transition. Social dialogue is very valuable and will help bring about a sense of inclusiveness, participation and ownership of such a transformation.

Regional and local level governments were signalled out to be a great driver in climate policy, often the ones that implement directives and they have a good local knowledge that proves vital in assessing the regions needs.

Looking towards the **progressive movements** it was felt during the discussions from both speakers



and the audience that more momentum is needed. If Paris really is going to be a game changer then the way in which we think about climate change and react to it is highly significant. Not only because the regions going through Transition are those progressive heartlands and where many sections of the movement established themselves but also because a new social contract with a just transition in mind would re-adapt the progressive movements to a narrative many adhere to already, the notion of solidarity being the reason to fight climate change. It's about the people not about the economy or the resources.

The FEPS and Change Partnership **report was presented** by Sanjeev Kumar who outlined the political context and the lessons we can learn from the three case studies featured in the research. The pamphlet offers viable policy solutions about how a new social contract, a Just Transition can look like. The discussions today really analysed the key issues and implementation frameworks to achieve this.

Keynote address:

Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President in charge of Energy Union at the European Commission

Discussants:

Benjamin Denis, Advisor at ETUC

Sanjeev Kumar, Founder and Director of Change Partnership NGO

Kathleen Van Brempt, MEP and Vice-President of the S&D Group

Christophe Rouillon, Committee of the Regions

Moderation: **Charlotte Billingham**, Executive Adviser at FEPS

Thank you to all the speakers and the participants who brought valuable input into this debate.