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Commission

Platform for Coal Regions in Transition

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Energy

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Monday 15 July

5th Working Group meeting - Plenary I

The first plenary of this meeting was opened by Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, Deputy Director General of the European Commission Directorate General for Energy, together with Nicola de Michelis, Director at Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, setting the tone for the two-day event: to ensure a clean and just transition, all stakeholders must be involved. Mr Borchardt updated participants on the launch of the platform's Technical Assistance to Regions in Transition (START) initiative, which will assist regions in preparing, developing and implementing transition-related activities, while Mr de Michelis urged participants to engage in the next round of the structural funds as soon as possible.

Mr Borchardt introduced the Platform's new members: the group of mayors of coal-producing Jiu Valley, Romania, the Irish Midlands Region, reliant on the peat industry, and Estonia, heavily reliant on oil shale. With these additions, the Platform is now bringing together seven country teams and is directly engaged with 18 European coal regions. Rallying such a high number of regions is an achievement, taking into consideration that the Platform was launched less than two years ago.

Progress made in the EU coal regions

Speakers

- Tomasz Dąbrowski – Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Energy of Poland
- Ladislav Šimko – Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investment and Informatisation, Slovakia
- Denisa Žiláková – General Director for Central Coordination Body, Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatisation, Slovakia

This panel started with a presentation by Tomasz Dąbrowski on recent progress made in the three biggest coal regions in Poland. There, a wide variety of stakeholders have been involved in projects aiming to achieve the right balance between social and economic impacts. Those projects fall under four main categories: (i) restructuring of mining regions and development of entrepreneurship and investment areas of liquidated mines; (ii) support of the process of employee retraining and job creation; (iii) R&D in clean coal technologies; and (iv) implementation of new *green* technologies. Regarding finance, MR Dąbrowski emphasised that funding from national and regional programmes often needs to be complemented by funding from EU and private sources. Such funding should also help cover the significant costs that will result from the replacement of jobs in the coal mining regions.

Denisa Žiláková presented the Action Plan for the transition of the Upper Nitra coal mining region, which has recently been approved by the Slovakian government. The Action Plan was developed with assistance from the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) and through a strong participative process with national, regional and local stakeholders. The plan has four pillars: (i) mobility and connectivity; (ii) economy, business and innovation; (iii) sustainable development; and (iv) quality of life and social infrastructure. A total of 180 projects has been collected and possible funding sources have been identified. Ms Žiláková also emphasised the importance of establishing well-functioning infrastructure if the activities included in the Action Plan are to be scaled up.

Workers in the clean energy transition

Speakers

- Claudia Brânduș – President, Romanian Wind Energy Association
- Sebastian Enache – Member of the Management Board, Romanian Wind Energy Association
- Alicja Messerszmidt - Chairwoman, Trade Union of the Brown Coal Mine, Konin, Poland

This part of the plenary presented examples on measures to create a just transition from a social perspective. Speakers highlighted that the energy transition should not have winners and losers, but create equal opportunities for everyone affected by it. They mentioned the willingness both from workers –of all ages- in changing their sectors and from companies in hiring them.

Claudia Brânduș and Sebastian Enache reflected on the situation of the workers in the Romanian transition and presented their project on Renewable Energy & Electricity Distribution School of Skills (RWEA). They explained that the coal regions of Romania have a high number of skilled people that can easily be utilised in other industries such as the wind sector. Their project aims to train 500 industry experts and 300 distribution experts per year and ensure that all workers trained will be hired. To reach this goal, the project will create an international database of workers to reach potential employers across Europe. A pilot project will be launched in October 2019.

Alicja Messerszmidt explained the key elements for a just transition in the case of the Polish city of Konin. Energy and mining sector workers are highly specialised in their field, thus they require significant retraining for finding new employment and cannot reconvert overnight. She urged the Commission to create a legal framework for supporting the reconversion of those workers, which should include protection systems such as financial support and pension schemes.

Transition stories - Lessons learned

Speakers

- Robert Pollock – Secretariat of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition – *Moderator*.
- Limburg experience: Frank Zwerts – Director, Locate Limburg
- UK experience: Phil Asquith – The Lucas Plan.

Discussion

This session introduced the audience to two stories of past transitions in regions. While not all regions have to deal with coal industries, lessons can be learned from various regions that have an inspiring transition story to share.

Phil Asquith, who was employee of now-extinct Lucas Aerospace, a manufacturer of components for the arms industry, shared a unique story of trade union mobilisation and preparation of a reconversion plan in the UK in 1976. The “Lucas Plan”, prepared by the workers, sought to address the need for industrial transition away from volatile defence contracts in the aerospace sector towards the production of socially useful products. Although ultimately unsuccessful, a close study of the story behind the Lucas Plan might yield useful lessons for tackling the multiple challenges that coal regions face today.

Frank Zwerts shared the success story of the reconversion of Limburg, Belgium, from the regional authorities’ perspective. Mr Zwerts explained the approach adopted in the region that enabled its transition to a successful and modern economy. One of the keys for a successful transition - applicable in Limburg as much as elsewhere – is to rely on the strengths that are endogenous to the region and make people stay. External support and investments will then become secondary. To this end, the region needs to identify a niche, which can be very small. Once all the regional players are aligned, the region can specialise to become a world leader in the niche.

International initiatives and perspectives

Speakers

- Laura Martín Murillo - Advisor on Just Transition to the Minister for Ecological Transition, Spain
- Martin Brechter - Policy Adviser, Strategic Partnerships for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPIPA)
- Michael Stanley – Global Lead Extractives, Energy & Extractives - World Bank
- Matthew Webb – Head, Powering Past Coal Alliance
- Gianpiero Nacci – Deputy Head of Energy Efficiency and Climate Change, EBRD
- Kieran Kearney – Regional Development Division, EIB

Discussion

The panel had an in-depth look at international initiatives that are relevant in terms of good practices on transitions, accelerating the transition processes, and can support other less advanced regions. This session explored potential synergies and opportunities with initiatives such as the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) and the Strategic Partnerships for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPIPA).

Michael Stanley encouraged the creation of other platforms around the world that are inspired by the European model, for exchanges between them, and also for an international platform on coal and carbon-intensive regions. He mentioned that there are current discussions on setting up a dedicated platform for Ukraine and the Western Balkans.

After Mr Stanley's presentation, the panel discussed the role of the financial sector in driving transitions, agreeing that it should to be more involved in the EU Platform for Coal Regions. While Bloomberg Philanthropies offered support in bringing private finance to the discussion, EIB and EBRD showed willingness for further involvement and support for energy transition projects. They stressed the necessity of an integrated approach through a participative process linking the private, public sectors, local communities and enterprises.

The last part of the panel included a presentation by Laura Martín on the development of the UN Climate Action Summit, with focus on the 'Social and Political Drivers' track co-led by Spain and Peru, and another presentation by Michael Stanley on the IEA [report Market Report Series: Coal 2018](#).

Success stories: how to bring new investments to reconversion areas

Chair

- Gergana Miladinova - Team Leader for Sustainable, Growth, DG REGIO

Panel participants

- Phil Asquith – The Lucas Plan, United Kingdom
- Frank Zwerts – Director, Locate Limburg, Belgium
- Jan Bondaruk – Deputy Director for Environmental Engineering, Central Mining Institute (GIG), Poland

Discussion

This breakout session was a follow-up to the presentations of transition stories in the plenary session, diving deeper into their respective cases –from the United Kingdom, Belgium and Poland- and the main reasons for success (or failure).

Phil Asquith shared a brief presentation on the Lucas Plan (see 'Transition stories – lessons learned'). For Mr Asquith, the main challenge was aligning the different parties due to conflicting views within the government and the labour unions. He recommended preparing the strategy a few years in advance to generate political support at the local and regional levels.

Frank Zwerts presented the keys to successful transition in Limburg, Belgium (see 'Transition stories – lessons learned'). That experience shows that two elements are essential for successful economic development: (1) nurturing local entrepreneurship and (2) internationalisation that "inspires", "fills gaps" and "speeds up". It is also key to involve and manage all socio-economic actors so that the views align. Furthermore, taking advantages of the geo-location (i.e., infrastructure and universities) and focusing on sizeable niche related to sectors with potential in the region help to draw the successful strategy for the region.

The final presentation, by Jan Bondaruk, focus on the recent renewal of Katowice, a city at the very heart of the Polish coal mining industry that has now become a centre of urban regeneration and economic growth. Although there is no overall policy agreement emerging in Poland yet, the transition process "from black to green" is well ongoing.

Conclusions

Several take-away recommendations for successful transition processes emerged from the discussion:

- Do not wait too long, start planning early. Taking ownership of the processes and engaging other stakeholders is key.
- Involve and empower all actors, and seek support the national level.
- Be patient and persistent. Progress is not easily achievable, but things will move forwards eventually.
- Industrial wastelands should be looked as an asset for economic development.
- Learn from lessons on transitions in other regions. Those lessons can be drawn from positive and negative experiences.
- Make use of all available tools and channels, such as the assistance provided by the European Commission.

The chair invited all Platform participants to share potentially useful practices and inspiring transition stories with the Secretariat of the Platform.

Clean energy potential in coal regions: industry dialogue

Moderator: Ewa Krukowska - Reporter, Bloomberg LP.

Speakers

- José Moya – European Commission Joint Research Centre
- Pierre Tardieu – Chief Policy Officer, WindEurope
- Walburga Hemetsberger – CEO, Solar Power Europe
- Gilda Amorosi – Sustainability Adviser, Eurelectric
- Anna Chmielewska – Senior Banker Energy, EBRD Poland Office
- Emmanouil Kakaras – Vice President, Mitsubishi Hitachi Power System Europe

Discussion

This session explored the case for various renewable energy sources (wind, solar, geothermal, etc.) in the EU coal regions, based on preliminary findings of a JRC study on clean energy potential in coal regions, which is a continuation of a previous study by them, [EU coal regions: opportunities and challenges ahead](#). Besides this discussion, Emmanouil Kakaras outlined the role of hydrogen and carbon capture in the decarbonisation process.

The discussion with the industry highlighted the importance of having a robust, stable and predictable regulatory framework. It also focused on how a clean energy package translates into legislation of Member States, delivers jobs and incorporates sustainable finance. Another issue discussed was the forthcoming gas package, which participants consider that it should have a shared taxonomy with renewable energy policies.

While agreeing on case-by-case approaches by investors, policy-makers and project developers, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, there was an overall agreement on the fact that renewable energy, coupled with economic activities, is the preferable approach. In that line, [Eurelectric's Decarbonisation pathways study](#) outlines that a low cost, carbon-neutral power sector must be supported by change of political, technological and market conditions.

Key elements for creating momentum for just transitions are the formulation of financial incentives for renewable energy, availability of low-cost electricity combined with the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive II and an obligation to adopt a long-term strategy. The European Commission must ensure that the clean energy package is translated smoothly, properly and quickly in the national law.

According to the JRC study, close cooperation between companies, regulators, investors, land-use planners and local communities is essential to identify the most sustainable uses and maximise social and economic development.

Technical assistance opportunities

Moderator: Carlo della Libera, Secretariat of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition

Speakers

- Ariane de Dominicis, Policy Officer, Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS), European Commission
- Šarūnas Bruzgė, Environmental Economist, Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS)/ European Investment Bank
- Philipp Horn, EIB AS-JASPERS, Head of the Energy & Solid Waste Division
- Robert Pollock, Secretariat of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition
- Paul Baker, Secretariat of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition

Discussion

This session presented European initiatives that can provide support for coal regions in developing their transition strategies and identifying and advancing successful projects. The first presentation was made by Ariane De Dominicis, who explained how the SRSS can support collaboration projects between coal regions, the development of regional strategies, and capacity building initiatives. She reminded participants of the availability of such support through national coordinating authorities on an annual basis. The SRSS is currently providing support services to the coal regions of Horna Nitra (Slovakia) and Western Macedonia (Greece).

Afterwards, Šarūnas Bruzgė and Philipp Horn (both from JASPERS) explained that JASPERS' assistance to coal regions mainly relates to recommendations on project eligibility and enhancements, and advice on available technical assistance and funding sources. They are currently supporting projects in Polish, Czech and Slovakian coal regions. As the conceptual planning and design phases have a high influence on project costs and quality, Phillip Horn urged interested beneficiaries to involve JASPERS and other initiatives as early as possible. They also emphasised that tailor-made approaches and close collaboration with national authorities are key to the technical assistance provided by JASPERS.

In addition to existing initiatives, Paul Baker and Robert Pollock, both from the EU Coal Platform Secretariat, presented the recently launched Secretariat Technical Assistance to Regions in Transition (START), which will deliver tailor-made support to six regions from the end of 2019 until 2021. However, for regions that are not selected, the Secretariat will seek to propose alternative pathways for assistance. Being complementary to existing opportunities, START is not intended for funding the core of projects but rather for strategy development, governance and planning, project identification and project development. Areas covered include sustainable spatial development, energy systems and technologies, environmental issues, employment, social cohesion, heritage and connectivity. The experiences gained through START will contribute to understanding the needs of technical assistance within other coal regions. The call for applications for START is still open until 20 September 2019, while a second call is not yet under preparation.

Conclusions

To ensure the success of technical assistance to coal regions, it is crucial to develop tailor-made solutions that build on good communication between project partners to establish an understanding of the specific socio-economic contexts and project needs. The assistance should furthermore draw on lessons learned from other coal regions.

International initiatives supporting coal transition

Moderator: Klaus Dieter-Borchardt – Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Energy, European Commission

Speakers:

- Matthew Webb – Head, Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA)
- Faltan Slye – Director of the System Operator, National Grid
- James Rydge – Policy Fellow, London School of Economics (LSE)
- Samantha Smith – Director, Just Transition Centre, International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Michael Stanley – Sector Lead, Oil / Gas / Mining, World Bank

Discussion

This panel presented an overview of actions taken outside of Europe and at a global level to support just transition activities in areas such as energy sector transition, social dialogue, sustainable financing, technical assistance and knowledge sharing. Another purpose was to explore linkages with those initiatives, as well as to try to define the concept of just transition.

Matthew Webb informed that the PPCA published their Finance Principles, which clarifies the role of financial institutions in the energy transition and provide with investment pathways. He announced that the PPCA and the World Bank will provide technical assistance to developing countries that are deciding to transition away from coal and accelerate the uptake of cleaner sources of energy. Afterwards, James Rydge presented the work of LSE on just transition, sharing insights from their 2018 document "[Climate change and the just transition: A guide for investor action](#)", which aims to set the scene on JT for investors, raising awareness amongst them, and from the [Investing in a Just Transition project](#), which started in February 2018 and is running for three years.

Though several institutions already have defined the concept of just transition, Samantha Smith pleaded for the use of ILO's definition. She also suggested including the ILO in the Platform engagement due to their relationship with labour unions and governments having difficulties with just transition.

A main issue raised during the discussion was the way to obtain private financing for projects. In this regard, the PPCA proposed to raise awareness among the private investors' community and set up communication channels to ensure the discussion. The expertise of Bloomberg Philanthropy, the European Investment Bank and the World Bank would be essential in this task. As a closing point, the World Bank raised the idea of setting up a platform for coal regions at the global level.

Interregional network: a way to bring different partners into discussion and action

Moderators

- Dimitrios Mavromatidis – Regional Development Fund of Western Macedonia, Greece
- Birgit Urban – Desk Officer, Representation of the State of Brandenburg (Germany) to the EU
- Robert Pollock – Secretariat of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition
- Paul Baker – Secretariat of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition

Keynote speaker

- Laura Buzatu – DeCarb project - Supporting the green energy transition of the EU's coal-producing regions

Discussion

This session was a continuation of the interregional dialogue conducted at the 4th Working Group of the Platform in April, where representatives from regions shared their points of view. Birgit Urban and Dimitrios Mavromatidis, acting as chairs for the session, reiterated that cooperation among regions is at the core of the Platform.

They mentioned that once the participating regions gain a good understanding of each other's regional contexts and situations, they can develop a common understanding and then engage in project cooperation. Supported by the Platform's secretariat, the interregional network will give regions a space for exchanging on shared challenges and opportunities.

First, the regional representatives exchanged on transition strategies. While some have developed dedicated and stand-alone transition strategies, either at regional or at national level, several regions rely on strategies that are embedded into other policy documents. The modes of developing strategies for transition vary widely, with some countries following more bottom-up or more top-down approaches.

Participants then discussed some of the challenges encountered in the development of transition strategies. Some coal regions stretch over several administrative regions, or even across national borders. As a result, it is necessary to develop a coherent strategy that covers whole mining areas with interregional approaches in mind, requiring good cooperation between regions, but it risks creating obstacles in implementation processes. At the same time, effective interregional cooperation requires previous "intra-regional" collaboration. Furthermore, the lack of deadlines agreed on the national or regional levels can create an additional challenge for the development of strategies at regional level.

The regional representatives exchanged on funding opportunities for the transition, which vary widely between countries and regions. Participants agreed that EU funds, and in particular the European Regional Development Fund, play a key role. However, there are few possibilities for funding the strategy development and the facilitation of stakeholder engagement processes. The chairs remarked that the critical period for defining future funding opportunities is happening now, as the negotiations for the upcoming period of the EU multi-annual financial framework (MFF) are ongoing.

Finally, Laura Buzatu, from the South West Oltenia Regional Development Agency, presented insights from the Interreg Europe DeCarb project "Supporting the green energy transition of the EU's coal-producing regions".

Conclusions

In line with the objective of the interregional network, the regions recognised the importance to understand their respective situations and regional contexts. The Platform Secretariat will help to facilitate this effort by collecting data from regions and preparing comparable regional profiles. To this end, the Secretariat has developed a template for creating a short and comparable profile for each region.

Actions

- The regions of the interregional network are invited to provide feedback on the regional profile template prepared by the Secretariat.
 - Each region should designate a contact person that will be responsible for filling in the template and liaising with the Secretariat.
 - The Secretariat will work with one or two regions to fill in an example sheet, which can then serve as a reference to the other regions.
 - Session participants are invited to share with the Secretariat proposals for topics they would like to raise at the interregional discussion to be held at the 6th Working Group meeting in October.
-

Participatory workshop on transition experiences in coal regions: finding a basis for better targeted exchanges between coal region

Moderators

- Andrzej Błachowicz – Secretariat of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition
- Dorit Lehr – Climate-KIC Re-Industrialise project

Speakers

- Matteo Mura – Associate Professor, University of Bologna

Discussion

This workshop focused on the challenge for transferring good practices from one region to another, due to either differences in policy framework or varying characteristics between coal regions. To overcome those obstacles, the University of Bologna developed a dedicated tool as part of the Re-Industrialise project, presented in this meeting. This tool identifies coal regions with similar regional features, enabling the creation of clusters. The tool maps and categorises the regions based on a combination of data: intensity of CO₂ emissions, drawing EU Emissions Trading System databases, and socio-economic data, such as GDP, population, digital development, education and wealth. Users can compare multiple regions based on a set of characteristics at different levels (NUTS 1-3). The tool can support the delivery of the technical assistance in the selected regions.

Actions

The finalised tool will be published shortly and will be accessible through the [Re-Industrialise project webpage](#). A test version is currently [accessible here](#).

Tuesday 16 July

Transition Strategy I: the cases of Slovakia and Greece

Moderator

- Andreas Von Busch – Head of Unit, DG REGIO

Speakers

- Ondrej Seban – Manager, PWC Slovakia
- Ivo Dolezal – Partner, PWC Slovakia
- Michael Stanley – Global Lead Extractives, Energy & Extractives - World Bank
- Chrysanthos Steiakakis – World Bank

Discussion

Ondrej Seban presented insights from the development of the transition strategy and accompanying action plan for the region of Upper Nitra, Slovakia, where PWC delivered a technical assistance project under SRSS funding in support of the strategy development between 2018 and 2019. The action plan was officially adopted last July by the Slovak government, and overall, the project was well received by the local stakeholders and all involved parties. This is the first example in Slovakia of a large-scale participatory approach for a regional development project, and as such, participants showed interest in details about the involvement of local communities in the strategy development process.

Chrysanthos Steiakakis introduced the participants to a technical assistance project run by the World Bank in the coal-mining region of Western Macedonia, Greece, and funded by the SRSS. Launched in February 2019, and set to last until February 2021, the project covers different transition-related issues, with one of its primary objectives being the repurposing of mining lands and assets. Session participants discussed the role of public energy and coal mining companies in the transition process, the importance of spatial planning for repurposing, and other questions.

Coal mine closure companies/authorities and their role in transition: insights and lessons

Moderator: Jan Bondaruk, Deputy Director for Environmental Engineering, Polish Mining Institute

Speakers

- Claudia Neculau – Associate Manager, Head of the Development Commercial Department, Spaque, Wallonia, Belgium.
- Vít Kopecký – Project Manager, Palivový kombinát Ústí, Czechia.
- Michal Herman – Chairman of the Board and Managing Director OKD, Czechia.
- Janusz Gałkowski – CEO, SRK, Poland.
- Petre Dragoescu – SNIMVJ, Romania.
- Tomasz Rogala – Chairman of the Board, Polish Mining Group, Poland.
- Mihai Danciu – Planeta Petrila Association, Romania.
- Jakub Chełstowski – Marshal of Silesia Voivodeship, Poland.

Discussion

This session aimed at exchanging experience in dealing with coalmine closures and revitalisation, with representatives from companies and authorities responsible for managing those processes, with additional focus on identifying barriers and knowledge gaps for effective transformation of European coal regions. It counted on presentations of cases from regions in Belgium, Czechia, Poland and Romania, which must consider restoration and revitalisation processes to ensure their future prosperity.

The panel discussed the role of governments in developing long-term policies beyond their mandates and in adopting post-closure policies, such as rehabilitation plans, to enable regional dynamism. Revitalisation can be spearheaded by new projects and synergies across regions, and approaches implemented for smart cities and smart villages can provide inspiration for the regions in transition. However, objectives and actions of the coalmine closure companies and urban regeneration promoters can diverge significantly sometimes. Two challenges are the strategy for removing legal barriers on land rehabilitation and the inclusion of mine operators and their technical tools to prepare a rehabilitation plan. Thus, it is important to have dialogue to solve these conflicts.

The Wallonia region adopted an innovative approach to manage rehabilitation. Private-Public-People partnerships, combined with historical analysis of the site, allowed organising the rehabilitation work better, to assess the costs, and build a comprehensive approach.

Points of agreement were that regions in transition should focus on clean energy, the management of water resources and the fight against climate change. The panel explained that the transition in regions is not always successful for everyone, and some projects do not work. Therefore, it is recommended to set up a team to support the transition and have regular dialogue with locals.

The EC published a report in May 2019 entitled: "[Recovery of critical and other raw materials from mining waste and landfills - state of play on existing practices](#)".

Country Teams' X-Change (Coal regions hangout)

Moderator: Carsten Rothballer, ICLEI Europe

Speakers

- Pavlína Kaletová – Ministry of Regional Development of Czech Republic
- Wojciech Kaluza – Vice-Marshal of Silesia Voivodeship, Poland
- Martin Klika – Ústí Region, Czech Republic

Discussion

The Country Teams' X-Change provided an opportunity for country teams and other stakeholders to exchange on best practices, experiences and failures in their domestic work. While Polish representatives presented an example of stakeholder engagement, while the Czech country team then shared their experience with multi-level governance process.

Following the opening presentations, participants discussed the following questions:

- How to ensure both short-term buy-in and long-term commitment to transition action plans?
- How to facilitate a stakeholder dialogue and engage civil society organisations and trade unions?
- How to approach negotiations for phase-out dates? How to ensure a just transition that gives adequate consideration to environmental issues?

Other topics were: the role and involvement of investors in the transition; the involvement of mining companies in the process; the necessity of coordination at national level; the respect for affected communities; the need for a shared vision; trust among all stakeholders; and more.

Conclusions

The different contexts and approaches shared show the many creative ways of achieving transition, without a one-size-fits-all solution. Significant work is ahead and close collaboration is required to make the just transition a success, keeping a mind a people-centred approach.

Financing for projects in coal regions: development banks, EU funds and regional grants

Discussion

Moderator: Kai Stryczynski – Deputy Head of Unit, DG REGIO

Speakers

- Sumeet Manchanda – Principal Manager, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change, EBRD.
- Russel Bishop – Principal Economist, EBRD.
- Michael Stanley – Global Lead Extractives, Energy & Extractives - World Bank.
- Roman Doubrava – Deputy Head of Unit, DG CLIMA.
- Katja Müller – Wirtschaftsregion Lausitz GmbH “Zukunftswerkstatt Lausitz”, Germany
- Tina Sølvsberg – Senior Sector Officer for Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy, EEA / Norway Grants.

This session featured key funders and regional initiatives, discussing financing and funding opportunities at different levels and scales. They presented their different initiatives and invited the project developers and public authorities in the coal regions to further discuss their projects with them. The European Commission introduced the [Innovation Fund](#) - whose first call will be launched in 2020 - and the [Modernisation Fund](#).

Conclusions

The discussion highlighted –throughout the session- the need for an integrated approach to ensure coherence between projects and supporting infrastructures, and for further integration of the financial sector in the design of transition policies. For instance, development of regional roadmaps for transition are essential for financial institutions, as they shows the commitment of regions and usually introduces pilot projects.

The panel agreed that the funding of the various projects should also aim to reduce inequalities in Europe. Similarly, it was explained that mobilising the civil society in the transition process could influence the economy of the region positively during the transition period.

Transition Strategies II: Guidance

Moderator and speaker: Philipp Schepelmann, – Secretariat of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition, Wuppertal Institut

Presentation

The Secretariat is developing a guide on the different steps for the development of transition strategies, to support the implementation of the EU Coal Platform Secretariat Technical Assistance to Regions in Transition (START). This guide will follow the policy cycle methodology, which outlines seven steps:

- a) Agenda setting
- b) Definition of objectives
- c) Identification of measures
- d) Selection and decision on activities
- e) Implementation
- f) Monitoring
- g) Evaluation.

A key consideration for developing a transition strategy is the choice of a top-down or a bottom-up approach: most of the strategies that are currently being developed follow a government driven top-down approach. The more stakeholders involved at an early stage of the strategy development, the higher the buy-in will be, which in turn will be crucial for its success. During the elaboration of the strategies, there are more efforts made on the beginning of the policy cycle -from the agenda setting until the implementation- than in later staged, on monitoring and evaluation.

Discussion

Participants asked the Secretariat to develop a common set of indicators across region for comparability and transparency, while the Secretariat discussed the possibility of supporting regions' efforts by collecting and lessons learnt and good practices. When delivering the technical assistance, the Secretariat could help authorities to compare different governance approaches and to identify the most suitable approach.

The first steps of the strategy development are to create a vision and a theory of change, and then call for support, select criteria and measurable targets to reach. Typical challenges relate to ownership/leadership, the set of clear objectives and transparency. Sponsorship can be critical to the success of a strategy: there is a need for a support coming from trusted and well-known organisations and people. Another key element to achieve acceptance and ownership of the strategy is to set up working groups with local stakeholders, increasing participatory process by public hearings and involvement of stakeholders as early as possible.

Workshop on National Energy and Climate Plans and Long-term Strategy

Moderator: Clément Serre - Policy Officer, DG ENER

Speakers

- Andreas Zucker – Policy Analyst, DG ENER
- Joanna Flisowska – Senior Coal Policy Coordinator, CAN Europe
- Victor Marcos Morell – Ministry for the Ecological Transition, Spain
- Thomas Pickartz, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany
- Laura Buzatu - Legal advisor, South West Oltenia Regional Development Agency, Romania

Discussion

DG ENER provided an overview of the EU long-term strategy on climate for achieving carbon climate neutrality by 2050, using eight pathways. Upon presentation, it was concluded that the strategy does not envisage a role for coal for 2050. Apart from transforming the energy system, achieving the strategy's goal requires actions across broader areas such as trade, research and innovation, taxation, local policymaking and social aspects. To manage the challenges phased by the sector, relevant policies, training, pilot projects and the Platform must play a central role.

Joanna Flisowska presented the *Just Transition or Just Talk?* report by CAN Europe, which analyses the draft National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) of Member States using coal for electricity generation. The report illustrates that whilst countries such as Slovakia, Germany and Spain either envision significant drops or complete abandonment of coal by 2030, the majority of countries do not foresee a decrease in their coal capacity. Flisowska stressed the importance of reflecting the transition in the NECPs, as timely planning will result in numerous benefits including investor certainty, predictability for the coal utilities to plan for closure, targeted public funding and time for implementing proactive measures supporting affected communities. Proactive planning by Member States can moreover ensure that the 2021-2027 EU MFF contains significant funding for catalysing the transition.

Víctor Marcos Morell presented the objectives and expected impacts of Spain's draft NECP, which is accompanied by a Just Transition Strategy to ensure nobody is left behind. In the context of the coal transition, Spain's NECP will help anticipate effects on employment, define most urgent actions, provide a timeline for power-plants' phase-out, estimate new jobs and point to key sectors for employment. The Just Transition Strategy aims to optimise the results of the transition on economic activity and employment while reducing any negative results.

Thomas Pickartz presented the developments in Germany, where transition from coal is a controversial and sensitive issue. In 2018, Germany established a Commission consisting of all relevant stakeholders on growth, structural change and employment. Its final recommendations will be incorporated in Germany's final NECP and include: the replacement of coal with renewable energy sources, a phase-out of coal by 2038, the support of combined heat and power, a switch from coal to gas and the establishment of a strategic reserve as a back-up to ensure energy security.

Laura Buzatu presented the INTERREG Europe programme, DeCarb, which aims to support the clean energy transition of coal-intensive EU regions. Bringing together nine partners from nine countries, it supports public authorities in cooperation and knowledge transfer in order to identify growth strategies that mitigate the impacts of decarbonisation, make the most of EU funds and financing tools, as well as to promote public dialogue on

conflicting interests. Through such measures, DeCarb aims to ensure that regions meet their CO₂ emission targets while limiting the negative impact on economic and social stability.

Conclusions

To ensure ambitious funding will be available for coal transitions in regions, Member States should clearly outline in their NECPs the timeline and the process for developing and implementing concrete just transition plans that include funding needs. Additionally, EU support to regions should be conditional on credible and ambitious energy transitions commitments by the Member States.

Plenary session II

Chairs

- Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, Deputy Director General, DG ENER;
- Hervé Martin, Head of Unit, DG RTD

Six mayors from the Jiu Valley in Romania signed a memorandum of understanding on transition during the Working Group meeting. The memorandum signifies a collective promise to work together on a gradual, efficient and participatory transition from a coal industry economy to a diversified and sustainable economic model. The Commission, with the support of the Secretariat for the Platform facilitated the drafting of the memorandum. Mr Borchardt stressed that the memorandum shows the importance of cooperation and of following a bottom-up approach, encouraging other regions to get inspired by this example.

Presentation on current practice case studies

The Platform's Secretariat is developing a number of case studies that demonstrate current practices in the transition process to inspire practitioners in all coal regions. Several current practice examples are already available on the Platform's webpage, with more to follow in the coming months. Each current practice case study includes a general description, challenges, enabling conditions, achievements, key learning points.

Upcoming meetings

The 6th Working Group meeting will take place in October 2019 in Brussels and the 2nd annual dialogue will take place on 25-26 November 2019 in Görlitz (Germany) where a series of sessions and discussions will be followed by study visits in the Regions of Saxony and Brandenburg.

Platform communication

Please follow the Platform's activities:

- Webpages ([accessible here](#))
- Newsletter ([sign up here](#))
- DG Energy Twitter: [@Energy4Europe](#)
- Hashtag #CoalRegionsEU

Additional resources

Further resources relating to the 5th Working Group of the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition can be found on the Platform's webpages:

- [Agenda](#)
- [Presentations](#)
- [Webstreams](#) of all sessions
- [Photo album](#)
- [Newsletter August](#)
- [Article](#) "*The energy transition doesn't stop at the border. Europe has to work together*".
- [Video interviews](#)

Authors

Edited by Luc Fischer and Adrián Lauer, based on the notes of rapporteurs Amélie Girard, Jenny Kurwan, Kata Gyori, Ida Tange and Luc Fischer.

This report is not exhaustive.

The presenters were not consulted on the content of this report.

