

Day 2 **Wednesday, 28th October 2020**

Part 1 **Online Spotlight Session (Participants may attend one spotlight from Session C)**

09.00 (GMT) **Session C: Levers to Drive a Just Transition**

1. Just Transition, Vulnerability, and Policy Responses

Lead Council: Dr Cathal FitzGerald, Institutional Research Analyst, NESC

General Aim of the Session: Redirecting Europe's economy, society and environment in a sustainable direction will require comprehensive transformation. This transition provides large opportunities, but also comes with significant social and economic challenges for affected communities. Therefore, a just transition in Europe necessitates relentless action by policy-makers to maximise quality alternatives and opportunities for those workers, firms, and sectors who are vulnerable. Research by NESC, 'Addressing Employment Vulnerability as Part of a Just Transition in Ireland', examines this issue in depth. The aim of this session will be to explore the vulnerability associated with low carbon transition with a focus on practical advice for policy-makers in how to respond. Specifically, the emphasis will be on how to ensure continuous, pre-emptive workforce development, the building of resilient enterprises, and the delivery of high-impact targeted funding to support transition.

Chair: Dr Damian Thomas, Senior Policy Analyst, NESC

Contributors:

- Prof John Tomaney, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, The Bartlett School of Planning, University College London
- Ms Rowena Dwyer, Manager of Policy, Planning & Government Relations, Enterprise Ireland
- Dr Cathal FitzGerald, Institutional Research Analyst, NESC

2. Advising on a Just Transition

Lead Council: Prof Anna Davies, Irish Climate Change Advisory Council

General Aim of the session: This session will examine how advisory organisations are approaching a just transition in their advice on climate change. Early action on a just transition can minimize the negative impacts and maximize positive opportunities. The Paris Agreement on climate change includes just transition as an important principle. Just transition is not a fixed set of rules, but a vision and a process based on dialogue and an agenda shared by workers, industry and governments that need to be negotiated and implemented in their geographical, political, cultural and social contexts.

This session will examine:

- How advisory bodies on climate change are approaching and integrating just transition principles in their policy advice
- Any lessons learned about advising on a Just Transition
- The challenges of balancing this with the necessity of climate action.

Chair: Prof Anna Davies, Member of the Irish Climate Change Advisory Council.

Contributors:

- Ulla Blatt Bendtsen, Team Lead International Affairs, Klimarådet
- Mike Hemsley, Team Lead Carbon Budgets, UK Committee on Climate Change

3. A Just Water Transition

Lead Council: Wim Van Gils, SAR Minaraad, Flanders in conjunction with CADS, Catalonia

Across Europe, climate change is having a major impact on the water cycle, varying from region to region and from sector to sector. Without adequate management of these impacts on water, the most vulnerable will be impacted the most. To this end, the implementation of water policies (such as the Water Framework Directive) and adaptation measures are pivotal, however costly. Nevertheless, a successful implementation of the WFD will lead to fairer and effective adaptation policies and therefore is worth the investment. In this session, options for Member States to ensure a just water transition will be explored, against the background of the Green Deal and the EU's recovery policy.

Chair: Jan Verheeke, Secretary of the Minaraad (Environment and Nature Council of Flanders).

Contributors:

- Nihat Zal, Project Manager of Water Resources, European Environmental Agency
- Stephanie Lyons, Policy Analyst, OECD

10.30 (GMT) **Break**

1. Sustainable and Resilient Regions

Lead Council: Dr Jeanne Moore, Social Policy Analyst, NESCC

General Aim of the session: This session will explore some of the key issues in regional development within a just transition framework. What policies and measures are effective in supporting regions to be sustainable and resilient utilising a just transition approach? What institutions and supports structures are required at a national, regional and local level? A key Irish case study is the Midlands, part of the EU's Platform for Coal Regions in Transition. The aim of this session will be to draw out lessons of work underway in the Midlands for the development of sustainable and resilient regions.

Chair: Prof Sinead O'Flanagan, Member of the National Economic and Social Council

Contributors:

- Kieran Mulvey, Ireland's Just Transition Commissioner
- Brendan O'Loughlin/Roisin Lennon, Chief Executive Officer/Rural Development Team Leader, Local Development Company
- Seamus Boland, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Rural Link
- Dr Rudiger Ahrend, Head of Economic Analysis, Statistics and Multi-level Governance, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE)

2. State-citizen Interplay for Achieving a Just Transition: Lessons from the Netherlands

Lead Council: Dr Luc Boot, Senior Advisor, Dutch Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli)

General Aim of the Session: The Netherlands strives to achieve a just transition towards a sustainable society. What role do citizens and citizens' initiatives play in achieving this objective and how does this impact the interplay between government – social partners (employers/employees) – civil society organizations and individuals / groups of citizens. What lessons can be learnt from the Dutch experience? Issues that will be discussed include: balancing individual interests with collective solutions; dealing with different value orientations in society; leadership vs autonomy and the role of deliberative democracy; confronting scientific knowledge with emotions and practical experience; prejudice and polarisation as obstacles for sustainability.

Chair: Dr Luc Boot, Senior Advisor, Dutch Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli)

Contributors:

- Annemieke Nijhof, on behalf of Dutch Council for the Environment and Infrastructure
- Ayolt de Groot/Menno Ottens, Head of Unit (Policy Analysis)/Policy Officer, Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy
- Dr Tamara Metze, Associate Professor in the Public Administration and Policy Group, Wageningen University and Research
- Eva van Genuchten, Board Member of the Youth Climate Movement

3. Finance for a Just Transition

Lead Councils: Federal Council for Sustainable Development of Belgium (FRDO-CFDD) and German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE). Dr Nathalie Boucquey and Dr Hannah Janetschek

General Aim of the Session: To assure that no one is left behind in the green transition, the Just Transition Mechanism of the EU Green Deal will provide financial support to help workers and regions most affected by the transition. The developments of the "do no significant harm principle" (DNSH) in the EU Sustainable Finance Strategy are of a major importance for Just Transition as well. Under this principle, for example, "green" financing is reserved to enterprises that comply with social safeguards. Just transition should reflect a balance of the environmental and the social dimensions of sustainable development. Today this is a controversial issue. Imbalance risks are identified in the use of the Just Transition Fund and of the Taxonomy for green financial products. We will consider those risks and discuss how policymakers could address them. In particular we will focus on two instruments to implement the DNSH principle: a possible social taxonomy, and due diligence to protect the environment and to safeguard social rights.

Chairs: Dr Nathalie Boucquey and Dr Hannah Janetschek

Contributors:

- Rebekka Popp, Researcher, E3G (Berlin)
- Prof Robert McCorquodale, Professor of International Law and Human Rights, University of Nottingham