



**European Economic and Social Committee  
Sustainable Development Observatory**

**Submission on the Roadmap for Global Climate Action**

This submission of the European Economic and Social Committee's (EESC) Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO) is based on the Opinion *Building a coalition of civil society and subnational authorities to deliver commitments of the Paris Agreement*, adopted by the EESC on 14 July 2016. It answers to questions number 1, 2 and 4. As the Opinion did not make any reference to the issue of tracking of non-Party stakeholder initiatives nor to the technical expert meetings (TEMs), this submission does not answer to questions 3 and 5.

**Question 1: The current situation:**

The sense of urgency that led to the Paris Agreement and sustained the work on work stream 2 (pre-2020 ambition) throughout the whole of 2015 must be sustained. The high-level champions need to make sure that we do “more, faster and now” on enhanced pre-2020 action. Pre-2020 action is a key element for the implementation and success of the Paris Agreement, equally for adaptation, mitigation and means of implementation. Notably, there is a need to quick-start implementation with a sense of urgency and ambition; create an interface with the real world and solutions, particularly the involvement of non-Party stakeholders; and maintain the political momentum.

***Is this general presentation an accurate description of the current state of play? If not, what can we do more?***

**EESC SDO's answer**

The EESC welcomes the decisions of COP 21 in Paris and considers them to be an important milestone in effectively fighting against climate change. While we acknowledge the progress made in terms of transparency and cooperation, we underline that civil society's real role in climate policy has not yet been fully recognised. We strongly agree on the need to quick-start implementation urgently and with the sense of ambition. We would like to stress however, that the commitments of the Paris Agreement will be brought to life by civil society and other non-state actors and not necessarily by those who negotiated the terms.

The EESC points to the fact that civil society actors currently face significant obstacles when they wish to initiate and implement measures to counteract climate change. This is mainly due to the fact that the political sector is unaware of how much potential civil society action has in terms of protecting the

climate. There has hitherto been too little political interest in what climate strategies civil society actors are planning, what they need, and what support they require. Regulatory guidelines can even sometimes systematically prevent civil society climate action.

As EESC operates in the European context, we believe that European and national policies should provide a framework for civil society action that is very open and as broad as possible. We need a new multi-level government approach. The EESC suggests the creation of an ambitious coalition of civil society actors, local and regional authorities, and the responsible political and administrative structures at national and European level. The Champions' support for such regional initiatives would be highly valuable.

**Question 2: The role of the high-level champions:**

As champions of global climate action, we believe that we need to be an interface between action on the ground and the UNFCCC negotiation process, between non-Party stakeholders and Parties. We intend to track implementation of existing initiatives to demonstrate credibility, promote best practices and enhance delivery. We will also support new initiatives focusing on adaptation, with a view to broadening the country coverage and including more initiatives coming from developing country Parties and non-Party stakeholders.

***Is this an accurate description of the role the high-level climate champions should play with regard to the mobilization of non-state actors? Is there anything else they should do, or are there things mentioned here that they should not do?***

**EESC SDO's answer**

The EESC has identified several obstacles to bottom-up climate action by civil society and other non-state actors. It should be the task of the Parties to work towards alleviating these obstacles, namely by:

- Deepening the understanding of what climate action civil society actors in various roles are planning and want to carry out;
- Identifying and removing structural problems and hurdles that constitute obstacles to successful implementation;
- Promoting and broadly communicating the "success stories";
- Assisting the replication of initiatives and best practices by specifying key conditions and factors for success that "sponsors" of new initiatives could learn from;
- Helping to design right regional policy frameworks enabling civil society actors to plan and implement strategies to combat climate change and thus contributing to well-functioning multi-level governance.

The high-level champions have a role to play in working together with the Parties to encourage them to alleviate the above barriers and obstacles.

### **Question 3: Transparency and tracking**

We need to help non-Party stakeholders achieve the recognition they seek. At the same time, we owe it to the integrity of the UNFCCC process to make sure that these initiatives and coalitions achieve the targets they set for themselves; that these targets are truly consistent with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement; and that the participants in initiatives and coalitions are actually doing what it takes to achieve the commitments they made. Therefore we intend to work on improving transparency of action and tracking of implementation to demonstrate the credibility of their work.

***How do we assess the initiatives? What would be the ideal set of criteria? Who would assess them? What should be the role of the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA)?***

### **Question 4: High-level event**

The high-level climate champions will facilitate, through strengthened high-level engagement in the period 2016–2020, the successful execution of existing efforts and the scaling-up and introduction of new or strengthened voluntary efforts, initiatives and coalitions. The high-level event at the Conference of the Parties (COP) is now the main annual showcase of climate action.

***What do Parties and non-Party stakeholders expect from the high-level event at COP 22?***

***To have a real impact at COP 24 in 2018, the Climate Action Summit showcasing the results of non-state actor initiatives would need to take place sufficiently in advance. Should it be organized in the summer of 2018?***

### **EESC SDO's answer**

The Independent Assessment Report of the LPAA prepared by Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions (GGCA) in December 2015<sup>1</sup> found that the LPAA demonstrates the high potential of climate initiatives and that it has intentionally selected initiatives for their large-scale and potentially transformative impact. However, there is an abundance of small scale, local community-led initiatives, whose role and potential for replication and scaling should not be underestimated. The EESC underlined that the "civil society is extremely varied. This variety must be taken seriously; this diversity must be understood as an opportunity and used as such".

While it is clear that the high-level events at COP 22 and at following COPs should focus on demonstrating the effectiveness and results of the successful initiatives, the EESC believes there should be a space dedicated to the smaller scale, innovative, community-led initiatives (including actions by

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<sup>1</sup> Lima-Paris Action Agenda Independent Assessment Report, December 7, 2015, <http://www.climategroundswell.org/blog-test/lpaa/report>.

citizens, cooperatives, SMEs and local organisations) to demonstrate the variety and the potential of civil society contribution to the Global Climate Action Agenda. The main strength of smaller scale initiatives is that they manage to maintain the engagement of its participants at high level throughout the project.

The EESC is also supporting the organisation of the Climate Chance Summit<sup>2</sup> taking place on 26-28 September in Nantes, France, where 18 multi-stakeholder coalitions will present their roadmaps and action plans. The EESC is co-piloting one of these coalitions on Multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance. The high-level event at COP 22 should also reflect the progress made by these coalitions.

#### **Question 5: The role of the TEMS**

We intend to use the tools created by Parties for the enhancement of climate action prior to 2020, such as the technical expert meetings (TEMs). These meetings have a whole new role to play in the dynamic and should be more concrete, focused, and connected to initiatives of the action agenda.

***Do you share the belief that the format of the TEMs should evolve in the light of the Global Climate Action Agenda? How could we ensure that the TEMs are more solution-oriented?***

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.climatechance2016.com/en/>