

## Report Thematic Session 4: Europe and the clean energy transition

Speaker: **Adalbert Jahnz** (SG)

Moderator: **Daphne Robberechts** (DG EAC)

Rapporteur: **Jakub Kollár**

The moderator, miss Daphne Robberechts, introduced the speaker for this thematic session, Mister Adalbert Jahnz. Adalbert Jahnz, formerly risk management analyst at JPMorgan and management consultant at iMPower Consulting Ltd moved to the European Commission in 2010 to work as asylum and refugee policy officer at DG HOME. Currently, he is working in the Secretariat General of the Commission as EU energy policy officer.

The presentation opened with an introductory question, namely, what is clean the energy transition? Since the 90's, in which the world started to talk about emissions, global warming and the harm caused by them, we have succeeded in lowering greenhouse gas emissions by 25%. However, the GDP within the EU was increased by 50%, which counters the general misconception that the green economy costs too much. Although clean energy transition requires more investments, it is already resulting in innovation and in the end boosts growth drives investment and creates new job.

This topic of clean energy is not an issue to be solved by the private sector. It presents grand challenge for public administration and needs to be addressed at an international level. The best possible way to solve it, would be focusing the governmental actions and regulations on missions. Clean energy transition is a very complex problem requiring collaboration of many sectors, including proper research and innovation. Thus, on the EU-wide regulation level, it is way more than just DG Energy being involved. DG's FISMA, ENVI and CLIMA play an important role as well. A lot of Horizon 2020 money is being spent on the cause. Last but not least, the European Commission's Investment Plan for Europe (also known as the Juncker Plan) planned to spend almost 300 billion investments for the EU, of which most will go to energy investments.

We seem to meet emission targets specified for 2020. However, regarding those for 2030, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40%, are hard to predict now as the rate of new technology development is unknown. Nevertheless, it seems that investing in energy and renewables create more jobs than using fossil fuels.

The speaker then talked about the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference and subsequent agreement. In order to negotiate this agreement, it took the states of the world 20 years. The reason behind this, are the international climate politics which could be shortly described as: You first! All the countries were afraid to make the first move towards climate protection because they were afraid of the investment that was needed for that.

However, only by talking about investments in economy, we cannot expect simple adjustments of the economy. The intervention will be huge and will require a transformation of the whole the economy we are used to. It will certainly require a lot of painful choices everybody will have to go through.

The last but not least important thing, in order to achieve the mission, it is necessary to keep the international momentum, not just Europe trying to reduce its quotas. Henceforth, international cooperation is of great importance.

### Open debate

The presentation was followed by an extremely lively debate moderated by Daphne Robberechts.

The first issue raised from the audience regarding the decrease of emissions from Europe is outsourcing the production outside EU and thereby not reducing the emissions world-wide. Adalbert is positive and thinks that future leverage of technologies and more technological production is the most important advancement in order to decrease the emissions all over the world. The next action we should undertake for environmental protection in the EU is taking responsibility, not only for the emissions we produce, but also for those we consume. Other than controlling consumption of emissions, we don't have leverage on non-EU countries. However we collaborate with neighbouring countries of Europe and the ones close to them.

Another important topic the public was concerned with is whether there is a way forward in terms of environmental protection other than changing our way of life. Adalbert believes one way forward is higher energy efficiency, using more renewables and industrial processes with emissions that do not relate directly to energy. EU doesn't stay only talking and motivating people to invest in new technologies. It is directly supporting Strategic Energy Technologies in its SET plan. In order to coordinate all the processes to save emissions, regional funds and European social funds need to be properly coordinated.

Certain countries are going ahead of the general trend in Europe. Germany is leading an example in green economy transformation. We should and are learning from these countries and one important problem to be solved is the apprehension of people on losing jobs.

The last topic raised was related to EU usage and production of nuclear energy. Adalbert answered that EU nuclear policy is only about the safety and does not talk about energy. The precise decision are on member states themselves.