



European  
Commission



# Just Transition Platform Conference

25-27 April 2023

Event report

Regional and  
Urban Policy

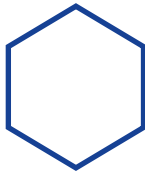
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## Contents

<b>About the event.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Session summaries: Tuesday 25 April .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Opening Session: JTF hands-on: roundtable discussion with Commissioner Ferreira and regional representatives .....	5
Opportunities for strategic industries in JTF regions .....	7
Just transition in times of energy crisis: how to guarantee energy security for all .....	9
<b>Session summaries: Wednesday 26 April .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Just transition implementation and monitoring – how to do it right? .....	11
JTP Working Groups: supporting the implementation of the TJTPs .....	13
International dimension of just transition and closing remarks .....	15
Side event: JTP – how can we help you on the ground? .....	17





## About the event

The seventh edition of the Just Transition Platform (JTP) Conference took place on 25-27 April 2023. Co-hosted by the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and the Directorate-General for Energy (DG ENER), the hybrid event brought together over 1 000 registered participants.

The Conference gathered stakeholders including national, local and regional authorities, economic and social partners, wider society, and representatives of the European Commission. Among them were Commissioners Elisa Ferreira, Kadri Simson and Thierry Breton.

This report provides a short summary of the Conference's sessions, which took place across Tuesday 25 April and Wednesday 26 April 2023. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive summary of every presentation and discussion that took place, but rather an overall summary of the main themes and conclusions. Please note, also, that the views documented in this report do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Commission.

Each session summary includes a link to watch back the recording of the respective session, for those that were unable to attend the event and wish to watch back the sessions at a later date.

The main conference was followed by a side event about JTP GROUNDWORK, which recently selected its first six technical assistance recipients, and the JTPeers exchange programme and database, which will soon launch a call for experts. These programmes will provide targeted, concrete support as regions proceed with implementation.

Following the recent publication of their common Implementation Plan (available on the JTP website), the JTP Working Groups on Steel, Cement, Chemicals and Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy then met in Brussels on 27 April. The Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition's District Heating Working Group also met alongside the conference.

As usual, on the third day of the JTP Conference, a Multi-Level Dialogue also took place, organised by the Committee of the Regions. This meeting gathered policy makers for a roundtable discussion.



Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms

# Session summaries: Tuesday 25 April

## Opening session: JTF hands-on: roundtable discussion with Commissioner Ferreira and regional representatives

Tuesday 25 April, 11:30-13:00

[▶ Session recording](#)

### Introduction

Opening the event, Commissioner Elisa Ferreira led a roundtable discussion on the implementation of the Just Transition Fund (JTF) with high-level regional representatives, focused on the ambitions included in the plans and the opportunities that the

Fund has unlocked in their regions. The session highlighted key projects that provide new economic opportunities for the territories affected by the transition, but also the challenges that the regions are facing in JTF implementation.

### Structure of the session

- **Moderator:** Sasha Twining
- **Keynote speaker:** Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms
- **Roundtable discussion with panellists:**
  - Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Governor and Head of County Administrative Board, Västerbotten, Sweden
  - Jeannette Baljeu, Regional Minister of Transition Harbour and Industry, Province of South Holland, The Netherlands
  - Patrik Pizinger, Mayor of Chodov, Council of the Karlovy Vary Region, Czechia
  - Hardi Murula, Just Transition regional coordinator, Association of Ida-Viru Local Authorities, Estonia

### Brief summary and conclusions

Commissioner Ferreira began by thanking stakeholders for their continued work on the transition. “I’m delighted to be with you again and see again the huge interest in the JTP and the exchanges it facilitates,” said Commissioner Ferreira. She noted that it is important to use the Conference as an opportunity to openly share successes and challenges, and to learn from each other as JTF implementation moves forward.

At the time of the previous JTP Conference in October 2022, negotiations on many Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTJs) were ongoing. Now, 67 TJTJs have been adopted, which support 93 specific territories. Until recently, six Member States had no coal phase out plans, but thanks to the Just Transition Mechanism and JTF, all Member States with approved TJTJs have committed to their coal phase-out date and concrete steps.

“This is a significant achievement we owe to not only the JTF but to your ambition. What a year this has been,” Ferreira said, adding that since October, the first calls have already launched through the Public Sector Loan Facility. As resources come

from the NextGenerationEU budget, JTF investments must be frontloaded.

“The TJTJs make clear the scale of the challenge but also set out ambitious commitments,” Ferreira added. “JTF support will be crucial in helping meet climate objectives, as we turn to delivery. This is why this Conference and the JTP are so important – we are fully engaged to work with you to build up a pipeline of projects. Ideas must be exchanged, discussed and tested – this is what these two days are all about.”

She added that while transition is a political choice, it is a necessary and inevitable process, calling for participation, creative ideas, enthusiasm and ambition from all partners, including youth, NGOs and trade unions. “You are rising to the challenge,” she said, citing the example of Estonia approving its first JTF project just one month after its programme’s adoption.

“You are not alone. We are committed to supporting you in this transformation,” Ferreira concluded, mentioning the upcoming technical assistance via JTP GROUNDWORK, the upcoming



JTPeers database and exchange programme, and the technical support instrument and traditional technical assistance from cohesion policy.

A panel discussion then focused on successes and challenges in regions. Skelleftea is a transforming industrial city with a population of 500 000. It needs 100 000 more for its transformation, including white and blue-collar workers. Unemployment rates are low, reskilling is possible and living and working conditions are good, but attracting vocational workers to relocate is a challenge. Its indigenous population – the largest in Europe – brings the additional challenge of historical land-use conflict, so climate goals must be balanced with the local environment. Ageing populations and ‘brain drain’ are a shared challenge for many regions, as Europe is expected to lose 35 million citizens of active-age population by 2050.

Rotterdam, meanwhile, is a large port and petrochemical industrial cluster, contributing 25 % of the Netherlands’ CO2 emissions. Reducing CO2 and making the cluster more circular affects direct and indirect workers in a densely populated province. It is likely to affect half a million people – a huge challenge in terms of human capital, especially when ports may no longer be attractive prospects for younger workers.

Ida-Viru is a region showing that transition is possible – in this case transitioning from mining and oil shale and moving to new industries. Even for projects that are “not complete game-changers” are gradually doing good things, bringing hope, attracting young people and creating jobs.

“We are very proud and pleased that the first JTF funding has gone to Neoperformance Materials, but we will need more investment and new industries,” said Mr Mirula, representing Ida-Viru. An additional challenge has come from the war in Ukraine, since over 80 % of the regional population speaks native Russian. This shows that the transition is not only economic, but also social and security-related dimensions.

Concluding the session, Commissioner Ferreira referred to the opportunity for Europe to use the transition to be a world-leader in the production of new industrial products and services, in industries such as green tourism, chemicals, metals and agriculture. She also noted the important gender dimension of transition, for example in coal regions where most mining jobs have traditionally been occupied by men. The Commissioner encouraged all stakeholder groups to engage in bottom-up processes, commenting that the change is building momentum.



Panelists in the opening session

# Opportunities for strategic industries in JTF regions

Tuesday 25 April, 14:30-16:00

▶ Session recording

## Introduction

The JTF will help the regions most affected by the transition, by reskilling their industrial workers and creating new jobs in futureproof sectors. Investments funded by the JTF will help build a new economic future for carbon-intensive regions and for coal regions, for instance in sectors such as green hydrogen and batteries. They will also support the transformation of energy-intensive industries (such as steel, cement or glass

production), to protect existing jobs and anchor their activities in EU regions. This session opened with a keynote speech by Commissioner Breton, followed by a panel discussion with stakeholders to discuss how investments in strategic industries can boost the competitiveness of EU regions, while contributing to a just climate transition.

## Structure of the session

- **Moderator:** Sasha Twining
- **Keynote speaker:** Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for Internal Market
- **Roundtable discussion with panellists:**
  - Thierry Breton
  - Constantine Karayannopoulos – Chief Executive Officer, Neo Performance Materials
  - Ajay Aggarwal – President of LIBERTY Steel Group Europe & Chairman of the Board
  - Giv Brantenberg – General Manager, Heidelberg Materials Northern Europe
  - Reinhilde Veugelers – Professor, KULeuven, Bruegel & PIIE
  - Ludovic Voet – Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation

## Brief summary and conclusions

The session was opened by Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry Breton, who delivered a keynote speech.

Describing the JTF as a “fantastic tool” to support the regions, Commissioner Breton referred to the need for a “reindustrialisation” of Europe, but in “the European way”, ensuring a just transition.

“I don’t need to explain to you how challenging the transition is – socially for workers, industry and entire communities,” he said. “I know how hard you are all working for new opportunities, to reinvent local economies, to invest heavily.”

Commissioner Breton spoke of Europe as a “laboratory, factory and engine”, with small and medium-sized enterprises at its heart. He emphasised the responsibilities of large companies and the importance of social dialogue, stakeholder involvement and monitoring in the transition process.

Representatives of business, unions and academia then shared their respective experiences. Providing an academic perspective, Ms Veugelers referred to the need to avoid seeing the JTF only as a pot of money, and to retain a broader

perspective. New green, transformative, mission-oriented industrial innovation is needed, with multiple actors involved. A portfolio of projects is important, including the right emerging technologies and connections within industries. Ideas must come from stakeholders.

Representing the union perspective, Mr Voet said that workers want to live on a healthy planet, but also want jobs. Skills are important, but they must be the right skills for jobs. Change must be anticipated – the key questions being how to retrain workers and ensure that change happens with workers, including strategic planning and social dialogue so that they are not left behind.

Mr Aggarwal shared a voice from the steel industry. Liberty Steel Group employs around 7 000 people at its factory in Romania and has an ambitious plan to decarbonise by 2030. The key is to upskill and reenergise the workforce, using its training programme, and to attract young people back into the industry. Its message to young people is that steel now includes jobs such as running solar power plants or working on green hydrogen.





Heidelberg Materials aims to reduce its footprint by 50 % by 2030, while reducing risk, future-proofing industry, and creating jobs. Carbon capture and storage is one of its main levers, with multiple ambitious carbon capture initiatives underway.

In Estonia, Neo Performance Materials became the first JTF project following the adoption of the TJTPs. It focuses on high-performance magnets for high-efficiency motors for electric vehicles. Costs for the company to develop this part of the business alone would have been extremely expensive, but the JTF funds were a key factor in allowing the company to pursue this. The company expects to create 1 000 jobs in Estonia in next two to five years, adding to an already high-skilled

workforce, which historically focused on shale processing and other carbon-intensive industry. Its vision is now to create an ecosystem with synergies, complementarities and a common vision.

Commissioner Breton praised the examples, emphasising the importance of continuing to prioritise jobs while pursuing future opportunities, to ensure no-one is left behind. “It means governance, talking together, involving everyone in this transition,” he said. “The European Commission is here to support you 100 %.”



Panelists in the session on Strategic Industries



# Just transition in times of energy crisis: how to guarantee energy security for all

Tuesday 25 April, 16:30–18.00

▶ Session recording

## Introduction

Throughout 2022, Member States' commitments regarding decarbonisation and coal phase-out have been challenged as the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine has drastically reduced flows of natural gas to Europe, thus endangering continued security of energy supply. The resulting energy crisis requires decision-makers to rethink energy security, while continuing to pursue fossil fuel phase out plans.

In this session, stakeholders discussed the energy crisis and the 'dilemma' of energy transition vs energy security, and whether this 'dilemma can be seen as an opportunity. Regions presented their short-term solutions to overcome dependencies on Russian oil and gas, outlined their REPowerEU plans, and explained how the EU can stay on track with its climate objectives.

## Structure of the session

- **Moderator and keynote speaker:** Paula Pinho, Director, European Commission
- **Presenter:** Chris Rosslowe, Senior Energy Data & Climate Analyst, Ember
- **Panel discussion:**
  - Rebekka Popp, Policy Advisor, E3G – Third Generation Environmentalism
  - Maciej Sytek, Plenipotentiary of the Management Board of the Wielkopolska Province for Restructuring Eastern Wielkopolska and President of the Regional Development Agency S.A. in Konin
  - Alexandra Landsberg, Head of Department, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Industry, Climate Action and Energy of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia
  - Julio Castro Gonzales, Managing Director, Iberdrola Energia Sostenible España

## Brief summary and conclusions

In her introductory words, Ms Pinho noted that the war in Ukraine is significantly affecting energy security and supply. Since the crisis, EU gas imports from Russia have gone down from around 50 % to below 10 % thanks to common efforts. This came at a cost, but provided the opportunity for the EU to demonstrate a strong common action to overcome challenges together. Despite the reactivation of some coal power plants as emergency and temporary solutions, the commitment to energy transition and coal phase-out in the EU remains unchanged and coal phase-out is well on track. The perceived 'dilemma' of energy transition vs energy security has thus proven to be less founded than initially feared.

On the Commission's side, rapid efforts were made to diversify energy sources during the crisis. With REPowerEU's support, efforts were made to promote energy saving, production of green energy, and diversification of energy supply. The support

of coal regions such as Wielkopolska was crucial to ensure energy security in times of crisis. North Rhine-Westphalia, meanwhile, moved towards phasing out coal eight years earlier than the national target date. However, the transition could also entail socioeconomic difficulties and energy price increases.

Mr Rosslow then presented Ember's annual European review, which showed a number of interesting and positive findings for the energy landscape. This demonstrated that despite difficulties, there was no structural coal comeback in 2022, even during the winter months. Temporary increases resulted from shortfalls in nuclear power – largely due to reduced output in France and Germany – and hydro power, due to drought. However, a growth in wind and solar power prevented overall increases in fossil fuel power, 2022 proving to be a record-breaking year for solar. Reduced demand also limited



the role played by coal and gas during the winter. Regarding future perspectives, Ember forecasts a decrease of fossil generation by 20 % in 2023.

This presentation was followed by a panel discussion. Ms Landsberg explained the reasoning for her region bringing forward its coal phase-out date in times of energy crisis. The idea to phase out earlier needs to be planned for a long time, but it is beneficial to the people and the economy of the region, and to the climate.

Mr Castro Gonzales noted that Iberdrola's mission has been to invest in renewables, but nowadays it is also focusing on decarbonisation. This comes from a vision for growth, making use of interconnections in the European market.

Ms Popp noted that just transition and energy security go hand in hand, as fossil fuel prices increase, and that renewable sources are, in any case, cheaper. She confirmed that the EU is continuing to head towards coal phase-out and pointed out that governments should take the opportunity of the JTF to prepare coal regions properly for this reality.

Ending the session, Ms Pinho concluded that there is in fact no such dilemma, insofar as it is possible to reconcile both energy transition and energy security. The European Commission remains committed to achieving a fair and just energy transition, while safeguarding security. This is to be discussed further at the [Annual Political Dialogue](#) taking place in Karlovy Vary in June 2023.



Panelists in the session on just transition in times of energy crisis

# Session summaries: Wednesday 26 April

## Just transition implementation and monitoring – how to do it right?

Wednesday 26 April, 9:30–11:00

▶ Session recording

### Introduction

A transition can only be just and successful if it is inclusive and leaves no one behind, which requires inclusion of people who are affected. Regions are adopting various models to govern the participatory and inclusive process of implementing and monitoring of the just transition, and where applicable, TJTPs, such as regional just transition observatories, stakeholder fora,

or dedicated working groups within the monitoring committee in the regions covered by the JTF, etc. This session launched a discussion on good practices examples from Member States on setting up inclusive and effective governance models for just transition implementation and monitoring.

### Structure of the session

- **Moderator:** Nicola De Michelis, Director, European Commission
- **Roundtable discussion with panellists:**
  - Lefteris Topaloglou – Associate Professor, University of Western Macedonia
  - Eva-Maria Wutte-Kirchgatterer – Head of EU Cooperation, Carinthian Economic Promotion Fund
  - Jesus Crespo – Coordinador Materias Primas, CCOO Industria
  - Luisa Marchionni – Innovation Consultant – Project Manager, Startup Europe Regions Network (representing EU Teens4Green initiative)

### Brief summary and conclusions

Mr De Michelis began by emphasising the importance of involving stakeholders to ensure the JTF delivers on its goals: “This is why we are so attentive to ensure conversation with partners on the ground happens,” he said.

Mr Topaloglou, whose university played a key role in developing its region’s TJTP, said “we are all interested in launching an open and critical discussion and bringing to the table the challenges of monitoring, implementation and governance”. Referring to the quadruple helix of policy, academia, business and society in decision-making, he spoke of the need for new governance practices, including a place-based approach as well as spatial, social and environmental justice.

He presented the SITRANS project, which promotes place-based governance and tailored transformation policies in coal

phase-out areas, by using multilevel dialogue and including vulnerable groups. Monitoring is based on indicators linked to the TJTPs and geospatial data, while interaction is achieved via surveys, conferences, workshops, awareness-raising, reporting, storytelling, and knowledge-sharing.

The Carinthian region of Austria faces challenges due to its heterogeneous infrastructure, with carbon-intensive industry spread across different sectors. Awareness of just transition in the small and medium-sized enterprises sector is important, particularly amid population decline and cross-region commuting. The Carinthian Economic Promotion Fund is involved in developing a regional innovation ecosystem as part of REACT-EU, involving scientific support, green and transformative incubation activities, awareness raising with regional stakeholders, and research and development and demonstration projects with businesses.





CCOO Industria aims to analyse, anticipate change, and propose decisions that work for workers. While it cannot oblige workers to accept changes, the aim is to sit discuss them together, with fluid social dialogue. When mines and plants close, it is not an overnight process. New investors must be found to find new solutions, including training and reskilling for affected people and companies.

EUTeens4Green is a flagship project of the European Year of Youth, launched in 2022. It enables youth to participate in Cohesion Policy decision-making by taking ownership of projects. Based on EUR 10 000 grants, youth become empowered just transition ambassadors for their communities. The experimental project will provide policy recommendations to the Commission on youth participation in decision-making. From 197 proposals from 22 EU Member States, 75 12-month projects were selected. The selected youth will receive training, while facilitators will ensure local-level follow-up, including monitoring. A first cross-fertilisation meeting is taking place in May 2023 to facilitate dialogue.

The presentations were followed by questions and answers. Asked about practical examples of small and medium-sized enterprise projects, Ms Wutte-Kirchgatterer explained that her region is looking to do a specific call for research and development projects. A working group is in place to ensure

this happens in harmonic way, but the timeline is challenging. Relevant projects to date have covered topics such as recycling and hydrogen. Asked about youth, she said local university students have brought a different perspective to projects and studies.

Mr Crespo added that his organisation has to work with education to train youth as needs change; currently, vocational workers are needed, for example. Asked how to focus on long-term transformative processes rather than fast, project-based grants and spending, he emphasised the importance of now, but reiterated the need to think, reflect, and act fairly. It can take years to launch projects, so both short-term and long-term solutions are required.

Asked about teaching, Mr Topaloglou said students must be shown that there is a positive future for work in the region, in order to reverse brain-drain. Asked about the challenge of accelerating the transition, he explained that in Western Macedonia, it is difficult to ensure local people are owners of the process and all parts of society considered. This requires a new mindset, visionary, strategic leaders at both national and local level, an evidence base and collaboration channels between all actors. He also emphasised the importance of bottom-up rather than top-down approaches, echoing a theme from the opening session.



Panelists in the session on just transition implementation and monitoring

# JTP Working Groups: supporting the implementation of the TJTPs

Wednesday 26 April, 11:15–12.45

▶ Session recording

## Introduction

The four JTP Working Groups on carbon-intensive regions bring together stakeholders from across Europe with a common concern for the people and places affected by the transition to a climate-neutral economy. Members of the Cement, Chemicals, Steel and Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy Working Groups have been working over the past

months to identify actions and a corresponding plan for the implementation in response to the challenges outlined in their respective Scoping Papers. During this session, the audience were informed about the outcomes of the Implementation Plan and how the actions will be implemented in relevance for the whole JTP community.

## Structure of the session

- **Moderator:** Catherine Wendt, Head of Unit for Smart and Sustainable Growth and JTF of the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission
- **Presenter:** Elodie Salle, JTP Secretariat
- **Panellists:**
  - Mags Bird, Senior Policy Officer, WWF European Policy Office
  - Corinna Zierold, Senior Policy Advisor, industriAll Europe
  - Monika Banka, Policy and Network Coordinator, European Chemical Regions Network

## Brief summary and conclusions

Setting the tone for the session, Catherine Wendt of the European Commission began by speaking of the importance of partnerships and involvement of all actors in the implementation of the TJTPs.

The four JTP Working Groups, set up in 2021, bring together actors from all regions and stakeholder groups, including local and regional authorities, civil society, social partners, economic partners, and academia. Members act as ambassadors for the just transition in their regions, taking forward the actions to support JTF implementation.

Ms Wendt congratulated Working Group members on the finalisation of their common Implementation Plan, which was recently published on the JTP website, and encouraged stakeholders present at the conference to take ownership of their recommendations.

Elodie Salle, representing the JTP Secretariat, then presented the Implementation Plan on behalf of the Working Groups. The plan is made up of 17 actions, with planned outputs ranging from toolkits and guides to good practices and recommendations. Examples of actions include a methodology to involve vulnerable groups and an assessment of stakeholder involvement in TJTP implementation.

As a common plan, it will be implemented jointly between the four Working Groups and aims to foster synergies with other initiatives and projects. It supports the main goal of the Working Groups to provide concrete solutions and support to stakeholders implementing the TJTPs.

Several Working Group members then presented selected actions in more detail. One cross-cutting action is a toolkit for communicating about just transition with citizens and municipalities. It aims to provide practical tools for communication at the local level. In the scoping phase, misinformation and disinformation were identified as threats to transparency and stakeholder engagement, therefore clear and targeted information is essential. Good communication can also help involve smaller actors.

As part of this action, the Working Groups circulated a survey on the JTP website, which received responses from 15 countries and all key stakeholder groups. Initial analysis of the results shows a clear shared vision for just transition but difficulties getting involved in the transition process. More targeted information is needed, with in-person communication increasingly in demand. Further analysis of the survey results will feed into the production of the toolkit.



A second action relates to recommendations for effective social dialogue. Currently, some people do not feel included in the just transition. Trade unions have called for social dialogue and developed guidelines for tripartite agreements, with workers being crucial in driving the transition. The challenge is that, despite being required by EU treaties, partnership agreements are not always in place. This action aims to set out guidelines and principles for effective social dialogue and involvement of unions at the local level.

The final action presented relates to compendium of best practices on energy transition governance in cross-border/interregional cooperation. This cross-border aspect is crucial to the transition, therefore this action aims to bring a regional, cross-border perspective to the Working Group on Chemicals. The chemicals sector touches upon all aspects of daily life and

the majority of its industry is made up of small and medium-sized enterprises, many of which do not have sufficient capacity to get involved in the just transition.

This action will share experiences from regions and collect examples to speed up the transition, given that replicable solutions are already in place, which can help limit the time and costs of the transition. The action will carry out a survey, which will then feed into the compendium.

Following questions and answers from the audience, which touched upon themes such as youth, capacity building, self-awareness and trust, Ms Wendt encouraged stakeholders to continue sharing feedback and keep up the urgency they have shown in their work to date.



Panelists in the session on the JTP Working Groups



# International dimension of just transition and closing remarks

Wednesday 26 April, 14:00–15:30

▶ Session recording

## Introduction

This session focused on the experiences of countries located outside of the EU with regard to the implementation of just transition policies. It featured a keynote speech by Commissioner Simson on the EU's global just transition efforts, including the Just Energy Transition Partnerships and a presentation from an international organisation on their experience of just transition implementation on the ground. These were followed

by an online panel discussion between non-EU countries that are in the process of transition (United States, South Africa, Indonesia and Colombia). Panellists shared insights into the different legislation, programmes and funds available in their country and the challenges and opportunities experienced in the past and future years of transition – with a specific focus on how these relate and apply to the EU experience.

## Structure of the session

- **Moderator:** Veronique Marx, European Commission
- **Keynote speaker:** Kadri Simson, European Commissioner for Energy
- **Presenter:** Lahra Liberti, Head of Unit, Natural Resources for Development Unit, Development Centre, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- **Panel discussion:**
  - Kate Gordon – Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Energy, United States Department of Energy
  - Rudi Dicks – Head of the Project Management Office in the Private Office of the President, South Africa
  - Dadan Kusdiana – Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Indonesia
  - Johanna Castellanos – Advisor to the Minister – Lead of Just Energy Transition Team, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Colombia
- **Closing remarks:** Sander Happaerts, European Commission

## Brief summary and conclusions

Opening the session, Commissioner Kadri Simson stated: “I’m delighted to see so many different stakeholder groups in the room, not only from the EU but also globally. When we began, we knew the just transition would either work for all, or not at all. Delivering a just transition for all is even more critical in this international context.”

The Commissioner confirmed the EU’s firm commitment to just transition, recalling that the energy crisis has made energy transition even more important and urgent, and international collaboration is critical.

Ms Liberti presented the OECD Development Centre, which builds collaborative solutions to development challenges. She particularly focused her presentation on the Equitable Framework and Finance for Extractive-based Countries in Transition initiative, launched at COP27, which supports developing countries with the gradual phase-out of fossil fuels, using social protection schemes, active labour market policies and local value chains.

A panel discussion moderated by Veronique Marx (DG ENER, European Commission) then presented examples from several countries. South Africa started its just transition journey with a national contribution target, which stimulated international interest and led to the signing of a partnership in 2016. It is focusing on new energy and value chains, including electric vehicles, given automobiles represent a large export sector. Of the country’s power stations, most are coal fired and concentrated in one province. This means there is an important regional dimension to potential power station closures, due to the knock-on effects for local communities, businesses and supply chains. The country’s ongoing power crisis provides an additional challenge for plans to decommission coal power stations. It has supply shortages and a grid that is not well designed for renewables. This is a huge challenge, but also an opportunity for just transition.

Indonesia was the largest global exporter of coal in 2020, but last year showed signs of its ambitious decarbonisation pathway, having committed to net-zero emissions by 2060

or earlier at COP26. Its initiatives include phasing down the use of coal-fired power stations (not building any new ones beyond those already under construction), increasing the share of renewables in industry, and focusing on electric vehicles. In some cases, coal is also blended with renewable biomass energy. In terms of international collaboration, the International Energy Agency and UN Development Programme will be sitting in on its working group.

Echoing similar themes to those discussed by EU stakeholders, the Colombian government aims to help affected communities through skills development, education and capacity building – including international cooperation – monitoring and evaluation. It seeks to change its economic model, which is mainly extractive, and is working on a national plan for coal transition in mining regions. As the closure of mines has huge impacts, it needs to diversify the economy and create green jobs, for example in sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency and renewables. Social security must protect low-income households and indigenous communities. New laws and regulations are already being created, but new strategies and hard work are required.

The United States has a broad executive order on climate change, including an ambitious target of 100 % renewable electricity by 2025. It has an interagency working group on coal and powerplant communities, which provides an integrated economic development approach to just transition. The aim is that strategies should be place and community based. Work has been carried out to identify regions with the most urgent

transition needs via geospatial mapping, starting with large coal regions such as Wyoming. Regional staff work together with on-the-ground organisations, labour unions and local government to address specific regional needs.

The United States has closed almost 300 coal power plants since 2010 – roughly 40 % of its energy capacity – and many more are set to close by 2029. It started with coal as its most urgent transition need, but the initiative also extends to oil and gas. The most immediate challenges relate to displaced workers from mine closures and land remediation, but also future planning in the form of asset mapping and investments in new industries, which requires a huge amount of funding from federal resources. An important aspect of this involves repurposing existing energy assets (i.e. coal plants), which are already connected to the grid.

Sander Happaerts (DG REGIO, European Commission) then closed the main conference. “It is comforting to see we are not alone in this effort,” he said. “The JTF is a mechanism we established from the start, when we were starting to prepare the JTF, to make sure everyone understands that this was always going to be a joint effort – and we will continue listening to all the stakeholders throughout the preparation and also implementation of the JTF.”

“We are seeing a JTF family emerging from this community and this is very encouraging to see,” Mr Happaerts said. He thanked all those that contributed to making this event a success, wishing all participants well until the next JTF conference.



Panelists in the session on the international dimension of just transition

## Side event: JTP – how can we help you on the ground?

Wednesday 26 April, 15:30–16:30

▶ Session recording

### Introduction

This session served as an informative, practical session outlining JTP GROUNDWORK, the newly launched technical assistance by the Just Transition Platform. JTP GROUNDWORK supports JTF regions in implementing their TJTPs with tailored capacity-building and advisory support. It works in a co-creative

and context-driven way. This session informed participants about the activities that are being and will be supported by JTP GROUNDWORK, the regions who will receive support, and how the programme works in practice. Participants heard from DG REGIO and the consortium implementing JTP GROUNDWORK.

### Structure of the session

- **Moderator:** Balbina Gluza-Czyczerska, European Commission
- **Presenters:**
  - Emma Krause, JTP GROUNDWORK
  - Moritz Schaefer, JTP GROUNDWORK
  - Sarunas Bruzge, European Investment Bank (EIB)

### Brief summary and conclusions

Introducing the session, which took place after the closing of the main conference on 26 April, Ms Gluza-Czyczerska of the European Commission invited audience members to use this space to talk about how they would like to be supported in their regions. She explained that DG REGIO includes her horizontal support unit in addition to several geographical units that support different regions.

Ms Gluza-Czyczerska showed a video and presentation of the JTP, which now includes several streams: events in the form of the JTP Conferences; Working Groups; knowledge products and technical assistance (JTP GROUNDWORK and JTPeers) as well as a website and communication activities.

Mr Schaefer and Ms Krause then presented the recently launched JTP GROUNDWORK programme, which recently selected its first six beneficiaries of technical assistance following a call. The beneficiaries are as follows: Lodzkie (PL), Medio Tejo (PL), Vasterbotten (SW), Vidzeme & Latgale (LT), Karlovy Vary (CZ), Hunedoara, and Gorj & Dolj (RO).

The programme will provide tailored technical assistance to support implementation in these six regions.

In addition to JTP GROUNDWORK, the new JTPeers programme will develop a database of just transition experts to help regions make use of available expertise and connect with other experts across Europe. It will include an exchange programme between regions and experts. Further knowledge products and communication materials will also be developed by the JTP this year, including toolkits and case studies.

Sarunas Bruzge of the European Investment Bank then provided an overview of additional technical assistance services linked to the JTP, including TARGET technical assistance for regions, through which the EIB supports projects, the Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS) advisory programme, and European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA). More information about these programmes is available on the JTP website.



Panelists in the JTP side event



