

BOTTOM-UP: A WAY OF  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
ACTING AND REACTING ON  
LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY  
PROJECTS  
“THINK GLOBALLY, ACT  
LOCALLY”

Dubravka Šuica  
Member of European Parliament

## INTRODUCTION

- ◉ The Europe we live in today will face great challenges in the years to come
- ◉ We must carefully plan and prepare today in order to achieve success tomorrow
- ◉ Member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety - ENVI
- ◉ Local experience as former two-term mayor of Dubrovnik and Member of Croatian Parliament

## BACKGROUND

- ◉ Increase efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, improve resilience to and ability to deal with the aftermath of natural disasters, ensure safe and nutritious food to more than 500 million, safeguard water and air quality, protect biodiversity, and deal with public health issues.
- ◉ Regions play a crucial important role in successfully tackling all of these challenges.

## BACKGROUND

- ◉ Using the advantages of regions and a bottom-up approach can be:
  - ◉ cost-effective
  - ◉ help safeguard the environment and halt biodiversity loss
  - ◉ provide numerous economic and social benefits by creating jobs and stimulating innovation

## EUROPE'S ENGAGEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- ◉ 22 October 2013 - European Parliament adopted a resolution on local authorities and civil society called "Europe's engagement in support of sustainable development".
- ◉ Resolution focused on a more ambitious partnership with civil society organisations and local authorities.
- ◉ Commitment to strengthening the democratic process and accountability.
- ◉ European Parliament passed resolution in order to create an enabling environment for civil society organizations and local authorities.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

- ◉ A 2030 framework for climate and energy policies had two goals - reduction of CO2 and increasing the use of renewable energy sources
- ◉ Recent studies have shown that 95% of global warming is caused by human activity (compared with 90% in the fourth assessment report of 2007) - need to affect change in every single household in Europe.
- ◉ Renewable energies [wind, solar (thermal, photovoltaic and concentrated), hydro, ocean, geothermal, biomass and biofuels] are substitutes for fossil fuels that contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, diversifying the energy supply and reducing dependence on unreliable and volatile fossil fuel markets.
- ◉ Renewable energy industry currently employs about 1.5 million people in the EU and it is predicted that this number could grow to 4.5 million by 2020. This is a major source of new jobs.
- ◉ EU is a world leader in the development of the "next generation" technology of renewable energy.
- ◉ EU legislative framework for the promotion of energy from renewable sources has grown significantly in recent years and now provides a stable regulatory framework that helps to attract investment from the private sector.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

- ◉ March 2013 - European Parliament endorsed the energy plan for 2050 and called on the Commission to promptly present a policy framework for 2030, including key stages and targets for greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- ◉ February 2014 - European Parliament voted for a law that would require 30% percent of Europe's energy to come from renewable sources by 2030, and for energy efficiency also to improve by 30%, while backing European Commission's proposal that greenhouse gases are cut 40% from 1990 levels by the end of the next decade.
- ◉ Preparing electrical infrastructure for extensive use of renewable energy is one of the main objectives of energy policy in 2020 and is located in the Energy Plan for 2050 and the package on energy infrastructure. True example of the EP listening to local needs and implementing the bottom-up approach.

## EXAMPLE OF BOTTOM-UP APPROACH: EUROPEAN CITIZEN'S INITIATIVE

- ◉ Treaty of Lisbon - citizens now have a chance to directly affect legislation at the EU level through the European citizens' initiative.
- ◉ European citizens' initiative is an invitation to the European Commission to propose legislation on matters where the EU has competence to legislate.
- ◉ Has to be backed by at least one million EU citizens, coming from at least 7 out of the 28 member states, and a minimum number of signatories is required in each of those 7 member states.
- ◉ Possible in any field where the Commission has the power to propose legislation, for example environment, agriculture, transport or public health.
- ◉ Citizens' committee registers its initiative through the official website and once registration is confirmed, organisers have one year to collect signatures.

## EXAMPLE OF BOTTOM-UP APPROACH: EUROPEAN CITIZEN'S INITIATIVE

- ◉ After one million signatures, within 3 months:
- ◉ Commission will meet organisers so they can explain in detail the issues raised in their initiative
- ◉ Organisers will have the opportunity to present their initiative at a public hearing in the European Parliament
- ◉ Commission will adopt a formal response spelling out what action it will propose in response to the citizens' initiative, if any, and the reasons for doing or not doing so

## RIGHT2WATER

- ◉ Premise of the initiative is that water is a public good, not a commodity.
- ◉ Citizens involved invited the European Commission to propose legislation implementing the human right to water and sanitation as recognised by the United Nations, and to promote the provision of water and sanitation as essential public services for all.
- ◉ They proposed that the EU legislation have three major points:
  1. EU institutions and Member States should be obliged to ensure that all inhabitants enjoy the right to water and sanitation.
  2. Water supply and management of water resources should not be subject to 'internal market rules' and that water services are excluded from liberalisation.
  3. That the EU increases its efforts to achieve universal access to water and sanitation.

## RIGHT2WATER

- ◉ Nearly 2 million signatures
- ◉ Right2Water initiative held the first European Parliament debate on a European Citizens' Initiative in Parliament in February 2014.
- ◉ *"If drinking water has a role in international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century like oil had in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where it was repeatedly proven not only as a key energy source, but also as a tool to achieve political goals, then we can conclude that drinking water will distinctly impact the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."*
- ◉ Croatia is in third place in Europe after Norway and Iceland in terms of water supplies
- ◉ 12 August 2014 - Commission opened a public consultation (found online) on the drinking water directive in view of improving access to quality water in the EU.
- ◉ Questionnaire that was available in all EU languages.

## ROLE OF WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- ◉ The position of the European Parliament with regard to gender equality is clear: it is indeed a fundamental requirement of democracy. Role of women in the political, economic and social life of society must be fully recognised, and their participation encouraged.
- ◉ Women represent more than half of any society, and releasing women's potential we can double output.
- ◉ Role of women is vital if we want to ensure sustainable development. Women contribute to a different outlook, offering often a different opinion from their own unique experience. Crucial partners in any bottom-up endeavour.
- ◉ Women need more support and equal opportunity to help to further build their capacities.
- ◉ Grassroots level is the key to ensuring long-term success so we must make it a priority to actively include more than half of the population in order to achieve sustainability.

## AGRICULTURE

- ◉ Common Agricultural Policy will put greater emphasis on both the environment and innovation and will provide Member States with opportunity to initiate a change. Bottom-up approach is once more critical in this process because local communities will have the opportunity to affect change.
- ◉ Major challenges to increase productivity in an appropriate way whilst reducing damage to European agricultural and natural resources and biodiversity.
- ◉ Produce more with less and cut wastage.
- ◉ Bottom-up approach to link practice and research.

## CONCLUSION

- ◉ Look beyond traditional answers to today's and tomorrow's challenges and seek innovative solutions.
- ◉ Quality of life, availability of jobs, access to education, demographic factors, environmental factors, etc.
- ◉ Comprehensive European strategies for sustainable development must be supported from the bottom-up through well-prepared and integrated strategies on the part of local and regional authorities.
- ◉ These strategies, in turn, should be supported by European funds and their implementation should be carefully monitored so that we immediately see what works and what doesn't.
- ◉ No single policy prescription
- ◉ Need to intensify the dialogue with local communities and their leaders in order to create a tailor-made approach.

## CONCLUSION

“Think globally, act locally!”

Thank you.

[dubravka.suica@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:dubravka.suica@europarl.europa.eu)