

## PARLIAMENTARY HEARING ON BUILDING POLITICAL WILL FOR 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

### European politicians across party lines call for a long-term 100% target for renewable energy

Some 60 European policy makers from 15 member states concluded in Brussels that self-interested actions and a lack of cooperation put Europe's resilience, its society, economy and climate at risk. Therefore, only ambitious targets for renewable energy can sustain Europe's economy and ultimately lead to an energy sector powered entirely by renewable energy.

**This international parliamentary hearing built capacities by catalysing international knowledge transfer and inspired change by showing that 100% renewable energy is possible. It strengthened the pioneers and built new alliances.**

Maciej Nowicki, former Environment Minister of Poland: "The **hearing was very encouraging** because it showed that there is political will and decisiveness among European parliamentarians to build a fossil free society. What we need is more collaboration. We **need to intensify cooperation** with the Commission as well as with national parliaments so that they can obtain more ownership of EU legislation. This would definitely lead to a more effective implementation of the policies forged in Brussels."



"By participating in this event, I gained a lot of **new insights and suggestions**. Especially the international dimension of the 100% RE debate was very **inspiring and encouraged me to do the work in our district**." Ulrich Ahlke, Steinfurt Office for Climate Protection and Sustainability District of Steinfurt, Germany.

"We were honoured to take part in such a rewarding experience meeting. We fully support the Action Plan of the International Parliamentary Hearing on Building Political Will for 100% Renewable Energy. It was so **encouraging for us to see that the way we follow in Kněžice despite the energy mainstream in the Czech Republic is the right way**." Milan Kazda, Mayor of Kněžice and delegation.



"It is a long way to build the political will for 100% renewables. But it is a **source of hope and power to see good examples** on the local level. It is therefore great to see these **pioneers connecting in a global network**." Jo Leinen, MEP

"Many of my colleagues are not interested in renewables. Gatherings like these are important to **build capacity among policy makers** for 100% RE. We therefore **need to continue the work** also with the new parliamentarians." Peter Liese, MEP



## 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY – THE ONLY WAY FORWARD

It is a fact that non-renewable energies will, by definition, run out. It is also a fact that in the meantime, dependence on these energy sources is causing multiple existential global crises. As presented by several participants in Brussels, we must achieve 100% RE by 2050, if we take climate change seriously. This is only possible by divesting from fossils and investing in renewables today.



“Studies prove that the more **we invest today, the cheaper it will be in the future.**” says Harry Lehmann, Unit Director, German Federal Environment Agency (UBA).

Anders Wijkman, Co-President of Club of Rome and Member of the World Future Council added: “The high standard of living in industrialized countries

is primarily the result of cheap oil. **In times of climate change, we need to develop new ways of powering our modern societies.** The only way forward is 100% renewables combined with energy efficiency. We need to merge the agendas of finance, economy, employment, climate change, pollution and resource depletion and constraints. **The financial crisis is not about money alone – it is as much about energy and natural resources.**”



“Decisions taken by politicians today will have a major influence on the world of tomorrow. **Investments into fossil fuels today will lock us and future generations into a dangerous system.** Europe has the responsibility to take up this leadership role. Hafsat Abiola-Castello, Founder of the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy and Member of the World Future Council.

## 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY – A MATTER OF POLITICAL WILL

One fundamental necessity to breaking the current political inertia is to build political will for 100% renewable energy among key decision makers.



However, the ‘policy and political fit’ criterion is often the area most neglected and the most poorly undertaken in the debate. Tom Burke from E3G said in his intervention: “We [renewable energy advocates] have not been good in **systematically create political will.** So far, we have not sufficiently understood the need to share narratives. Therefore, we need to **start shaping discourses and narratives that last.**”

Current policy debates in the EU prove this. Between 2000 and 2009 the EU pioneered a new global economy of renewable energy and managed to benefit a great deal from it. However, recent developments reflect a lack of political will to stay on this path. At the hearing, international delegates from Canada, Japan, Australia and Nigeria called upon Europe to re-establish its leadership role. “The international community and especially the leaders in Canada need to see that **mitigating climate change by scaling up renewables is possible. Europe leadership is therefore crucial for solving the world’s biggest challenge.**” says José Etcheverry, Professor at York University, Canada.



Rebecca Harms, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and Co-president of the European Greens/EFA agrees and sees politicians responsible: “The **European Union must return to its leadership role** – morally, politically, and economically – in tackling climate change by deciding on strong policy priorities. **100% renewable energy is the prerequisite to tackling climate change.** It is therefore essential to send a clear signal to our citizens, investors and the world that the EU is determined to pursue its renewables-based system.”



Representatives from all Member States and across parties highlighted the need for strong EU targets to give direction and policy certainty. Fiona Hall, MEP and Member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe: “To **ensure economic prosperity, industrial competitiveness and democratic stability, Europe must decisively scale up its renewable energy share.** There is no reason to hesitate to adopt a long-term strategy like a 100% target when it comes to renewable energy technologies. Renewables and energy efficiency are ready to be implemented all over Europe. **It is simply a matter of decisiveness about doing what is necessary.**”

Beyond that, media plays a crucial role in this change process. All participants emphasized in the discussions, that **miss-communication through media is one of the biggest barriers for building political will** for 100% RE.

Despite the fact that utilities and companies in many countries slow down progress towards renewable energy, Susanne Dreyer from the Carbon Disclosure Project highlighted the other side of the medal: “Our survey on climate change mitigation and adaption in the utility sector Germany, Austria and Switzerland shows that climate change mitigation targets are economically sensible for companies. **The private sector needs policy certainty.** Based on the results of this study, we can therefore draw four policy recommendations: dare regulation, agree internationally, create level playing field and achieve sound European economics.”



### Policy Recommendations to build political will

The aim of the hearing was to answer the question on how to build political will for 100% RE. The discussions among the two-day hearing resulted in the following 10 policy recommendations:

- Build strong alliances across parties and sectors
- Mobilize knowledge that creates political credibility for 100% RE
- Inform and educate on benefits of renewable energy
- Connect messages to the context
- Shape the discourse for the long-term
- Target your messages to a certain person rather to a general system
- Reflect on the political culture in the specific region
- Engage citizens as community power creates political will
- Inspire change by sharing and visualizing solutions and best practices.
- Unify renewable energy community to have a strong voice against well-organized opponents

## BUILDING POLITICAL WILL MEANS CREATING POLITICAL CREDIBILITY

There are a lot of scenarios, road maps, visions and papers out there that claim to provide policy recommendations and tools for policy makers to boost renewable energy. However, **reality shows that there is a lack of action**. On the other hand, some policy makers claim that there is a lack of knowledge about solutions.

There is an urgent need to **understand the link between research and policy making**. In order to explore the link between vision and action and understand on how to fill the gap between research and policy, the hearing aimed at bringing together analysts and policy makers, going beyond policy recommendations. In this **multi-stakeholder dialogue**, participants looked at the implementation process and identified tools and instruments for taking action.

The ability to understand and effectively deal with **policy implementation is essential to impact policy in a manner favourable for 100% RE**. The research community is beginning to respond to the needs of individuals, organizations, and policy makers to carry out research relevant to the policy-making process.

### What legislators need from civil society groups and academia:

- Good articulation of findings and assumptions behind scenarios
- Scientific prove for feasibility of 100% RE
- Accurate data
- People centered solution/ approaches
- Broadening the debate towards what kind of RE system do we want in the future
- Broad base of argumentations for all constituencies for 100%RE
- General political consensus on national level for energy efficiency
- Communicate how 100% RE helps the people

## BUILDING POLITICAL WILL REQUIRES STRONG COMMUNICATION

Communication lies at the heart of this change. It is a goal in itself as well as an enabler of development because it actually means placing the individual and the community at the heart of discussions. Whereas one-way flow of information and communication is widely criticised, participatory communication aims to empower the community towards collective decision making and action through enhanced knowledge and skills to identify priorities and resolve problems and needs. Participants of the hearing emphasized the need for stronger, informed, independent and clearer communication.

### In order to build political will for 100% RE

- messages must be kept short.
- the narrative must be positive and should avoid certain concepts and words that may create negative connotations among stakeholders.
- crucial voices must be amplified.
- the 100% RE community must personalize its approach: Do not think “what is stopping us” but “who”. Than ask, what do they want?
- the mind-set of the way we think about energy, needs to be changed: Energy is not a commodity, it is a service that builds better livelihoods.
- messages must connect to the context.

- blaming and shaming must be part of the narrative.
- highlight and stress the moral argument for phasing out fossil fuels.
- address the broader framework like democracy and economic structures.
- assess the indicator and adapt them accordingly to your values.
- avoid repeating the “low-carbon discourse” as it has rather negative connotations and is also used by the nuclear industry. Create a positive 100% RE discourse.

## BEST POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR ACHIEVING 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY

It is the World Future Council’s mission to identify and promote political solutions for the challenges of our time. The hearing offered parliamentarians and policy makers an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the main issues of renewable energy policies.

### **Coherent and inclusive governance structures are needed to achieve 100% RE.**

- A coherent policy framework on the European level that the national and local perspective enables and empowers local communities to become fossil free.
- Engaging people and creating ownership among citizens for RE projects is crucial to achieve 100% RE. The following lessons learnt derived from the pioneers present at the workshop:
  - Public institutions must show leadership in RE and invite stakeholders to become part of this transformation.
  - Financial incentives for engagement to ensure return on investment
  - Communication of RE must be closer to people’s lives
  - Price security and energy security are strong arguments for people to support RE.
  - Pilot projects help to educate. Invite opponents and skeptical citizens to show them how things work.
- Collaboration among sectors and governance levels may spur innovation
- Collaboration across parties results in political consensus which is a prerequisite for the 100% RE target.

### **Strong policy priorities including the following are needed to achieve 100% RE:**

- Energy Efficiency must be improved and prioritized
- Mobility is still the elephant in the room, but solutions on project level exist.
- Investment into training and education is urgently required.
- Remove gradually all energy subsidies and introduce the internalisation of all externalities to achieve a level playing field;
- Low investment risk policies are still key: The determining success element in any RE policy is the guaranteed access to the grid which is currently only the case in Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs).
- Depending on the country policy makers either need to implement FiTs or develop a FiTs 2.0
- A clear political decision on flexible vs. base load system is needed on the national level.
- A paradigm shift in market design is needed as RE question the logic of the markets. Policy makers must design an inclusive process that defines how to define the costs of electricity and heat in a fossil free society.
- Carbon tax has proven to be more effective than emissions trading system (ETS) to scale up RE.
- Target setting – providing a signal for the market, stability, realistic target is very important
- Integration – of RE in any kind of policy and infrastructure
- Optimizing policy instruments – continuing on a path is better than changing it steadily
- Neutralizing – fossil fuel subsidies, misconception
- Science tells us that global cooling must be the top policy priority

## COMPREHENSIVE COMMITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants acknowledged that our generation has the responsibility to phase out fossil resources in energy production to preserve planetary habitability for today's and future generations. Our dependence upon fossil resources has built a system that lacks diversity and security, threatens the health of our citizens, jeopardises the stability of Earth's climate, and robs future generations of clean air, clean water, and energy independence. In their concluding recommendations, participating policy makers recognized that making the transition to 100% renewable energy is a political decision and an economic and ethical imperative, as technical solutions already exist. As today's investments create the energy system of the future, we urgently need to divest from fossil fuels now. Further they recognised that a decentralised and people-centered approach has proven to be the fastest and most sustainable transition to 100% renewable energy. In terms of political action, the European parliamentarians and policy makers from 15 member states

1. *Urge* the European Union to return to its leadership role – morally, politically, and economically – in tackling climate change by deciding on strong policy priorities;
2. *Demand* strong and robust European-wide targets to provide policy certainty, investment security and leadership for member states as well as regional and local governments;
3. *Commit* to developing policy frameworks that enable and empower local communities to become 100% renewable energy regions and communities;
4. *Further commit* to developing policies that provide people and industry with options to choose between a 100% renewable energy future and a fossil fuel dependent future and facilitating policy development towards a level playing field for renewable energy technology; and
5. *Call all stakeholders to join the* collaboration, alliance building, knowledge mobilisation and international policy dialogue on 100% renewable energy.

The concluding recommendations and the Action Plan are also available for download on: <http://power-to-the-people.net/building-political-will-for-100-renewable-energy/>.

### Follow up Activities and On-Going Support

The World Future Council will offer parliamentarians and policy makers on-going support in fulfilling their commitment. We will facilitate dialogue between parliamentarians, policy makers from different governance levels and experts on concrete topics. Concretely, commitments for the following follow-up activities were given by participants and will be coordinated by the World Future Council in the coming months:

- WFC will compile a fact sheet with arguments for 100% RE to support policy makers in their communication.
- WFC and REN21 will host a Side Event in August at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bonn Conference.
- WFC and UBA will host a Parliamentary Briefing on 100% RE for new EU parliamentarians
- WFC explores options to host a Parliamentary Hearing on divestment together with international partners.
- WFC, ITC El Hierro, York University and MEP Peter Liese will host a Study Tour to El Hierro for new EU parliamentarians
- ITC El Hierro, York University with the support of WFC will develop a concept for a student internship program to pioneering places for 100% RE
- Carbon Talks hosts meeting in Canada on divestment and RE in communities in May 2015

## A BIG THANK YOU

This parliamentary hearing would not have been possible without the financial and in-kind contributions from our partners the Climate Service Center - Germany (CSC) is an initiative developed by the German Federal Government as well as EUFORES, a European cross-party network of Members of Parliaments from the European Parliament as well as from the EU27 national and regional Parliaments.



Further, we would like to thank all participants for their valuable contributions. By sharing your insights and expertise, you made this hearing a successful next step in building political will for 100% Renewable Energy.



## CONTACT

For further information please contact

Anna Leidreiter  
World Future Council Foundation  
Mexikoring 29, 22297 Hamburg  
anna.leidreiter@worldfuturecouncil.org  
www.worldfuturecouncil.org  
skype: anna-summer

Photos: Anna Leidreiter for World Future Council

All participants are encouraged to continue the discussions online. This is also an opportunity to engage other stakeholders in this process. Help multiply the debate on 100% renewable energy!



@GO100RE



www.facebook.com/Global100RE