

Friday, September 24th, 2021

Tullamore Declaration

We, the undersigned of this declaration, as participants of the 14th ENCORE Conference, which took place virtually on 24th of September 2021, express our concern at the global emergencies of climate change, scarcity of raw materials/resources and biodiversity loss. The European regions recognise that these global crises have and will have adverse impacts on wildlife, biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture, economic sectors and the health and well-being of humans and the natural world.

The need to transition from current extractive and fossil fuel-based socioeconomic models is greater than ever. Policy pledges must be matched by concrete actions, taken at all levels of governance. In Europe, the regions form a critical function by translating high level EU and national policy frameworks into appropriate on-the-ground actions. Through their actions, regional authorities across Europe have been, and continue to be, at the forefront of the transition to a zero-carbon and circular society that delivers better life beyond GDP and protects its communities and ecosystems by mobilising finance and fostering cooperation between stakeholders.

Therefore; The 14th ENCORE Conference builds on:

- The European Green Deal, first presented in December 2019, particularly its headline goals of;
 - o No net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050;
 - o Economic growth decoupled from resource use;
 - o No person and no place left behind (a Just Transition);

and

- 26th UN Climate Change Conference 2021 (COP26) goals of;
 - o Securing global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach;
 - o Adapting to protect communities and natural habitats;
 - o Mobilising finance;
 - o Working together to deliver decarbonisation;

and

- The Agenda 2030, adopted in September 2015 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and which consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) integrated into indivisible economic, social and environmental pillars. The European Green Deal and the UN Climate Change Conference 2021 both reflect the SDGs' principles.

The 14th ENCORE Conference reaffirms that the principles of maintaining and enhancing Ecosystem Services, Circular Economy and Climate Action can result in a Just Transition for Europe and beyond.

Through our work in advance of and at the conference, we, the undersigned ENCORE Members, have identified the key challenges, opportunities and required actions in our regions in terms of:

- **Maintaining and enhancing Ecosystem Services**
- **Transitioning to a Circular Society**
- **Achieving Zero Emissions through Climate Action**

Some common factors enabling decisive action on each of these themes are:

- Youth leadership in the context of these challenges driving action at all levels
- COVID-19 recovery providing us an opportunity to Build Back Better in order to create a vital and sustainable society
- Creating policy alignment at all levels and within different sectors.
- Collaboration through platforms, such as ENCORE, to enhance partner connectivity, help to secure timely funding and improve strategic thinking between now and 2030.

We believe that there are a set of **cross-cutting key challenges** for maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services, integrating a circular economy and achieving zero emissions through climate action to create a Just Transition, which are:

- Inconsistency in policy making and legislation and insufficient policy integration
- Lack of knowledge and unfamiliarity with the subjects
- Current system being structured in such a way that disincentivises new economic models and sustainable approaches
- Political short-termism making it difficult to implement the required long-term action
- The significant effort and investment required to transform to a low-carbon society, including addressing skill shortages, product design and scale, disinvestment in fossil fuel investments and infrastructure.
- The difficulties inherent with transforming the energy-system and the industrial sector while strengthening the local economy
- Promoting public understanding and motivation for climate action
- Lock-in effects through investments and infrastructure

- A lack of financing for climate neutral technologies

The **main opportunities identified that cut across** the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem services, integration of a circular economy and achieving zero emissions through climate action to create a Just Transition, are:

- New economic opportunities and job creation
- Potential for development of new economic models and synergistic actions in for example the agricultural and food system which address both the biodiversity loss and climate change emergencies simultaneously
- Increasing resource efficiencies and substituting fossil fuels for biomass, solar and wind through collaboration and innovative resource use
- Current political will and momentum to make real change happen at local, regional, national and international levels and across sectors
- Reorientation of public awareness of and support for sustainable and just transitions.

Lastly, we consider that the **overarching key actions and timelines required** for maintaining and enhancing ecosystem services, integrating a circular economy and achieving zero emissions through climate action to create a Just Transition, are:

- Setting ambitious, yet achievable targets for 2030 and 2050, with measurable roadmaps to achieve these goals
- Adopting a strategic and holistic approach characterised by early action, rebalancing biodiversity, ecological, societal and economic values in agriculture and industry and cooperation across multiple scales and levels
- Better policy integration and consistency in implementation that reflects ecosystem services, a circular economy approach and taking climate action in a Just Transition lens
- Effective and accessible communications for citizens to raise awareness and understanding using truthful information based on sound scientific research and innovation
- Creating market structures and financial supports that incentivise public and private investment in circular and environmentally sustainable economic models
- For Europe to be Carbon Neutral by 2050. For the fulfilment of the interim target of a 55% reduction by 2030, the EU Commission already made various and ambitious proposals within the framework of the “Fit for 55” package.
- Ensuring integrated cross cutting climate adaptation
- For Member States to transpose EU environmental legislation as quickly as possible.

The special role of the European regions will be to:

1. Act, within the limits of their competencies and capabilities, on points raised in this declaration to:
 - A. Maintain and enhance our Ecosystem Services in our regions
 - B. Transition to and integrate a Circular Society into our regions
 - C. Achieve Zero Emissions through Climate Action by becoming a net zero continent by 2050, keeping warming to 1.5 degrees or less
2. Coordinate, inspire and enable our local governments and citizens to develop local solutions to combat climate change and ensure no one is left behind.
3. Continue to proactively cooperate at European level to affect the policy change needed to address the climate, scarcity of raw materials and biodiversity emergencies.
4. Serving as frontrunners in their countries to achieving the goals mentioned above or going ahead with even more ambitious goals.



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