

DIALOGUE SEMINAR

Environmental protection and climate change as a challenge for EU policies – the role of ethics, lifestyles, solidarity and global justice

Thursday 17 October 2013, Brussels

Panel 3: Towards a comprehensive global 2015 agreement – EU climate policy in the long term perspective, priorities and strategy. EU on the way to the Paris COP21 Henrik Grape, Church of Sweden

Ethical perspectives - Love Peace and Understanding

Love – Like many people of faiths love is the ground out of which we have to act or should act. This is the essence of Jesus teaching. To love God and your neighbour as thy self. It may seem odd to refer to love when we are talking about climate policies but I think it is not.

The driving force behind many people of faiths and churches in the climate change debate could be referred to as love. Love of the creation and love of your neighbour.

I will not tire you to repeat the many facts from the latest IPCC report and other research that are telling us that we are on a dangerous track.

But our love for our planet, the creation that we are living in and are dependent on, forces us to act.

As much as the love for our neighbour, those who are and most likely will be affected by climate change, is on our mind when we are advocating for decisions that will turn the development in a direction that is more sustainable.

To take care of the most vulnerable to climate change we need to be more brave when it comes to mitigation targets in EU. 20% 2020 is no effort to reach. We are almost there. If we love this planet we must do better than this because the reality urges us to act faster. And also now: The reality says it is easier than predicted. Even though it might be the low hanging fruits that we have taken down that lower emissions have to do with the financial crisis we could do a lot more to lower our emissions.

If there is no political will I must ask why?

But there is also a big gap between what science says is needed and what decision maker says is possible. If you treat a patient at a hospital with a deadly disease you wouldn't expect and accept the doctors to say we have a diagnosis and we know what treatment you need but we just give you 30% of the medicine and hope that will cure you.

What kind of message is needed to bridge the gap between science and action?

If EU could express its love for the planet EU should take a lead in the efforts to lower emissions and to transform our society to a modern low carbon society. The capacity is here and we could do a lot more and point to this as the future. This is the moment to do the green investments in energy and infrastructure. It is job creating and at the same time it will clear the ground for the coming low carbon society

The upcoming COP:s should be a time to work for trust between the different parties in the UNFCCC. I am sad to say that so much trust was trashed at the Copenhagen meeting and we still need to build up trust between the different parties. Especially between developing

and developed countries. The following COP.s in Cancun, Durban and Doha have barely survived the process and we should be glad that we still have it but the coming three COPs must take brave steps to create a common trust between the parties. In that case I think that EU has played during last COPs a more constructive role than others. I hope that it will continue.

I would also like to put the question of peace on the table. We are living in the context of a horrible conflict with millions of people fleeing and become refugees in and outside Syria. The catastrophe in the Mediterranean sea that close to Lampedusa Italy, is very close to us and brings many questions on how to bring peace to the region and how we shall act as Europeans. But it is not to often mentioned that climate change can cause many conflicts in the future and also many refugees. Actually there are many signs that the drought that Syria experienced could be one part of the origin of the conflict. Of course not the only one but one that must be taken into consideration when we know that a climate constrained world will be more likely to generate conflicts and violence and all the problems and suffering that comes along with it.

So Climate Change action is also about peace. We have to act now to avoid conflicts. We have to have peace with earth to get peace on earth. A long term climate action is not only about environment and energy it is also a work for peace.

And Understanding. We need understanding of the situation we are in. The awareness of the situation seems not always to be there when we are discussing the issue of climate change. The urgency to act that all reports on climate change has been accelerating during the last 6-7 years seems to be unheard when it comes to decisions. We know what we should do but we don't act that way. It can have something to do with understanding.

We need a lot more understanding of what situation we have created.

We need to understand that we are on a very dangerous track.

But at the same time we need to understand that we have all the possibilities to create a sustainable society.

We need to understand that the consumption and production patterns are not sustainable because we overshoot what the earth can deliver. At the same time we need to understand that we can create an economy that is not based on overusing natural resources and that we can decouple economic growth from higher emissions of green house gases.

We need to understand that the we in Europe have a special moral obligation to act on climate change in every way that we can. We have the capacity to transform to a low carbon society and if we take the lead and make a pathway the rest of the world can follow.

Now, you might call me a dreamer, but I'm not the only one (to quote John Lennon) who stills thinks that Love Peace and Understanding is something to take seriously. Yes, I think so. Martin Luther King jr did not say "I have a nightmare " No he said I have a dream. We need visions to take brave steps cause we live in a time where brave steps are needed. As it is said in the Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish. We need brave visions to take brave actions. We need love, we need peace and we need understanding. Thank you for listening.