

STR-Environment and development

My name is Barbro Holmberg and I am governor in the Province of Gävleborg in Sweden. Sweden has, as the rest of the European Union countries a strong regulation concerning environmental issues. In addition to that, Sweden has implemented a comprehensive environmental objective process. I would like to start with telling you about our environmental goals and the national process to reach these goals.

The Swedish Parliament decided in the year 1998 on a comprehensive objectives process. (1) The Riksdag, the Parliament set the objectives nationally. Regional and local authorities are responsible for the implementation of measures in society. The process is monitored by the County Administration Board and every fourth year an evaluation nationally is carried out and based on the result of this evaluation a government bill is issued.

(2) The overall environmental policy in Sweden is that the major environmental problems should be solved for the next generation and these (3) are the environmental Quality Objectives set by the Parliament. The STR, the County Administrative Board, has a key role in the process. First of all, the Board decides on regional objectives, based of course on the objectives set by the Parliament. The Boards are also responsible for implementing measures and to mobilize municipalities, local authorities, businesses, organizations and other stakeholders. Further on, the County Administrative Board is mandated to submit permits, issue grants and subsidies and perform supervision, both in relation to municipalities and to individual enterprises.

As you can see some of these are conflicting goals. For example to build a wind power park in order to increase renewable energy may conflict with biodiversity or other goals which aims to preserve certain landscapes. In addition to that implementing all the regulations to reach those goals sometimes also conflicts with economic development so the day-to-day work for the STR are definitely an act of balance between conflicting interests, and I am sure you all recognized these dilemmas. To give you a picture of the extent of the balances in my county I would like to give you just a brief introduction of the county of Gävleborg and the economic development in the county.

Gävleborg is a region of forests and this has set the foundation for the massive steel- and paper industry as well as wood processing. Hundreds of paper and steel mills developed during the 2000 century. Today, we have just a few of them left but these are now worldleading companies in and Gävleborg is the second largest industrial region in Sweden.

In the past there have been huge conflicts concerning those industries. The use of Chlorine in the paper and pulp industry created severe pollution with dioxins up until 1994. Earlier the use of Mercury created large problems and we still have mercury contamination in some waters. Some fish caught along our coastline are still polluted with dioxins. The steel industry had problems with poisonous metal that spreads with the smoke and dust from the processes.

However, these industries have had a strong economic development and by continuously investing in new technologies has enabled them to reduce pollution and environmental problems. So, most of the problems we see today are not in these world-leading strong companies, it is rather in old industries with weak economy that makes it impossible for them to keep up with new technologies. We had for example a case recently with a factory producing impregnating wood. They used arsenic and creosote. The company couldn't afford changing the process and they had to close down and people lost their jobs.

So, when it comes to manufacturing industries the conflicts between environment and economic development is not a big problem. The problem is undeveloped weak industries and environment. The Swedish environmental legislation (and also the EU regulations) are based on the principle that the industries are compelled to invest in new technology based on the concept of BAT (Best Available Technique) as formulated in the IPPC directive. And I believe, that even if it is difficult in the daily work in the STR, it is necessary in the long run. I also believe that promoting and investing in systemic solutions for waste management, urban planning, environmental techniques and renewable energy we can break the link between greenhouse gases emission and economic development. We can see that in Sweden. Between 1996 and 2008 carbon emissions fell by 18 per cent while at the same time GDP increased by 45 per cent.

I also believe that it is a great potential in green jobs and growth. The challenges of climate change offers substantial business opportunities for the business community as well as for municipalities. I would like to give you one example from my county. Sweden, like many other European countries has developed very efficient solutions for waste management and recycling of different materials. Today, 49 per cent of household waste goes to incineration and energy recovery through incineration provides electricity and heat so waste becomes energy to our district heating system. The waste management owned by one of the municipalities in the county are now selling know-how in waste management all over the world. They offer educational- and trainee programs, planning, system solutions, construction and building waste management system and the global market is huge.

Finally, The main challenge for EU as well as for the rest of the world is to meet the demands of growing cities, combining it with sustainable economic development and a dramatic cut in

emission of greenhouse gases. This task is challenging, given the estimates that the global economy will grow 4 times to 2050. But it is possible and I believe that STR has an important role to play in this transformation of our economy.

Thank you for your attention!