

Climate Advocates championed Challenge Europe projects at Nordic Climate Solutions

Nordic Climate Solutions took place at the Bella Centre in Copenhagen only three months before the Centre is to host COP15. The conference provided an important networking opportunity for businesses, politicians, researchers and Climate Advocates concerned with climate change.

As the name suggests, Nordic Climate Solutions emphasised ways to accelerate the change to a low carbon future – right here, right now – moving beyond the years old rhetoric of “yes, there is a problem, and yes, we need to do something about it.” The conference was all about solutions and tried to be bold in its approach – just as Challenge Europe Climate Advocates are in their endeavours.

After a night spent in one of the world’s first carbon neutral hotels, Climate Advocates used public transport – Copenhagen’s driverless metro network – to get to the conference venue. There, they had the opportunity to visit stands, discover technologies and services positioned to reduce carbon footprints, and talk to experienced professionals about their challenges and, of course, about their own Challenge Europe projects and ideas. Moreover, Climate Advocates were given the opportunity to use the largest and most central stand in the trade area in order to promote their projects to over 1500 visitors.



The conference focused on renewables, energy efficiency, sustainable transport and green business opportunities. The EU Commissioner for Energy talked about the need for better and more regulation within the European Union. He was promptly sanctioned by businessmen who argued that *smarter* not more regulation is essential in terms of energy efficiency, subsidies and long-term planning. Managers for whom

climate means business debated over the role their companies play in mitigating climate change, expressing their frustration with the uncertainty surrounding European and national regulatory frameworks. Without clear incentives to invest in new technologies, they argued, solutions will not be deployed on time. Regardless, the main message was that companies, despite fuzzy regulation, are pioneering new ways of tackling climate change.

Finnish Climate Advocate Anna Kumpulainen said: participating at Nordic Climate Solutions gave valuable insight in what's happening in other Nordic countries – in business as well as in the public sector. This, and networking with other Climate Advocates offered good ideas to our own Challenge Europe climate projects.

Dragos Talvescu, a Climate Advocate based in Norway meant that the highlight of the first day of his trip to Copenhagen was the British Council networking event. Most of the former and current Danish Climate Advocates met with the visiting Climate Advocates from Northern Ireland and Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Norway.

The evening was devoted to talks about the Kyoto protocol, its ratification, the subsequent 14 Conventions of the Parties preceding COP15, as well as the bureaucratic apparatus surrounding the negotiations over a new binding agreement. Moreover, Climate Advocates discussed their projects, motivations to be a Climate Advocate, plans and interests apart Challenge Europe. Climate Advocates meant the evening was a great opportunity to get to know each other better, make new friends and establish future possible collaborations. As Dragos told the British Council: "It was a wonderful evening and most people did not leave before midnight!"