



Margrethe Vestagers tale ved The Danish Recovery and Resilience Plan

Taler

Margrethe Vestager
Ledende næstformand i
Europa-Kommissionen

Dato

20. marts 2023

Sted

København

Introduction

Good morning,

Often in life, if something is worth doing, it is probably not easy to do. Most Danes know this very well. In fact I think it's fair to say this is a key factor behind a lot of Danish success stories. It's no accident that when you look at the World Economic Forum's 2020 report on Global Competitiveness, Denmark ranks among the highest countries, for a whole range of indicators - from digital skills to updating infrastructure and effectiveness of public institutions. Indicators of well-being consistently show Denmark as one of the happiest places on Earth to live.

We Danes don't like to congratulate ourselves. I don't think it's in our nature. But sometimes we should: Because Denmark's success did not come automatically, and it has not been easy to achieve. Rather, it is the result of decades of careful policymaking; good business decisions; investing in and benefitting from the EU's Single Market; which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. And most especially, we owe it to the investment, work and commitment made by the Danish people.

This question is how we take that success forward, into the next 30 years.

Planning for transition

Ultimately, this is what today's discussion is all about. The Danish Recovery and Resilience Plan sets out the key contours for how we continue our positive drive into the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and beyond.

It is first and foremost a great opportunity for Denmark. The value it brings to Denmark cannot be measured solely in terms of the 11 billion kroner in grant money. That's a lot of money, yes. But the true value of the EU Recovery Plan for Denmark is much greater, because it is based on two things: Strategy and Focus.

First, the Danish Recovery and Resilience Plan is strategic. Denmark's plans and priorities are aligned with those of other EU countries, creating important synergies and ensuring positive spillovers. In this way, Danish companies that innovate green and digital technologies will find their export markets expanded thanks to the recovery plans in other countries.

Second, the Plan is focused. Let's be honest. Coming out of the pandemic and the energy crisis will always create momentum for recovery. That is how economic cycles work. But the Recovery Plan directs this momentum towards precisely those areas where we can achieve long term prosperity and make good on our promises to the next generation: I'm speaking of course about the digital and green transitions.

This is a lot easier said than done. The digital transition brings with it enormous benefits, but also substantial risks - whether that is about keeping our children safe and healthy online, or about keeping digital markets open, fair and contestable. The skills challenge, even here in Denmark, is enormous. And with

new technologies like ChatGPT or the Metaverse developing all the time - we have to constantly stay alert for new risks.

The same is true for the Green Transition. Whether it is about overcoming climate scepticism, ensuring that the transition does not come at the expense of Europe's most vulnerable, or remaining vigilant against the risk of greenwashing, getting to climate neutrality will not be easy.

The digital transition in the Danish Plan

But in policy as in life, the things that are worth doing are never easy. A successful digital transformation will bolster economic resilience and safeguard Denmark's place in the global competitiveness rankings. This is about more than just Danish ICT companies and their export potential. It is about every Danish industry - integrating AI and machine learning into business practices increases efficiency across the board.

The Danish Recovery Plan shows clearly that the government understands this

importance - two elements that I think are particularly relevant are digitisation support for SMEs and extending rural broadband coverage. Not alone do these priorities show the value of rural regions and small businesses to our economy, they also demonstrate a commitment to the social dimension of digital policy - for a fully digital Denmark to succeed, it cannot afford to leave anyone behind. Sole traders must benefit just as much as large companies. Thisted must benefit just as much as Frederiksberg.

The green transition in the Danish Plan

The exact same can be said of the green transition. I still hear far too many voices saying - in one way or another - that we cannot afford to honour our commitments to climate neutrality. First of all, we cannot afford not to honour them. Europe just experienced the mildest winter on record, and it follows one of the hottest summers on record. The scientific consensus is now overwhelming. We must achieve climate neutrality, we must maintain/keep temperature increases to within an acceptable level. If we fail, the consequences for us, but mainly for our children and grandchildren can be unimaginable.

The good news is that we can also make this transition growth friendly, in a number of ways. First, by exploiting the synergies between digital and green. For example, with 5G technology fully deployed and self-driving cars already advanced, we can begin the move towards smart cities - a shift that can reduce

road emissions massively. Second, green technologies are themselves an engine for growth. The sooner Danish industry makes this shift, the better placed it will be to lead as the green transition is rolled out across the globe. This opens fresh business and growth opportunities.

Denmark's Recovery and Resilience Plan fully reflects this thinking. Reforms and investments under the Plan will contribute to the government's major policy objective of reducing CO2 emissions by 70% by 2030 - in line with the European Green Deal and among the most ambitious plans of any EU country. We always hear from business that they can redirect investments but they need clear signals about where to go.

This is what the Plan provides. The 1.8 billion kroner allocation to green research and development sets a clear priority for exploiting Denmark's competitive advantages in the knowledge economy. Already Denmark is a frontrunner in clean tech and renewables - especially wind. I can well imagine that in a decade's time, the energy islands being constructed here will inspire the rest of the world - with the work overseen by skilled Danish engineers.

Meanwhile, the 1.3 billion kroner allocation of funding to the green transition of agriculture and the environment can help address outstanding concerns around habitats and groundwater quality.

Finally, Denmark's very ambitious green tax reform provides a window for businesses to kick-start green investments, in preparation for the increase in taxes on CO2 emissions.

The European Green Deal and supporting policies

Important as national measures are, they are still only one part of the story. The European Green Deal, which the Commission presented in December 2019, aims to make Europe the first climate- neutral continent by 2050. Building on the Green Deal, in 2021 the Commission tabled the Fit for 55 package, a comprehensive set of proposals on climate, energy, land use, transport and taxation - all with the goal in mind of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. Political agreement was reached last year for several files, and we expect final agreement on additional proposals soon.

But the real work starts once the ink is dry: Implementation. This is where all sectors of the economy must play their part. We need a change in individual mindsets and in business practices. How we produce. How we consume. How

we do business. This is a whole-of-society shift in thinking.

Which is not to say policymakers are off the hook! We still have a lot more to do. For one thing, we must gear our industrial policy and trade policy to make sure the products and raw materials need for the Green Deal are available - whether that is for wind turbines, heat pumps, batteries or semiconductors. High energy prices triggered by the war in Ukraine and the changing geopolitical environment make these supply chain issues more challenging. We have to think carefully, and we have to think ahead.

That is why we presented a Green Deal Industrial Plan last month and why we have just tabled proposals to ramp up clean tech manufacturing and ensure a sustainable supply of critical raw materials.

Conclusion

I've been in Brussels for some time now. I've seen a lot of hard negotiations on difficult files. I can tell you that with so many different voices at the table, it is

almost never easy to get really big things done.

I can also tell you that what we are doing now with the green and digital transition represents an even higher level of ambition. And with acknowledgment that there's no way around solving these challenges together. We have gone bigger this time. So there is no way everything will go smoothly.

But I am convinced we will deliver on our promises and make Europe stronger, cleaner and safer than ever before. The same way we got through the financial crisis. The same way we got through the pandemic.

Because in life, if something is worth doing, it is probably not easy to do. Thank you.

Kilde

ec.europa.eu

Kildetype

Dokumentation på online medie

Tags

Politisk tale

URI

<https://www.dansketaler.dk/tale/margrethe-vestagers-tale-ved-the-danish-recovery-and-resilience-plan>