

## ***Governance for Sustainability***

Speech by Tommy Eggers, Political Member of the Board of Health and Sustainable Development, City of Aalborg  
Province of Modena, 25 January 2008

Dear Participants, dear colleagues

[Slide 1]

First of all I would like to congratulate you all with the 10 years anniversary on your Local Agenda 21 processes here in the Province of Modena and with your excellent result on sustainable development reached so far. I am indeed very pleased for having been invited to take part in the celebrations and to learn about the experiences from yet another signatory to the Aalborg Commitments. It is always very beneficial to go abroad to visit and learn from colleagues in other local governments around Europe on sustainable development, within the same framework of the Aalborg Commitments.

Before coming to my presentation let me briefly introduce myself and the City of Aalborg to you.

My name is Tommy Eggers and I am political member of the Board for Health and Sustainable Development and member of the City Council.

The board and the department were established only one year ago with the main purpose of enhancing Sustainable Governance in the City. The Board is

responsible for the co-ordination of sustainability, health and other important cross-cutting issues within the municipal administration. Uniting strategies on health and sustainable development gives us an excellent opportunity in bringing people into the centre of our efforts and to adjust our strategies on environmental quality and sustainability accordingly.

[Slide 2]

As you may know Aalborg is located in the northern part of Denmark and is today the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city in Denmark. For those of you who have had the opportunity of visiting our city will know that the city is attractively located on the banks of the LimFjord connecting the North Sea to the Baltic Sea between Denmark and Sweden. The city was originally founded by the Vikings as a trading settlement over a thousand years ago.

[Slide 3]

The city has continually attracted businesses throughout its history, and offers today excellent facilities and company domiciles, a successful university and well-developed infrastructure. The city also has outstanding research and development facilities in for instance the field of communication and engineering businesses.

The city has 192.000 inhabitants, 121.000 living in urban areas. The yearly municipal budget is about 1,7 billion Euros

[Slide 4]

As representatives of local governments we have a huge responsibility in creating sustainable and healthy societies for the well-being of our citizens and future generations. This requires strong political commitment locally and partnerships with our local stakeholders to set clear and ambitious targets on sustainability. Furthermore it is pivotal that we convert the political commitments into necessary actions and allocate the necessary resources in order to secure the right balance between environmental protection, social equity and economic prosperity.

The city of Aalborg has had considerable focus on sustainable development for many years. Our main sustainability milestones, so far, have been:

The Aalborg Charter from 1994:

Defining sustainable development by carrying the message from Rio forward to local government in: Thinking global - Acting locally.

Our Local Strategy on Sustainable development from 2003:

This combined with our overall municipal strategy setting targets on sustainable development.

Aalborg Commitments:

As you all know Aalborg Commitments was adopted in Aalborg 2004 at the 4<sup>th</sup> European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign conference.

A new Local Strategy for Sustainable Development for the next 4 years and ahead. This new strategy is to be adopted next month:

The new strategy is based on the requirements of the Aalborg Commitment in producing a baseline review as starting point for a Participatory Target Setting Process. For your information it is required by law in Denmark that local governments are to adopt new strategies on sustainable development every 4th year following the local elections for the city council. This goes very well in line with the requirements in the Aalborg process, enabling us to: both increase our efforts and secure ongoing improvements in our sustainability performance.

The coming strategy will set targets for both new as well as existing efforts to be enhanced during the next 4 years and beyond.

Our baseline review identified a number of strengths and weaknesses in our present policies and strategies. The participatory target setting process

involving local stakeholders from industry, agriculture, NGOs etc., confirmed the findings of the baseline review by stressing 4 key challenges to give special attention to our new strategy.

[Slide 5]

Before presenting you with the 4 challenges let me briefly elaborate on what the Aalborg Commitments furthermore has achieved in Aalborg.

- It has enhanced the political commitments to sustainable development
- It has raised interest and awareness from local stakeholders and society
- It has helped us scoping Sustainability.
- It has provided us with more cross-sectorial action, heading for common targets and reduced specific sectorial thinking and political rhetoric's.
- It has given us beneficial networking possibilities on knowledge and experience exchange around Europe

[Slide 6]

And now to the 4 key challenges which are Climate change, Groundwater protection, Natur and Waste

[Slide 7]

Climate Change:

On climate change we will not find better opportunities or arguments than at the present time in terms of political awareness and commitment to adopt ambitious strategies and targets to fight climate change. This is valid both on reducing climate gas emissions and adopting measures.

The new strategy will set new targets for CO<sub>2</sub> reductions from 2012 to continue our existing efforts, which entails reducing 33% before 2012. The tools in focus today for reaching our 2012 target are:

- utilisation of the surplus heat from industry which today covers about 98% of the energy supply in the district heating system.
- renewable energy from wind, biomass and wood & straw, which today covers 10 % of the consumed energy in the municipality.
- energy savings mainly in industry has reduced the energy consumption, which resulted in a drop of about 16% the last 10 years.

New means to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions after 2012 is to displace more fossil fuels by more renewable energy from solar panels, biogas from agriculture, energy efficient buildings, district cooling, energy management in buildings etc.

[Slide 8]

Climate adoption:

The other challenge on climate change is to cope with the climate changes already under going such as higher sea level, more storms, more heavy rain, raise in temperature etc. with all its implications on urban planning, infrastructure and nature protection. We have started the mapping of scenarios and consequences by having this map produced showing which areas along our harbour front will be flooded by different scenarios. As part of the new strategy we will therefore adopt a separate climate strategy on this issue.

[Slide 9]

Groundwater protection:

The groundwater in the Aalborg area is very poorly protected from a geological point of view. Combined with intensive land use in the drinking water catchment areas, it is a big challenge to secure a continued supply of fresh and clean drinking water based on untreated water from the underground as we have today. We have, for years, done a lot in protecting the groundwater from pollutants from industry, agriculture and urban development. Despite of this 60 % of our drinking water today holds a content of more than 25 mg/l of nitrate which is the

recommended maximum level for water quality in Denmark. Compared to this, 80% of all drinking water dwellings in Denmark have water quality below a limit of 1 mg/l nitrate.

Main source of nitrate contamination is agriculture. We are testing new approaches to avoid further contamination. One of the most successful examples is to make agreements on environmental friendly farming with farmers situated in the most important water catchment areas, to agree on set-aside areas, planting forests etc. It is an expensive but often necessary approach, expensive because we have to compensate the farmers for possible reduced earnings.

The water quality is also threatened by contamination with chemicals from industry and agriculture. Over the last 10 years 8 drillings have been closed down due to pollution of pesticides and petrochemicals. To avoid further contamination we have cleaned up several polluted former Industry sites and in our planning we are also very aware of not to plan for new Industry in the most sensitive areas.

In the new strategy this effort in taking care of our drinking water will continue with unreduced speed.

[Slide10]

Nature:

Nature is under pressure from industry, agriculture, urbanisation and other human activities. Agriculture in Denmark is very extensively driven and that has a crucial impact on nature quality, quality of streams and lakes and on biodiversity following the use of fertilizer, pesticides etc.

Nature in Denmark is often divided in smaller areas due to the intensive exploitation of land. Therefore one important target in our new strategy is to improve planning of a more coherent nature for the benefit of biodiversity.

Since the municipal reconstruction in Denmark last year, the municipalities are now main responsible for nature protection and conservation. More than 10% of the total municipal area is classified as NATURA 2000 protected. This means we have a special obligation in protecting these areas and improve habitats for flora and fauna.

The new strategy will contain drastic requirements for agri- and aqua culture to reduce their impact on nature, as we have to reach good ecological conditions according to the Water frame directive. The Danish government expects huge investments in the coming years to reach this target before 2015. One calculation says about 20 mil. Euro's within each municipality.

[Slide 11]

Waste:

The quantity of Waste is still increasing also in Denmark. This is mainly due to the increased construction activities during the last decade and the general economic development among people. People in Denmark are simply richer today than 10 years ago which results in increased consumption of products and thus, waste production. During the last decade we have seen about 25% rise in the quantity of waste in Aalborg. This gives us a huge challenge in handling, sorting and in the disposal of the waste in the most environmentally efficient way. Our targets and strategies for the waste management are concentrated on maximizing re-use or re-cycling of waste and limitation the waste for land filling. Waste not suitable for recycling is incinerated and utilized for energy production. Status today is that 76% of all industrial waste is re-used or re-cycled, 13% disposed at landfill and 11% incinerated, which more than complies with the national targets for waste management.

Regarding waste from households 59% is incinerated, 34 % re-used and only 7% land filled.

[Slide 12]

To demonstrate to you, how we see waste as a resource and not a problem in Aalborg, I would like to end my presentation by showing you a presentation of our publicly owned Waste Management company: Reno Nord. Their main activities are incineration of

waste, controlled landfill, recycling of waste from construction activities, handling of CFC gas from refrigerators and handling and recycling of waste from electric and electronic equipment.

The film focuses mainly of the newly build incineration plant and how waste is handled and disposed and the landfill outside the city. Lean back and enjoy the film which will last 7-8 minutes.

I hope my presentation gave you some ideas on how we deal with sustainable development. You are always more than welcome to contact or visit us for more information and exchange of experiences.

[Slide 13]

Thank you for your attention.

Start DVD film