

Welcome to the Ernst Strüngmann Forum podcasts—a series of discussions designed to explore how people collaborate under real-life settings. Joining us in the series are high-profile experts from diverse areas in society, whose experiences will lend insight to what collaboration is, what it requires, and why it might break down. This series is produced in collaboration with the Convergent Science Network.

P. Verschure This is the Convergent Science Network and Ernst Strüngmann Forum podcast on collaboration and together with my colleague Andreas Roepstorff, we're speaking with Connie Hedegaard. Welcome Connie, to our podcast.

C. Hedegaard Thank you very much.

P. Verschure Great that you could join us. Before we delve into the topic of collaboration, it would be extremely helpful if you could give us a sketch of your personal trajectory that brought you to where you are today in your professional life.

C. Hedegaard I was a minister of the environment in 2004 in Denmark. I guess it was on day four there, that a guy in the ministry looked into my eyes and said: "And by the way, what do you intend to do with the climate?" That was quite a question to have after four days in office. I would say that, since then, that has been one of the topics that I have really been working with, because my sense is that the more you know about climate change, the more you also understand why it's so urgent that we address it, that we cope with it. And that's what I did for five or six years as a minister, then five years as an EU commissioner, and for the last six years or so from many different roles in different courts, where the golden thread would still very much be on what to do about climate change, in business, in the investment community, in organizations, in the university, and other places.

P. Verschure Before you became a minister, you came from an academic environment?

C. Hedegaard No. I have an academic degree, but before that I worked for 14 years as a journalist and had a late-night current affairs magazine in Denmark known as *Deadline*, where you could decide each night what should be the topic of the day. What is the most important thing to discuss today? And like many other people, I thought, if it was going to be climate, can we find something else because it's complex, it's difficult. But that was at that time. Today it would be much more natural, and you can assume that people have a basic knowledge about what the challenge is.

P. Verschure So, Connie, what is collaboration and what is it good for?

C. Hedegaard Well, as you can hear, I have a political background. In politics you can't do anything unless you collaborate. It's not a one-man or one-woman show, you really have to work with others in order to achieve anything. That is also sometimes where I see the academic world and the political world clashing because as a researcher—I know that many researchers are collaborating with others—you often can sit there and pursue your own truth. In politics, it's not enough that you believe that you yourself know what the truth is. You

have to compromise. You have to give in. You have to identify landing zones. So, compromise and collaboration, I would say, that is built in at least in the Danish political system, at least in the European policymaking process. You cannot achieve anything unless you understand not just how to work with other policymakers, but also understand that decisions are not just political decisions. They are not made only within the formal political system. There are many other actions taking place in the decision making, formally and informally. You really have to work with knowledge institutions, you have to work with business, you have to work with NGOs, you have to work with civil society, you really have to work with all sorts of actors. For example, back in 2014, we finally adopted at the EU level our 40 percent climate targets for 2030, and that was in the run up to the Paris Agreement. If people really knew how many buttons you had to push inside and outside the political world to make that happen, they would see that it does sometimes clash with the textbook perception of how politics are being done because the perception is that politics is being done by the parliament or the European institution; there are people elected to do that. But it's a much more complex game, and I think it becomes increasingly important for different stakeholders who want to deal with the complex issues of our time to understand the complexity of decision making if they are going to make themselves heard. But for us, for instance, and for the academic community, to understand how these systems work, I would say is crucial to bring your knowledge into play. If you don't understand these processes, you can produce a lot of interesting and relevant knowledge but afterwards be puzzled: How come the knowledge I have produced is not being reflected? There is something there: how different spheres have to understand each other and benefit from each other and co-fertilize each other. This is something we need to do much better but is extremely difficult. It's easy to say that we should get rid of the silos. Everybody would sign up to that. But how do we do it? How do we actually work across silos, and not just across different knowledge hubs and specialties and expertise, but also between different policy levels, local, regional, and national.

- P. Verschure If we step back from the complex processes you're describing, what are the defining features that make them collaborative or not? What makes it collaboration? What do people share to make it collaborative?
- C. Hedegaard The first thing is to have a shared perception that there is a problem, at least in the political world. The other thing, if you are going to have real collaboration leading to anything, you need to be able to understand your counterpart's interests. Sometimes, when results are not being produced, it is out of a lack of profound understanding of where your counterparts are coming from. What is their profound interest? Where do they see the problem differently than you do? To understand the other. And again, to accept that you cannot have 100 percent your own way because the others

have their own interests. Understanding that is probably the first prerequisite for being able to create any progress.

- A. Roepstorff It almost redefines the political process as one that has to deal with collaboration. With experience in both the Danish context and the European context, would you say that the same things count in these two arenas? Or did you experience fundamental differences in how collaboration unfolded and what might make it stop?
- C. Hedegaard I'm sure that there are differences, but I think that the main observation is that it is not as different as one would assume. If you follow the debates in Denmark, but I'm sure it goes for every member state of the European Union, people would normally have this perception that it's so different down there in Brussels. And then you find out that, no, actually it's not. Yes, it makes a difference whether you make a regulation for 5.8 million people in Denmark or for 500 million people in Europe. But basically, the mechanisms to arrive at a decision are not that different. The interests, the lobbyists, they are even stronger at the European level. It goes without saying that if you have not just one industry consideration but instead 27, one for each member state working at the European level, they become really powerful and have many resources. The sizes and the proportion and the dimension can be different, but the tools to make policy are more or less the same. And perhaps to the surprise of some, it does not necessarily take more time. If you have an idea that you want to carry through, it does not necessarily take more time to get a big piece of legislation through at the European level than at a national one. I guess that is also linked to the fact that the processes and procedures are not, in principle, that different.
- A. Roepstorff You mentioned that after just the fifth day as a minister for the environment, it became clear to you that something needed to be done about the climate. And in a sense, since then you haven't really looked back. That has been the main focus of your work. Do you think that there is something particular about collaborating with respect to the climate and similar long-term, large-scale projects relative to other types of political work? Or are the same mechanisms at the stake in the same toolbox that's available?
- C. Hedegaard I think that there are two differences. You touched upon the one: the short term versus the longer term. Now, unfortunately, we are starting to feel climate change. It is not a theoretical thing happening 10 years from now. It's kicking in; we feel it. It's becoming more of a short-term political issue, and in a sense, that is good because that is where it should be. But I think that there is a difference in the complexity because you cannot cope in a cost-effective, meaningful, and fast enough way with climate change, unless you work across all the silos or with the silos. It's about energy, obviously. It's about transportation, it's about how we produce our food, it's about our consumption patterns: that is, it's very much at the core of the way we grow our economies. It's about geostrategy. It's about our relations to other parts

of the world, and so forth. It has it all. It's also a security issue. It's about refugees. The complexity when it comes to climate change, I would argue, is even bigger than, for example, reforming a school or retirement system. It is more complex also because it cannot just be a national topic. It is perforce international. That, of course, adds a layer of complexity.

- P. Verschure You have identified two key features: to understand that there's a common problem and to have empathy with the perspective of the other parties, or silos. If a successful collaboration starts with having a common view of the problem, for climate change, this is not necessarily the case. So how do you shape a common understanding of the problem?
- C. Hedegaard When it comes to climate, the IPCC has helped a lot, contrary to many other problems. Biodiversity, for example, is also a hugely complex issue, and there's a lot of science there, but the structured presentation of science in the climate field through the International Panel on Climate Change has helped provide a profound, joint understanding of the problem. It has taken much too long for my taste. But today, even Saudi Arabia, an oil nation, or the gas and oil coal states, as we saw in Glasgow recently, do not anymore question whether there is a problem or not. The scientific case has been made and has been accepted, and that is one of the reasons why it seems that the world, broadly speaking, is now moving more and faster into the "hows": how to do it, what to do. Ten years ago, a number of countries would still take endless time and international forums questioning whether there was a real issue or not, or whether we could wait for action or not. Science has been extremely powerful there.
- P. Verschure You're implying that all the actors, even within the complex debate on climate change, are, in the end, rational and influenced by facts. Do you believe that?
- C. Hedegaard If it were so simple, then the world would have gotten its act together, say, 20 years ago. It takes a long time to get to the stage where you stand on a common denominator of profound recognition that we must be science based.
- P. Verschure How do you get there? That's the surprising thing. If everyone would have been rational and fact oriented, we would have done it after the Club of Rome wrote its report, but that didn't happen. What's the problem? How do you overcome it?
- C. Hedegaard I think two things. The IPCC reports have become even more precise, even more serious, and even more knowledge has been produced. It has also helped that reality kicked in. And that is, of course, the negative. Saying that is not enough. Ten or 15 years ago, it was not enough. The science warned people what would come by 2020. Somehow, humans are constructed in such a way that many people need to stand in their flooded basement before they really understand that this is what they were warning us against. It's ever

more irrefutable science that even business, even the oil companies cannot ignore, combined with reality kicking in. That includes the economic and human consequences being felt, pushing things further than would have otherwise been the case.

- P. Verschure I don't want to be polemic, but this point you make about reality kicking in: you could argue that science has failed to get the message across because we first have to see islands disappear and jungles disappear and so on before a significant group of actors...
- C. Hedegaard You could say that science has not been strong enough, even in an area where they are stronger and where they are being heard more than in so many other areas. But still, we got less than two degrees into the Copenhagen Accord from 2009, and there scientists were still warning us that we would really feel climate change by 2020. So, I don't think it's fair to say that people only reacted when reality kicked in. There are also different cultures and traditions. In Europe, we have a tradition for having science-based politics, not just in this area, but in general, so there would be an inclination to listen much more to warnings coming from science. All things being equal, that would have a stronger weight in the political debate in Europe, for instance, than compared to in some other areas. I also think, by the way, that in China, for instance, they would also do that kind of analysis, but maybe they do not have the same interests, or that somebody else should do more and things like that. There has been a slightly different discourse and discussion. But I think there are systems where it is natural to be science based and then there are political systems where that does not count as much.
- A. Roepstorff I would like to invite you into your machine room. We have been talking about general features of collaboration and situations where it might be more pertinent to need it. But you are also someone who has an enormous expertise in actually getting these things to work. And would it make sense to talk of a toolbox that you have available once you enter a room and you know you need to come out with people being able to collaborate in ways that they couldn't do before. What's in your toolbox when you're facing a situation like this?
- C. Hedegaard I think trust is absolutely a key tool. You must have built it up. It can often be personal trust, or it could be through an institution. There should not be too much suspicion; you know that your counterpart means what he or she says or is serious about this, and they know the same about you. Also, to be prepared: that was what I meant by understanding where your counterpart is coming from. What is their core interest? What is the debate in their country? It's easy to say to them, in general, you should do this or that, but you also have to understand that they still have 300 million people without access to electricity, for example. So what is of interest to your Indian counterpart? That is, how on earth will they get electricity to the 300 million citizens who

haven't got it yet? To understand that, to get to know what you want, but also to have reflected on what you can live with. Often I think that the way Europe makes policies—no matter what kind of topic is discussed—it takes such a long time for the 27 member states to agree a position, that they are so happy when they have reached a position, and then they go out into the world and hope that the rest of the world will subscribe to this position, but surprise, they don't, they have their own position. How can you convene all the interests you need on your side, but also think through the next step? Where are we going to land this so that we will not just have discussions where people sit with their ideal positions but are not inclined to move toward each other. If you take, for instance, international climate conferences, that is often the case. There's the posturing. People tell you what they would like to see. Fine. And that can be good on day one, but it's not so good if that's what they also do on days 10 and 12. How do you bend your wills toward each other and identify landing zones? And I think that those who are good at identifying landing zones, at reading the room, at reading the different positions, and identifying what could be common language, they will also often be those who can make a real impact on the outcome.

- A. Roepstorff You talk about the importance of reading the room. Is there something about being physically together in the same room that matters in these situations? There has been a lot of discussion about whether Brexit would have panned out in the same way if people had been able to actually meet up rather than meeting on Zoom. Might meeting face-to-face be important to accomplish the last steps toward shared understanding and decision making? What's your experience of this?
- C. Hedegaard I'm not sure Brexit is a good example because there were four years of Brexit talks before we had the COVID lockdown. Even during COVID, there were many face-to-face meetings. In general, I would say video conferences can do a lot and are useful for many things, but you cannot read the room, you cannot read the faces. I can see you now, I can see the surface of you, but I do not see the small glimpses in the eyes, and so forth. If there are three of you in a Zoom room, it works. If you are seven, maybe it works. If you are 10, it's not possible. You cannot read what's really going on. I would say where there is real disagreement, it is really difficult to discuss that disagreement in a virtual meeting. There are so many things virtual meetings can do, like exchange of information, or you can get an impression of a person, or small groups can work together. But if it's a really tough negotiation, there I would argue that there are limitations, because a lot of unsaid things, a lot of body language is needed. I can zoom in on one and I can see his or her face, but I cannot read the room, so I cannot identify landing zones that can work for the room in a Zoom meeting. The more disagreement there is, the less workable the Zoom tool will be.

- A. Roepstorff Do you have a routine you do to prepare yourself to enter into a physical, contested space? Because, as you say, it's about being mentally prepared, it's about paying attention to the others. It's also about having your particular presence that allows other people to see you and read you. Have you identified anything you do to be as constructive and effective as possible once you enter that concrete space?
- C. Hedegaard I think that to really listen, not just hear what they say, but really listen, that is important. To somehow show that you are willing to compromise. It depends on the situation. Sometimes you may go into a tough negotiation where you have to show that you're not willing to compromise. Yet being in a listening mode and understanding what is not being said, that is probably one of the most important tools you have when you go into a negotiation room.
- A. Roepstorff And how do you indicate to others that you are listening? If the other person can't see the listening going on, perhaps it doesn't work.
- C. Hedegaard Are you talking about the physical or virtual meeting now?
- A. Roepstorff Ideally in a physical meeting, but it counts for a virtual meeting as well. If the defining features are trust and both sides listening to each other, how are they communicated?
- C. Hedegaard In the political field you can normally see when people are deviating from their written scripts. If you're a minister or a commissioner, you will not go into a room without having some form of written preparation. But you know, if I am sitting there with the Chinese minister, I am in no doubt whether we are really listening to each other. Are we getting into what it is interesting? Are we getting into the core, or are we hiding behind strange language or not wanting to go into the core? You can read that. But when we talk about international negotiations, then it requires that you, in your preparation or your experience, have some understanding of what kind of culture the person sitting in front of you comes from. If it is the Japanese, it would be one thing, for the Chinese, it's another thing, or if it is another European, it's a third thing. How frank can you be? How polite or not polite can you be? The person should not lose face. It's important to know all these cultural codes. Or if you don't know them, then at least be very much aware that you don't know them, if you understand what I mean.
- P. Verschure You could say that negotiation is at the periphery of a collaboration because it is a feeler to create a collaborative process with that opponent. How does that movement then happen? How do you approach that?
- C. Hedegaard Say you want to do some legislation for car standards, and the car associations, by definition, will be against that. They say it will cost us too dearly, it is technologically impossible. You will hear all the arguments. They, of course, know that when they say it's technologically impossible that the commissioner has a rather clear picture of what is feasible and what is not

feasible. But it's a game. Both parties know that it is in their mutual interest at a certain point, when their respective positions have been made very clear, to enter into that space where you're trying to collaborate and find solutions together. How can I push the politician in that example? How can I push them as far as they can go? I cannot push them further than they have a mandate for, or further than they really believe they can go without losing the competition to people from outside Europe, or whatever. So how can I push them to the maximum? And they will, of course, do the opposite. But from a certain point, both parties will know that it is in our mutual interest to work together on this, because they would fear that otherwise some crazy politicians will just come up with something in the late night hours that they have no influence on and which they would not like. And on the other hand, seen from our perspective, if we don't bring them in, they can mobilize lots of workers and politicians in their regions that get nervous and all that. In such an example, both will go to the utmost of what they can do, and such a negotiation can take a long time and it's not necessarily solved in one or two meetings. In the European tradition at least, nobody always gets it 100 percent their way. It's in the heart of our democratic tradition that we know that I have to give you some, but you also have to give me some. And it's sometimes very much unsaid but felt. When in this collaboration is it my turn to give you something? It's not something you can write down. But it is felt in the room that, as long as we come from the same democratic tradition, then there is a sense of what is a fair way of working together on this, where is the fair deal.

P. Verschure In your view, are these structures in the European Commission geared toward building collaborative engagements in terms of the protocols, how they are structured and organized, the communication?

C. Hedegaard No, I think it holds for many of our political institutions—like climate, the area I know best—that the way our organizations, our institutions, our procedures work are often much too slow. That is probably where we will be challenged the most in years to come if we are going to deliver on all of the nice targets on climate and things like that. That everybody should have a say, and it takes so many weeks to go back and forth, and somehow our systems, our administrations are not equipped with the mandate to act across the silos. Each has their own silo-created mandate, if you will, but we need people to work together across silos in an expedient and effective manner. Do they have the mandate for that? If they don't, we spend a lot of time sending files from one silo to the next, up and down, and then up and down the next. Then it starts to feel like we cannot move as fast and as urgent as the targets that we have set, that we want to achieve.

P. Verschure You indicate something really important: this might suggest that to support this notion of consensus and trust, you pay a price and that price is time. Would you see it like that?



- C. Hedegaard I agree. A very good example is permitting. It could be for solar, or wind, or whatever. We hear from everybody that it takes forever. In Germany, I think, the average time to get a permit through is maybe seven years or something like that. So, it's very democratic, it's very inclusive, and everybody can have a say. But in the end, we lose time and by losing time, we also risk losing competitiveness and we risk losing some of the jobs that those people that we want to include in all this are dependent on. So, we have a real dilemma here, particularly when we compare other systems, like the Chinese system. If they decide they want to be world leaders in something in their five-year plan, and they need a certain technology, they throw money into the field, resources, scientists, without all of these democratic procedures. So then in Europe, where we want to stick to our democratic procedures, where we want decisions to have legitimacy, how can we take decisions a bit more efficiently, so they are a bit more fit for purpose, and still keep the core value of listening to people, having all the elements on the table before we take a decision? There I think we have a huge dilemma, a huge democratic challenge in front of us.
- A. Roepstorff You have mentioned a few times the need to work across silos and the difficulty in making sure that each silo doesn't follow their own logic, but that they all commit to a larger perspective. Could you reflect on a few successes you have had where, if you succeeded in making things work across silos, what it took to do. Were there any tricks that made it possible? Were there any insights that made it possible to transcend silo thinking?
- C. Hedegaard During the financial crisis in Europe, for example, we actually managed to get all the member states behind setting a target for 20, 30, 40 percent reductions in Europe. That was not a given. How could we do that at a time of a banking crisis, a financial crisis, with 26 million unemployed people in Europe, and so on and so forth? There were many other things on decision makers' minds, and maybe it's sad to say, but it is not enough just to come with the scientific case for climate. You also have to be able to prove the economic case and the job case. These things have to go hand in hand because if you cannot do that, you cannot convince those with the other portfolios. But if you can put all this together, you can also work with those who may wonder from the outset why they should bother with it. Suddenly they can see the co-benefits, the jobs, that it makes economic sense, that this will scale up innovation. You have to identify many elements to overcome silo reluctance, and I think that was what we did there. But we had the economic case ready. Climate or environment people who would normally be in their own silo also have to have much more economic insight and economic expertise or they will not succeed in convincing those from the other silos.
- A. Roepstorff If you are projecting 20 or 25 years into the future at a time when Europe is in a big crisis, the arguments for economy and jobs are perhaps difficult to validate and support. Wasn't it also a matter of creating a larger vision or greater urgency? Don't you also need a larger narrative that makes it possible

to unfold all of these things to transcend the silos because no one knows what's going to happen in the job market in 20 or 25 years. There's so much uncertainty related to that. Was there an element of creating a larger narrative in it, too?

- C. Hedegaard Yes. But I think that if you are talking about the EU and its institutions, since 2005 or 2006 there has been a general acceptance of the science, of the overall narrative, if you want. You can go back and you can find all sorts of European leaders saying, yes, we must do this. Yes, because of climate. Yes, or else this will happen. In 2010 we already had our 2050 roadmap. We had the pricing of carbon in the Emissions Trading Scheme back in 2006 and 2007 entering into force. So I think that the urgency was there, the narrative was there. What I'm saying is that when you are in the midst of a crisis, an economic crisis or now COVID, then you need to prove that, if you are serious about the agenda that we all agree upon is needed, then you must also be able to prove not only where you want to go, but also how you can get there without harming the jobs situation as we go. I think it's more the other way around. The basic fight to get people in Europe, or political leaders in Europe, to accept that there is an overall climate change challenge that we need to address, I think that battle was won some time ago. When Ursula von der Leyen was going to become the new president of the EU Commission, she could not land that job until she had pledged to make climate part of the key narrative for Europe. So that is a good thing in this and the strong thing, and that is what they have to deliver on now.
- A. Roepstorff Do you think that hope or fear was more important in shaping these larger narratives? Because, again, you are projecting into the future. It can both be the fear of what might happen otherwise, or the hope that, if we do this right, we are going to also have a competitive advantage relative to others. Does it make sense to separate these factors out?
- C. Hedegaard I think you need both. If you just tell people that it's about gloom and doom, then there is a part of the population that you will not get to open their ears to this kind of message. It's extremely important that there is also a positive narrative, that there are solutions that they can see themselves in and that the solutions are not just theoretical, but tangible, something you can see, something that you want to be part of. Having said that, though, I also do think that people need to understand the urgency. That there is a time factor is so crucial and you can only get that message across if now and then you also remind people of some of the not so nice facts. So, I think it's a combination. But if you only have the gloom and doom, I think that a portion of the population would say, okay, let's party while we still can. It's extremely important to have both. And that is why right now, one of the most important things in this collaborative effort that should bring us to where we need to go is that business industries come forward showing their solutions. If we go into digital solutions, to show how smart this tool or product is so that people want to be part of it. The electric car is a very, very good example. Once

people have had an electric car, they do not want to go back to a noisy diesel car. To have the solutions out there, I think that is absolutely key, not to move the 20 percent of front runners, but to carry the rest.

- P. Verschure You also indicated earlier the tradeoff between expediency, time, and maintaining consensus and trust. But if we take the climate crisis as our example, or COVID 19, European society is accelerating toward some really serious obstacles. Taking a more negative perspective on that, what is our plan B for the collaboration if this very slow process of maintaining trust and consensus is just not getting us there?
- C. Hedegaard That is always the problem, because as soon as you start to talk about Plan B in politics, then you will never, ever have fulfillment of plan A. But I think that one place to start is, and you mentioned yourself the pandemic, to take some of the courage that many political leaders showed during the pandemic by presenting in clear language to people what the danger is, what we are faced with here, and what the solutions are, even unpleasant solutions. We saw that those who actually did so gained respect from people, broadly speaking. One of the things that really frightens me is when policymakers are busy telling people that we can make the biggest transformation, maybe ever in the history of mankind, without anybody feeling anything or without it costing anybody anything. I think that people see through that. I think a much more straightforward conversation is needed, presenting some of the tough choices, and showing political leadership to get the knowledge out that people understand. People don't believe those policymakers who tell them that you don't have to change anything. It is not trustworthy. In regard to collaboration, as much as we have been discussing including big business in this conversation, I think it's high time to find deliberative ways to include interested citizens in this conversation. To have a much more deliberative democracy. Not asking people, what do you want to do with climate? How would people have meaningful answers to that? Instead, for instance, should it be more expensive to fly or not? Should it be cheaper to take the train than to fly? Things like that. Difficult political choices. Real choices have established ways to include interested citizens in those kind of deliberations. I think that that would make it much easier five to 10 years down the road.
- P. Verschure What you're saying goes back to the Enlightenment: if we give people the knowledge, then they will also do something with it. You're speaking to the intrinsic properties of the actors in the collaboration. You also mentioned the role of empathy and trust. From your perspective, when you walk into a room, do you feel that drive for collaboration is a given? Is it an intrinsic feature of us as humans, or is it something that you also have to cajole, and create, and force sometimes?
- C. Hedegaard Well, I think scientists would have to tell us whether it's an intrinsic feature of the human being. But I think that in enlightened societies including people who want to enter the conversation leads to better results than when you

think you can just do it at the top and then hope that people will follow. I think we should also pay more attention to better ways of including people in the conversation, for example with social media and the other digital options. My impression is that if you really are frank with people and you get the knowledge out there, people are not idiots, and they also understand why you do what you do, or why you decide what you decide. But I think it's correct that the really big risk we have in Europe in years to come now is an increased polarization, and not just because of climate. There are many other factors there, but climate can push into that direction. I see a huge risk in further polarization. To get knowledge out there, to get facts, to get straight talk out there, that is a prerequisite for avoiding that. What is also very much needed in the climate field is to send a price signal. There is a way to accommodate that, namely the way you create the tax system, the way you take care of people being fit for the jobs of the future through reskilling and upskilling. There really are many things that can be done so that people can see that this is also for me. It's not just something that those in power decide, and I'm just a victim of their decisions.

- P. Verschure But I was also thinking about the examples you mentioned earlier. As a commissioner, you walk in a room to negotiate with the Chinese minister, or you have to negotiate with the car industry. When you enter that room, do you assume these people are in this room to collaborate, or not?
- C. Hedegaard It depends very much on the situation. There will also be situations where you feel that your counterpart is not here to collaborate. Your counterpart is here to try to prevent or avoid that something happens. So you cannot always count on that. But normally I think that, at least in the political field, people are there to achieve some kind of outcome, some kind of common thing. And it can take too long, and it can be frustrating, but in the end, normally some kind of common sense prevails. In the climate field, too slow and too little, for sure. But I think that it's important to understand that it takes time also because if we talk about international politics, different countries have different interests, and then that takes a long time and effort to overcome. But at a certain point, there is recognition that now we all have an interest in trying to move forward. And often that point of recognition will come more or less at the same time as the economic interest. Big business, investors also start to see their interest in not holding back but moving forward.
- A. Roepstorff We have just a few minutes left and there are a few things I would like you to reflect on toward the end. In your current position as a board member of Aarhus, the KR Foundation, and of others, you also have the possibility to design structures of collaboration by thinking about how universities be organized. By thinking about which kind of grants to do, what kind of initiatives to launch. It's almost like designing a sphere within which particular types of collaboration can happen. Would you reflect a little bit on how you deal with that situation?

- C. Hedegaard Let's take an example. We now have this Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance. We formed an alliance of eleven countries signing up to go beyond oil and gas. Where did that come from? It did not come out of the blue. At the KR Foundation, we took the initiative some years ago for exactly what turned out to be this alliance. We convened a lot of interested philanthropic foundations and others, some knowledge people and asked: What do we do? We need to go beyond oil and gas. How do we get started? Other foundations chipped in. You broaden the circle, you work with stakeholders, and at a certain point, it is ripe, it is mature to bring it to the political arena. And then you've identified who could be interested, like Denmark or Costa Rica, or others, working with more and more states to sign up for this. You start, you see a need, and then you convene stakeholders around the table and the discussion starts from there, and you make sure you have some resources to put into it.
- A. Roepstorff You also mentioned that universities are struggling with being tied up in silos, inside disciplines, etc. Are there similar things that can be done at a university level to ensure that people work across disciplines?
- C. Hedegaard There you can try to do it by setting aside some strategic money for exactly that purpose because money is sometimes a good driver for that. But you must believe that new steps need to be taken into some interdisciplinary initiatives and not just the kind of interdisciplinary thing where some people come with one expertise, another, and another, and another, and then they sit there for three hours and then they each go back. To me, that is not truly interdisciplinary. How can you get different strengths of knowledge coming together, forming new insights, and taking them back to their own field afterward? You can do that, as we're doing in Aarhus, with some strategic measures, and saying if you really want to do that, there is money to be had. Another example is researchers doing a lot of research in the field of sustainability suddenly asking whether it means their own university should be sustainable. Should we change the way we travel? Should we change the way we attend conferences? It's not just something that we do research in, although that is where our biggest impact can be. We also have a responsibility for being a workspace for thousands of people every day. And people suddenly sat together, 100, 200 people, who wanted to do a sustainability strategy and be involved in that work across all areas at the university. People collaborating on a new way of being a university if you want. New dyads, new ways of handling things in the canteen, new ways of handling energy consumption, or the computers being bought, or the travel patterns, as I mentioned, or organizing conferences. Suddenly, it also comes to you, your place, and you have to work together to change things rather fast because otherwise it's embarrassing.
- P. Verschure To finish up, we have some rapid-fire questions for you. Do you believe that humans are able to maintain and establish sustainable collaboration?

- C. Hedegaard Yes, I think we are able, but I think it requires structures that are supportive of that, and we need to organize ourselves in a way that invites exactly that. It does not come automatically.
- P. Verschure If you could change one thing in humans by magic, what's the one thing you would change to make that happen?
- C. Hedegaard One thing?
- P. Verschure You can have two if you want.
- C. Hedegaard Then we are talking about really hypothetical things. When it comes to addressing climate change and our sustainability challenges, our inclination to look at our short-term interest is a huge obstacle, a huge barrier. I would hope that we would have a better sense of being part of a longer time frame, where saying that we have a responsibility for generations to come is not just a nice catchphrase, but that it was more embedded in our actual behavior so that we could replace this instant fulfillment of my interests and my needs here and now. If that could be replaced by a more holistic approach and the long-term thinking about what is good for the totality, that would make many things easier in the climate field.
- P. Verschure Wonderful. Connie Hedegaard, thank you very much for this conversation.
- C. Hedegaard Thank you. I hope you can use some of it.
- P. Verschure Yes, it was fabulous. Thank you very much for taking the time. I learned a lot.
- C. Hedegaard OK. Good luck with the whole project and stay in touch. It would be interesting to hear what comes out of this.
- P. Verschure We will follow up with you and keep you updated and we'll send you the recordings for your approval. Thank you Connie and have a great evening.
- C. Hedegaard Take care. You too.