

ESDNewsletter April 2017

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New ESDN Quarterly Report on “Communication and Awareness Raising in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: Activities and Challenges”

This Quarterly Report focuses on communication and awareness raising activities that are being employed regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the challenges that are being faced in its effective communication at the UN, national, sub-national, and stakeholder level. This report will be looking specifically at communication and awareness raising activities that go beyond consultation mechanisms, which many countries employ when dealing with and implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS). For the purposes of this Report, communication and awareness raising will not only focus on what types of communication and awareness raising tools the UN, national, sub-national, and stakeholder levels are using regarding the SDGs, but also how they are using them to spread awareness. Some examples of the tools and activities that will be discussed in this Report include, media campaigns, websites, videos, SDG guides, conferences on sustainable development, workshops, newsletters, educational programs, etc.

This Report then shifts its focus to look at the national level within Europe, in order to take stock of what countries are doing in terms of communicating and raising awareness for the SDGs. The report will give an overview of the tools and initiatives that countries are using, in order to illuminate good practices regarding communication and uncover tools that are effective in being able to communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs. From the group of European countries that have something in the way of communication and awareness raising activities and tools, a few countries will be selected for closer inspection on why they employ certain awareness raising activities and how these tools function in enhancing communication and awareness raising. Through analyzing different country cases within Europe, it is hoped to be able to showcase interesting strategies that are effective in communicating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at all levels of government, which includes all stakeholders and civil society, and potentially lead to an enhanced success rate in not only the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, but also its uptake by stakeholders and civil society.

In addition to taking stock of the current communication and awareness raising atmosphere in Europe, it is an added goal of this Report, in being able to identify communication and awareness raising initiatives and tools, that countries can learn from one another, communicate further with one another in terms of ideas about different communication and awareness raising tools, in order to facilitate more exchange and to avoid duplication of efforts.

Apart from the UN and national levels, this Report will also inspect what different stakeholder groups are currently doing to raise awareness for the SDGs, whom they are targeting, and how they are targeting them. Stakeholder communication and awareness raising is interesting, as stakeholders and stakeholder groups tend to be very familiar with how best to reach members of their communities and interest groups than larger bodies, such as sub-national, national, regional, and international bodies, could be. Communication and awareness raising tools can, therefore, have a more targeted focus upon selected

groups of stakeholders, which can elicit a more pronounced response from the target audience. When engaging with the SDGs, it is important to be able to present them to stakeholders in a way that is not only understandable to them, but also applicable. It is, therefore, important for stakeholders to be actively engaged with the SDGs, whether that is business, NGOs, CSO's, research and academia, and civil society, as they sometimes know how best to make the SDGs approachable and appealing to their audiences.

>> [Link to the current ESDN Quarterly Report](#)

ESDN Conference 2017 on “Strategic Governance for SD: New developments and approaches in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs” in Prague, Czech Republic, 22-23 June 2017

The ESDN Conference 2017 is entitled “Strategic Governance for SD: New developments and approaches in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs”. Given the ambitious targets set out in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, new governance models and concepts may prove necessary in the Agenda's implementation and the realization of the SDGs. The conference will, therefore, provide an excellent chance for policymakers to learn about new governance methods and concepts, which will be coupled with different examples from European countries. Additionally, in-depth discussions and hands-on activities will be introduced to put these new governance theories into practice.

The conference will be comprised of three sessions, each with two parts:

- Session 1: Practical Steps Towards Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
 - Part 1: Conceptual Framework for Policy Coherence
 - Part 2: The Reality of Policy Coherence for the SDGs at the National Level
- Session 2: Good Governance – New Public Management, Systems Thinking and Knowledge Brokerage
 - Part 1: Theories and Examples
 - Part 2: Concrete Challenges and Paradigm Shifts
- Session 3: Strategic Foresight – From Vision Building to Policy-making
 - Part 1: The Conundrum of Policy Planning for the Future
 - Part 2: Learning the Methods and their Policy Link

More information about the conference can be found on the [ESDN website](#) or by writing to the ESDN Office at esdn-office@sd-network.eu.

2nd ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit in Helsinki, Finland, 20-21 April 2017

The main objective of the 2nd ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit is to have a very informal exchange and interaction between policymakers who are responsible for preparing their country's Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) or develop strategies/policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD and the 17

SDGs. Similar to the 1st ESDN Peer Learning Platform, the exchanges during the 2nd ESDN Platform and Visit will be based on the Chatham House Rules to increase the openness of discussions.

The ESDN Peer Learning Visit, organized back-to-back with the Platform, will include discussions and exchanges with representatives from many Finnish ministries and stakeholder group representatives regarding the Finnish approach and experiences in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

ESDN Side Event at the HLPF 2017, 12 July 2017

There will be an ESDN Side Event at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017 which takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. This Side Event, entitled “The Role of Peer Learning in Achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs”, is organized by Austria, in cooperation with France and the European Commission.

The ESDN Side Event will introduce the Peer Learning Mechanism that the ESDN has recently developed, inviting for a broader reflection on peer learning as a general approach to support learning and experience sharing in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Important questions that will be addressed in this Side Event are: How has peer learning been addressed in different regions? What issues in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs will particularly benefit from peer learning? How to put peer learning into effective practice?

European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2017 from 30 May - 5 June 2017 – register, promote, and spread the word about SDG activities!

The 3rd European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) will take place from 30 May-5 June 2017! There have been nearly 500 events registered in 14 countries so far!

This European-wide initiative was initiated by Austria, France and Germany and is supported by the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN). The aim of the ESDW is to stimulate and make visible all those activities, projects and events that promote sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Europe on a common online platform (www.esdw.eu). The ESDW, therefore, asks that all stakeholders take part in making the ESDW and the SDGs more visible by organizing and promoting activities!

The ESDW 2015 and 2016 were both great successes and received high level political recognition: First Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans endorsed the Week in a press release, and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel highlighted the importance and success of the ESDW at the recent 16th annual conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development.

News on the governance of sustainable development from various European countries and the EU:

Austria: Report about the Contributions of Federal Government Ministries in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD in Austria published.

In March 2017, the Austrian Federal Chancellery and the Austrian Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs published the report "[Contributions of Federal Government Ministries in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Austria – 2016 Account](#)" (which is currently only available in German). This report includes an overview of the implementation of all 17 SDGs in Austria, also reflecting on various cross-cutting themes like human rights, gender issues, education, culture, etc. We will provide information as soon as an English version of the report is available.

Belgium: National Accounts Institute (NAI) and the FPB have published a new annual statistical report on indicators "beyond GDP" in 2016 and 2017.

According to the law, these indicators must measure the quality of life, the human development, the social advancement and the sustainability of the economy in Belgium. The 67 selected indicators are grouped by theme and also according to their contribution to the description of the situation *Here and now*, *Later*, and *Elsewhere*. When possible, the indicators are linked with the goals listed in the LTV and the SDGs. The observed evolutions show generally better results for the environmental than for the social indicators, mostly since the financial and economic crisis of 2008.

Finland: Government Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD

The aim of [this report](#) is to address a carbon-neutral, resource-wise and competent Finland where non-discrimination and equality is secured. In line with the Government priorities, the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Finland builds on two themes: To achieve a carbon-neutral and resource-wise Finland. The focus should be on improving the energy, resource and material efficiency and sustainably increase the share of renewable forms of energy. Finland must produce environmentally friendly services and innovations, promote their exports, and develop low-emission economic sectors and transport models.

To secure non-discrimination, equality and a high level of competence in Finland, Finland must prevent youth and long-term unemployment, exclusion of various population groups, polarization of labor markets, and segregation of living and residential areas. Finland must also reduce health disparities, promote gender equality, support lifelong learning, and raise the level of education and competence of the population. Non-discrimination includes equal access to services at the different stages of ageing.

Germany: The Federal Council's Decision on EU Sustainability Policy

The [Federal Council's Decision on EU Sustainability Policy](#) has commended the EU Commission's commitment in its Communication to comprehensive implementation at the European level in, in internal and external policies, of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2015, as well as the commitment to make

sustainable development a key guiding principle in all Commission policy. This commendation extends also to the Commission's envisaging of regular reporting on EU progress on implementation of Agenda 2030 from 2017 onwards.

However, the Federal Council does not share the Commission's view that the existing governance system within the Commission and the EU as a whole already ensures implementation of the guiding principle of sustainable development and of Agenda 2030. There are at present no adequate procedural provisions in the decision-making system of the Commission or the EU to ensure such implementation.

As EU action plays an important role in many of the relevant policy areas (for example agricultural and environmental policy), a European sustainability framework is crucial to ensure that Europe makes an effective contribution to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. That is the only way to ensure that activities at the EU level and activities in the Member States are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The Federal Council, therefore, considers that ambitious strategic goals to implement the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 should be stipulated promptly at the EU level and that an indicator system should be adopted. As also advocated in several Opinions from the EU's Committee of the Regions, this process could, for example, take the form of a new EU sustainability strategy or a Europe 2030 strategy, building on the Europe 2020 Strategy. A new strategic approach of this type must also be equipped with an effective implementation mechanism, which was lacking in the EU's previous sustainability strategy from 2001. It is crucial to ensure that a unit in the Commission, endowed with sufficient capacities and influence, is in future entrusted with implementation of sustainable development as a guiding principle and of Agenda 2030 in its full thematic breadth; the Commission's Secretariat-General is of particular importance in this context.

Furthermore, the Federal Council considers that the Commission should initiate an inter-institutional consultation process promptly, with the participation of the Member States, as well as the EU's regions and federal states, in order to devise the requisite overall strategic framework for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at EU level in a timely manner. The EU's Economic and Social Committee has already undertaken important initial consultation measures to this end.

Germany: The 17th Annual Conference of the Sustainable Development Council will be held on 29th of May 2017

The topics of discussion will center on: "How we can live sustainable development, what we have to change, what is realistic for Germany, or what must still be realized for Germany in this regard?" The Conference program will offer many forms and opportunities to exchange and discuss about these questions. More information about the conference can be found here: <http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/jahreskonferenz/>.

Germany: The RNE has published a report on the first Open SDGclub.Berlin

The German SD Council has recently published [a report on the first Open SDGclub Berlin](#) which took place in November 2016. Over 90 non-state actors from over 30 countries came

together for a three day meeting and exchanged experiences with and ideas for 2030 Agenda implementation in their respective context. The report summarizes the meeting, gives insight in the preparatory process leading to the meeting and presents follow-up actions and lessons learned.

Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia: Third Sustainability Bond issued

On 28 February 2017, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) issued its third Sustainability Bond, a record Euro 1,825 Billion issuance at very favorable conditions. The concepts of the bond and the selected projects have been audited by oekom research, a leading sustainability rating agency. The Sustainability Bond NRW #3 refers to 49 eligible projects from the State's 2016 budget. All projects were selected in accordance with the specifications set out in the framework of the bond. Main criterion is a clear environmental or social benefit as set out in NRW's sustainability strategy of 2016. The projects are part of the State's discretionary spending. Projects prescribed by federal law are excluded. You can find further information here:

- www.sustainability-bond.nrw.de
- <https://www.nachhaltigkeit.nrw.de/themen/nachhaltigkeitsstrategie-fuer-nordrhein-westfalen-en/>

Germany: The 10th German Sustainability Award competition has already begun

Applications for companies to show their sustainable business models, and how products and services can take on the ecological and societal challenges of sustainability and turn them into an economic opportunity, will be accepted until the end of April 2017. Distinctions will be awarded this year in three size classes. Special awards will be given to Companies for resource efficiency and sustainable brand leadership. For more detailed information regarding the German Sustainability Award, please follow this [link](#).

The German Sustainability Award is an initiative of the German Sustainability Award Foundation, which works together with the government, local associations, trade associations, research institutions, and CSOs. The Sustainable Development Council supports this initiative. The German Sustainability Award will be awarded on December 8th, 2017 in Düsseldorf.

Norway: Report on Policy Coherence for Development 2016

[The report](#) analyses the effects of Norwegian policies on development as they relate to each of the targets under SDG 16 on Peaceful and Inclusive Societies. The main objective of Norway's development cooperation is to assist developing countries in promoting their own economic and social development. Norwegian policy in areas that are not targeted at development is primarily intended to promote Norway's own welfare and security. Nevertheless, policy in these areas can also have repercussions for living conditions in poor countries and for global issues that affect all countries. Policy coherence for development means that when promoting national interests, Norway should seek to avoid undermining development in poor countries, and – where possible – to enhance development in these

countries. This involves identifying and realizing synergies between development policy and other national and foreign policy. Policy coherence for development also increasingly involves ensuring that national policies promote global public goods that benefit all countries, not least the poorest, for example in the area of climate change and the environment.

Poland: Strategy for Responsible Development approved by Polish Government

Realization of the Strategy for Responsible Development, which was approved by the Polish Government in February 2017, will support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Poland. The Ministry of Economic Development, coordinating development policies of the country, undertook the leading role in the process of implementing of the 2030 Agenda in Poland.

The Strategy for Responsible Development lays down a new development model: strategic vision, the rules, objectives and priorities for Poland's economic, social and spatial development in the 2020 and 2030 perspective. The main objective of the Strategy is the growth of income of the Polish population, accompanied by an increase in social, economic, environmental and territorial cohesion. It is directed on inclusive social-economic development. Considering its role and the assigned tasks, the Strategy is an instrument of flexible management of the main development processes in Poland. The Strategy sets the goals and necessary tasks, implementation instruments and key projects that guarantee its implementation. It also provides for a system of coordination and implementation, specifying the roles of respective public bodies and the methods of cooperation with businesses, academics and citizens.

The objectives of development policy will be implemented, in line with the partnership principle, by representatives of social and economic partners, associations and non-governmental organisations, academic circles and private entities, including entrepreneurs. The participation of those entities in all stages of processes related to programming and implementing development measures will ensure their efficiency and effectiveness by building wide social support and trust among public entities and their partners for the purpose of achieving the development goals.

The Netherlands: First Dutch Well-being Outlook is planned for in 2018

The Dutch Cabinet has commissioned the three Dutch policy assessment agencies – the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB), the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) – to compile a periodic outlook of well-being in the Netherlands. This outlook should link to the monitoring of well-being, commissioned to Statistics Netherlands (CBS). The need for such a monitor and outlook is the result of the acknowledgement that welfare comprises more than GDP growth alone, and should not just consider 'here and now', but also 'elsewhere' and 'later'. Both the monitor and the outlook are expected to explicitly address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The first outlook is planned in 2018.

European Commission: The EU's response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

On 22 November 2016, the Commission presented its response to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and has adopted a sustainable development package including an overarching Communication on next steps for a sustainable European future, as well as a proposals for a revision of the European Consensus on Development and a post-Cotonou framework on the future relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. The package is accompanied by accompanied by a Staff Working Document that describes in broad terms the contribution of the various EU policies and legislation to the SDGs.

With this response, the EU is determined to continue its frontrunner role in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, together with its Member States, in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity. The 2030 Agenda will further catalyze an EU joint approach between the internal and external dimensions of EU policies.

Follow-up work on the Communication on next steps for a sustainable European future is underway: (1) The Commission will mainstream sustainable development into EU policies and initiatives through the use of the better regulation framework and by means of the Commission's project-based approach. (2) The Commission will also provide regular reporting of the EU's progress as of 2017 and is currently in the process of developing a reference indicator framework. (3) In order to pursue the 2030 Agenda in partnership with all stakeholders, a multi-stakeholder Platform will be established, and a call for applications that will detail the selection criteria is expected to be launched soon.

The Commission will also continue to promote sustainable development globally in cooperation with external partners and will take implementation forward with the Council and the European Parliament.

The inter-institutional process with the Council and the European Parliament on the European Consensus on Development has also been initiated. The aim is a joint adoption of the Consensus by May 2017, followed by a joint signature during the European Development Days in June 2017. The new Consensus will constitute an essential part of EU's external implementation of the SDGs together with the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy.

Further information can be found in the links below:

- http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sustainable-development/index_en.htm
- http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy/2030-agenda-sustainable-development_en
- http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy/european-consensus-development_en

European Parliament: Draft Report on EU action for sustainability published

In March 2017, the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety published a [draft report](#) on EU action for sustainability. The report includes

a motion for a European Parliament Resolution on EU action for sustainability and an Explanatory Statement. The following two paragraphs open the Explanatory Statement: “The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) impact virtually every aspect of the EU’s work. The SDGs represent not only a blueprint for a better society and world, but essential elements - deliverable through practical and measurable action - for achieving better and more equal health outcomes, greater wellbeing among citizens, higher overall prosperity, action against climate change and the conservation of the environment for future generations.

The Parliament warmly welcomes the work undertaken by the Commission to take stock of how its work programs affect the delivery of the SDGs. It is essential the Union has a clear set of measurable objectives to ensure the delivery of the UN SDGs.”

Other news:

United Nations: High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017 in New York from 10-19 July 2017

The [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (HLPF) is the UN’s central platform for the follow-up and review of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals](#), adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015. The Forum, which adopts a Ministerial Declaration, is expected to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations on the 2030 Agenda’s implementation and follow-up; keep track of progress of the SDGs; spur coherent policies informed by evidence, science and country experiences; as well as address new and emerging issues.

The HLPF in 2017 will take place in New York from 10-19 July 2017. The theme will be "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The set of goals to be reviewed in depth will include Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development that will be considered each year:

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS): “Talk to Work” project tours Baltic Sea region to survey SDG implementation preparedness & Action Plan BALTIC 2030 – drafting started

What are the common challenges for implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Baltic Sea Region? What capacities should be built to address the SDGs? Under the frame of the project *Towards Baltic 2030 – From Talk to Work*, funded by the Swedish Institute, workshops in Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Russia and Sweden are being conducted by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat's [Baltic 2030 unit](#). The workshops are helping to identify opportunities and needs in capacity building for national and macro-regional 2030 Agenda implementation. The outcomes will be presented in the final event on the 27th April in Stockholm. The project will also result in a development of a collaborative web-based learning platform to help making SDGs implementation more efficient in the Baltic Sea Region. The platform will pool and share information, best practices and knowledge on sustainable development actions, tools, policies and initiatives.

Recognizing that the 2030 Agenda in the Baltic Sea Region can only be achieved through the common and cooperative efforts of all countries, sectors, and stakeholders, the high representatives of the Council of the Baltic Sea States government institutions called upon the [CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development](#) to elaborate the BALTIC 2030 Action Plan. While addressing all the SDGs and providing general vision for the region, the Action Plan will be defining the most relevant areas for macro-regional cooperation and will particularly focus on:

- Processes that support regional governance collaboration, and cooperation and that advance progress on sustainable development;
- Processes that support voluntary sharing of the results of national-level reporting, as well as other regional-scale assessments;
- Processes that pursue thematic topics of interest to the region and where there is an evident added-value of transnational cooperation. Preliminary draft of the Action Plan will be presented to the Expert Group in May 2017 and is expected to be endorsed by the foreign ministers of the CBSS member states in June 2017.

Nordic Countries: Joint Nordic action on 2030 Agenda implementation

The Nordic countries are joining forces in implementing 2030 Agenda. The five Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Finland, together with the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland) have tasked the Nordic Council of Ministers to formulate a regional implementation program for 2030 Agenda. The aim of the initiative is not to coordinate national implementation, but to find areas where it makes sense for the Nordic countries to collaborate jointly. The new initiative is set to be approved in September 2017 when the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation meet in Copenhagen. Knowledge sharing, an integrated SDG approach, SDG progress analysis, stakeholder engagement as well as jointly defined focus areas are expected to form the core of the program. The program is set to run until the end of 2020.

In preparation of the new initiative, the Nordic Council of Ministers sponsored in 2016 a comprehensive mapping of the Nordic countries' action on 2030 Agenda so far. The mapping, which also includes concrete suggestions for the upcoming Nordic initiative, is expected to be published on www.norden.org in the beginning of April 2017. For more information, please contact the Nordic Council of Ministers Secretariat (Sustainable Development Advisor Anniina Kristinsson anpi@norden.org)