

ESDNewsletter January 2017

This ESDNewsletter informs about the following topics and activities on sustainable development in Europe:

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- **Second ESDN Peer Learning Platform in Helsinki, Finland, on 20-21 April 2017**
- **ESDN Conference 2016, “Vertical integration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD: Addressing the role of sub-national and local levels”, in Bern, Switzerland on 10-11 November 2016 – full documentation now online**
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 - Local Pathways Fellowship program – a pilot initiative of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network - Youth (SDSN Youth)

- New report by the European Environment Agency (EEA): “Sustainability transitions: Now for the long term”
 - Sustainable Society Index (SSI-2016) launched
 - International Conference on “Making the Planetary Boundaries Concept Work”, Berlin, 24-25 April 2017
 - Launch of the ISC3 in May 2017 in Berlin
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New ESDN Quarterly Report on “Multi-level Governance and Vertical Policy Integration: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels of government”

This ESDN Quarterly Report will focus on multi-level governance and vertical policy integration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels of government. However, before arriving at the main theme, the Report will broadly discuss governance for sustainable development, as multi-level governance and vertical policy integration, while of vital importance in themselves, are pieces of the entire concept of governance for sustainable development. The Report will examine the literature available, in order to discern what governance for sustainable development, multi-level governance, and vertical policy integration are, and how they can be and are used, in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Also of importance, to better understanding the role of vertical policy integration in the implementation of Agenda 2030, is to not only comprehend how to integrate policy across different levels of government (local, subnational, national, and supranational), with sometimes conflicting objectives, but also to be aware of the potential pitfalls that contribute to vertical policy integration being ineffective.

After arriving at a clearer understanding of multi-level governance and vertical policy integration, this understanding will then be used as a lens to look at how these concepts are framed in the 2030 Agenda and follow-up documents and what is happening regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in different European countries. The goal is to determine if, and how, countries have been integrating the 2030 Agenda at all levels of government, from the national level down to the local level, and how the sub-national levels have started to implement the 2030 Agenda since its adoption on 25 September 2015. Specific attention will be given to countries that participated at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2016 and submitted Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), since they have already prepared and presented, in-depth, about their efforts in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Since the HLPF 2016 took place in July 2016, many of the presenting European countries have integrated, or are working on integrating, the targets of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into their National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS). This report will look into the NSDSs of various countries, in order to examine how they are dealing with the vertical integration of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the sub-national and local level.

Based on the outcomes of interactive group work with participants of the ESDN Conference 2016, the Report will, in a concluding section, list important ingredients for successful vertical policy integration for the 2030 Agenda implementation.

ESDN Conference 2017 on Strategic Governance for SD in Prague, Czech Republic, 22-23 June 2017

The ESDN Conference 2017 will focus on aspects of strategic governance for sustainable development in the context of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs implementation. It will be held in Prague, Czech Republic, on 22-23 June 2017 in cooperation with the Sustainable Development Unit of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

More information about the conference topic, a draft agenda, and official invitations will go out soon.

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

The second ESDN Peer Learning Platform (see information on the first one below) will take place in Helsinki, Finland, on 20-21 April 2017. It will provide a chance for policy-makers responsible for SD strategies and policies to exchange on the Voluntary National Reviews prepared for the UN High Level Political Forums.

More information about this Peer Learning Platform will be available soon.

ESDN Conference 2016, “Vertical integration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD: Addressing the role of sub-national and local levels”, in Bern, Switzerland on 10-11 November 2016 – full documentation now online

The ESDN Conference 2016, entitled “Vertical integration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD: Addressing the role of sub-national and local levels”, took place in Bern, Switzerland on 10-11 November 2016, organized in cooperation with the Sustainable Development Section of the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE). The conference was a 1.5 days event and brought together policy-makers and experts from different stakeholder groups from all over Europe. A total of 80 participants from 19 countries took part in the conference.

The conference focused on the vertical integration aspects in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, addressing the role of sub-national and local levels. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs will require action and efforts at all political levels and also cooperation between the different levels. The conference thus provided an excellent chance to reflect on first 2030 Agenda/SDGs implementation experiences in the different European countries, especially on the role of and activities on the sub-national and local levels.

The full conference documentation can now be found on the [ESDN website](#), including the agenda, the participant list, the conference background paper, the slides of the keynote presentations, group work results, and the conference report.

1st ESDN Peer Learning Platform in Brussels on 13 October 2016 – documentation online

The first ESDN Peer Learning Platform, “Policy coherence and cooperation for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs implementation”, took place in Brussels on 13 October 2016. This first ESDN Peer Learning Platform offered policy-makers from all European countries, experts and selected stakeholders the chance to exchange experiences and learn from implementation practice. The platform had the following objectives: To provide the opportunity to exchange and discuss the needs of national policy-making with regards to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD, and to share experiences and perspectives on how to design policies and processes, and how to link them to national sustainable development strategies; and test the ESDN peer learning approach for future fine-tuning of this new mechanism for peer learning. The platform included an opening and orientating session, followed by four main ‘Spaces for Exchange’:

Space for Exchange 1: Experiences and lessons learned from the 2016 HLPF Voluntary National Reviews;

Space for Exchange 2: Policy coherence – Overcoming ‘silo’ thinking;

Space for Exchange 3: Cooperation between the different policy levels;

Space for Exchange 4: How to bring these ideas back home.

Please find the agenda, background paper, and Peer Learning Platform report on the [ESDN website](#).

European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2017 from 30 May-5 June 2017 – registration for activities now open!

The third European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) will take place from 30 May-5 June 2017. Events, projects and activities that promote sustainable development and the SDGs and take place during this week can from now on be registered at the [ESDW website](#)! This European-wide initiative was initiated by Austria, France and Germany and is supported by the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN). Its aim 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 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:

Germany: Renewed National Sustainable Development Strategy published – orientation towards 17 SDGs

The renewed German National SD Strategy was adopted by the Federal Cabinet in January 2017. This renewed NSDS is Germany's main framework for an ambitious national implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The strategy includes chapters on the current challenges of SD, the governance architecture for SD in Germany, the German contribution to reach the SDGs (including activities for all 17 SDGs), and an outlook for the future. This very comprehensive strategy is currently only [available in German](#), but will be translated into English very soon. More information about the NSDS process in Germany can be found [here](#).

Germany: The Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia adopts first Sustainability Strategy

The State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) adopted in June 2016 the first NRW Sustainability Strategy: „Act now—working together towards sustainable development in NRW“. The strategy is the result of a close cooperation between all State Ministries, civil society, businesses, municipalities and scientific institutions. It actively addresses upcoming challenges and creates a viable framework for ecologically, economically and socially balanced politics. The State Government has identified 19 fields of action that cover the three traditional dimensions of sustainability. For all fields of action sustainability goals for 2030 and correspondent indicators are set. This set of 70 indicators will make it possible to measure progress continuously. The Sustainability Strategy also serves as the framework for NRW's contribution to the implementation of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development

and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by a United Nations summit in September 2015. More on the subject, the Sustainability Strategy for North Rhine-Westphalia as well as the Indicator Report (available only in German) can be found here: <https://www.nachhaltigkeit.nrw.de/themen/nachhaltigkeitsstrategie-fuer-nordrhein-westfalen/>

Germany: First “Open SDGclub.Berlin” organized by the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)

From 21-23 November 2016, the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) was hosting its first 'Open SDGclub.Berlin' – an English-language international conference in Berlin at which participants can share their initial experience with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its global Sustainable Development Goals, as adopted by the UN in September 2015. The Open SDGclub.Berlin meeting was designed for representatives of national Sustainable Development Councils or similar advisory bodies, of civil society movements or from the local community level. The three-day meeting aimed at facilitating mutual learning, sharing of experiences, networking, and brainstorming. It focusses on innovative solutions, courageous action and possibly new partnerships.

Please find more information about the event, a concept note, an interview with RNE Secretary General Günther Bachmann, as well as a film and photos documenting the event at <http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/en/opensdgclub/>.

Greece: Update on current and planned activities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD and the SDGs

Greece, after a preparatory phase at the national level for setting up the required governance structure that will address the responsibility of coordinating efforts for the implementation of the SDGs, is currently in the process of further determining how to best adapt the SDGs to national priorities and circumstances. Given that all SDGs are equal, interlinked and need to be addressed holistically, they are in the process of completing a prioritization exercise at the level of targets.

Regarding governance, efforts for the implementation of the SDGs, at the national level, are being coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Government, with particular emphasis on enhancing inter-ministerial coordination. The General Secretariat of the Government is well positioned as it stands close to the political leadership of the country, indicating commitment at the highest level. Under the coordination of the General Secretariat of the Government, an “Inter-ministerial coordination network” was officially re-established in mid-December 2016.

A National Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda implementation, that is currently under elaboration, will focus, inter alia, on revisiting existing thematic strategies and policies, building on them, and making them more “SDG aware” by improving their coherence. Moreover, it will include the identification of several key cross-cutting priorities for the country to be pursued through new horizontal cross-sectoral integration tools and arrangements that will have a special added value for Greece for the achievement of the SDGs.

Since the implementation of the SDGs goes far beyond the responsibilities of the government, particular emphasis has been given, from the start, to raising awareness at all levels. The intention is to build strong partnerships with all relevant stakeholders in the implementation process, from Parliaments, public administrations and local authorities to civil society and the private sector.

Netherlands: Report by the Dutch Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli) on how sustainability challenges will change landscapes all over the world

In November 2016, the Dutch Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli) presented its advisory report 'The Connecting Landscape' to the Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment and to the Minister for Agriculture. In its advisory report, the Council addresses the question of how the transition of the landscape that will accompany major and urgent sustainability challenges can and should be supervised. This report has been fully translated as the Council expects that the sustainability challenges will change landscapes all over the world. This requires careful guidance of the quality of the landscape by governments and other parties involved.

As one of the densely populated deltas in the world the Netherlands is facing major and much-needed sustainability challenges. These are global challenges for which global goals are agreed upon according to the 2030 Agenda (17 SDGs) and the Climate Agreement (COP21). An acceleration of the energy transition, the adaptation to climate change and the transition to a more sustainable agriculture is urgently needed to meet these sustainability challenges. This will change the Dutch landscape significantly. The Council feels that these challenges can only be met with success if they are combined with public dialogues focused on the improvement of the quality of the landscape, thus adding values to the landscape.

To download the report and get more information on the results, please visit this website: <http://en.rli.nl/publications/2016/advice/the-connecting-landscape>

Eurostat: New publication "Sustainable development in the European Union – A statistical glance from the viewpoint of the UN Sustainable Development Goals"

Eurostat has published a new publication "[Sustainable Development in the European Union - A statistical glance from the viewpoint of the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)". It provides an overview of the current situation of the EU and its Member States in relation to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are at the core of the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted on 25 September 2015 by the UN General Assembly.

The publication is based on a limited number of indicators that are relevant for the EU and aims to capture the broader ambition of each SDG. In total, 51 indicators are presented, mainly produced and disseminated by Eurostat, showing data for the most recent available year for the EU-28 and the EU Member States and trends (in general from 2000) for the EU-28.

"Sustainable Development in the European Union - A statistical glance from the viewpoint of the UN Sustainable Development Goals" is a one-off publication, bridging Eurostat's series of monitoring reports on the EU sustainable development strategy to the future regular monitoring of the UN sustainable development goals in an EU context, foreseen to start in 2017. The publication was released together with the Commission Communication "[Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability](#)".

The report was also accompanied by a citizen's guide "[Figures for the Future – sustainable development in our everyday life](#)". "Figures for the future" is a statistical guide to the EU sustainable development indicators in the context of the SDGs. It communicates statistical figures as seen through the eyes of a fictional 21-year-old student, Anne. Anne aims to find answers to many questions that relate to our everyday life and our future. What does it

mean to be poor in Europe? How do we treat nature and our natural resources? Will there be jobs for young people like her? What about quality of life?

These and many other questions are answered while Anne is writing a blog on sustainable development as part of her Young Women in Journalism scholarship. She links events in her everyday life to the SDGs, and looks into the statistics behind.

Both reports can be downloaded from the [Eurostat website](#).

Updates in ESDN country profiles: New section on 2030 Agenda implementation activities in European countries

The [ESDN country profiles](#) provide the most up-to-date information on national SD strategy and policy processes in European countries. We regularly update them to make sure the information we provide there catches up with the developments in all of these countries.

General updates were recently made in the country profiles of **Belgium** and the **Czech Republic**.

We have now created a [new section](#) in the country profiles on **national activities in the European country to implement the 2030 Agenda**. Information on 2030 Agenda implementation activities are currently available for the following 12 countries: Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Slovakia, and Switzerland.

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 be the following, including 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

The [HLPF 2017 website](#) also mentions those countries that will prepare a Voluntary National Review for the event. Among them are 10 European countries: Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

Local Pathways Fellowship program – a pilot initiative of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network - Youth (SDSN Youth)

The Local Pathways Fellowship is a pilot initiative officially launched by [UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network - Youth](#) (SDSN Youth) in 2016 at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito. The Fellowship aims to build a network of young leaders from 50 cities across the world, who will become advocates for an inclusive process of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) on a local level by working to engage local governments, universities, civil society and youth organizations in cooperation and dialogue about the issues and decisions that impact their future. The core component of the Local Pathways Fellowship is providing youth fellows with a training program consisting of series of online webinars and workshops focused on the governmental and planning processes, mechanisms, tools, and platforms that enable implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda on a local level. More information on the Local Pathway Fellowship can be found at www.localpathways.org, including information about how to apply.

New report by the European Environment Agency (EEA): “Sustainability transitions: Now for the long term”

This report was developed in cooperation with the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) — a partnership network of the EEA and its member and cooperating countries involving more than 1,000 experts and 350 national institutions across Europe. Drawing on evidence collected from across the network, the report represents an initial attempt to explore what the concepts of sustainability transitions and transformations mean in practice, and how the EEA and Eionet can help develop the knowledge needed to support systemic change in Europe. Case studies are used to explain and illustrate key concepts and to give a sense of what activities are already under way at local levels. The report concludes with reflections from the EEA's Scientific Committee and Executive Director, which provide further insights into the new knowledge needs and the potential role of the EEA and Eionet in responding to them. You can download the report from the [EEA homepage](#).

Sustainable Society Index (SSI-2016) launched

The newly updated Sustainable Society Index – SSI-2016 was launched in December 2016. What's new in it?

- Now 154 countries, including Mauritius, Lesotho and Singapore, together comprising 99% of the world population
- More recent data for all countries
- Data showing progress over the latest 10 years, 2006-2016
- Data for all 19 UN regions, 2006-2016
- Data per income class, 2006-2016

- Interactive maps now also showing progress for each country per indicator and wellbeing dimension

To read the SSI-2016, please visit the SSI website: <http://www.ssfindex.com/results/main-results-2016/>.

International Conference on “Making the Planetary Boundaries Concept Work”, Berlin, 24-25 April 2017

The international conference “Making the Planetary Boundaries Concept Work: Practical Implications for Society, Economy and Politics” will take place in Berlin on 24-25 April 2017. The conference is organized by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), the German Environment Agency (UBA), and the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU). To allow for an intensive dialogue, the event will gather a targeted group of 200 international and national participants, including representative of academia, governments, civil society, the private sector, and media engaged in sustainable development issues. The conference will synthesize and discuss the current status of the planetary boundaries concept, reflect on its operationalization in specific contexts, and generate agendas for the further development and application of the planetary boundaries concept for governments and regional and local policy-making, the private sector, civil society, media and academia to establish a safe operating space for a sustainability transformation. You can find further information including a **registration form** on the conference website at www.pb-conference2017.de.

Launch of the ISC3 in May 2017 in Berlin

The ISC3 – International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre – wants to support the global breakthrough of Sustainable Chemistry. The project for the establishment of ISC3 was started in March, 2015, by the German Federal Environment Agency and undertaken in close cooperation with the cooperation with the United Nations Environmental Programme. Groups of scientists all over the world, chemists and practitioners in the chemical industry as well as in other branches, competent staff people from international organisations and national governments and a number of experienced non-governmental organisations are working to develop sustainable chemistry concepts. These concepts should fit to the sustainability triad: ecologically sound solutions, which can be realized successfully in economic terms under safe working conditions. Sustainable Chemistry shall help to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ISC3 will be launched in 17-18 May 2017 in Berlin on the occasion of the conference “Mainstreaming Sustainable Chemistry”. This conference also provides an opportunity to meet members of the ISCnet global network. Barbara Hendricks, Federal Minister for Environment and Building, will open the conference. Registration for the conference is already open on the ISC3 website www.isc3.org.