

## **ESDNewsletter January 2018**

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## **New ESDN Quarterly Report on the “Budget Provisions in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs”**

This Quarterly Report focuses on the importance of aligning national budgets along the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in order to help in their successful implementation. Within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there is a reference made in paragraph 45 to the role that national budgets have in implementing the SDGs. Although the passage reflects more on the role and responsibility of parliaments in adopting national budgets, this can be seen as further stressing the importance with which budgets should be bestowed, and the serious effects they have on the implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

This Quarterly Report will also look into how the SDGs will be incorporated into the budgets of the European Union, as the European Union is often held to a very high standard by the global community with respect to sustainable development. Recently, the EU and the European Commission have been signaling the increasing importance the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs have, and have reaffirmed their desire to remain a frontrunner in its implementation.

Furthermore, this Quarterly Report will also take stock of the current situation in Europe regarding national budgetary alignment along the SDGs. Information for the stocktaking exercise is based on European countries that have completed their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) meetings in New York. This Report also highlights good case examples of European countries that are actively pursuing national budgetary alignment along the SDGs.

## **ESDN Annual Conference 2018 will be held in Vienna, Austria, 1-2 October 2018 – Please save the date!**

The ESDN Annual Conference 2018 will be held in Vienna as an official event during the incoming Austrian EU Presidency. The conference is still in the planning stage, and the ESDN Office will make more announcements in the coming weeks and months regarding this year’s Conference topics! Please also visit the ESDN homepage regularly for [conference updates](#).

## **European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2018, May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup>**

The ESDW will be organized for the fourth time this year! The [ESDW 2018](#) will take place from May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup> 2018. The launch of the ESDW website for event registrations will be February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018! Everyone is encouraged to develop and register events that pertain to the SDGs! More information will follow very soon.

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

### **Austria: Statistic Austria released national SDG indicator set**

In order to measure the degree of target achievement, indicators are assigned to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the associated 169 Targets. Statistic Austria has now developed a [first national version of the set of indicators](#), based on the indicator set of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) and in close coordination with the European Statistical System (ESS). This national set currently provides data from Statistic Austria or external data providers for almost half of the UN indicator proposals. Around one third of the UN indicator proposals were classified as irrelevant for Austria, as the respective objectives were largely achieved or no statistical data can be used in the narrower sense. For 19% of the UN Indicator Proposals, no data is currently available.

### **Belgium: 2017 Federal Report on Sustainable Development**

The 2017 Federal Report, “Make the global Sustainable Development Goals real” (English translation of the report title), on Sustainable Development takes as its starting point the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the UN. The report assesses 34 indicators that show the evolution of Belgium towards the SDGs and examines the gap between existing scenarios and the SDGs in 3 areas: poverty, energy, and transportation. Current developments usually go in the right direction, but most often lag far behind the quantified objectives.

The report can be read in [Dutch](#) or [French](#).

### **France: Developing its national framework of indicators to monitor the SDGs**

Drawing upon the work undertaken by the European Union to select the EU reference SDG indicators framework, France has set up a working group under the auspices of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS), in order to develop its own national set of indicators. The Working group gathers over a hundred stakeholders committed to the SDGs (administrations, NGOs, businesses, trade unions, local authorities, academics, experts, etc.). The aim is to produce the national SDGs scoreboard by the next High Level Political Forum of July 2018.

### **Greece: Preparation of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) for the HLPF 2018**

On 3 October 2017, an event was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on “Achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Exchange of Experiences and Best Practices,” ahead of Greece’s participation, with a Voluntary National Review (VNR), at the HLPF in July 2018. The event was aiming at facilitating the exchange of experiences of EU Member States and Mediterranean countries that have already conducted VNRs in the framework of the HLPFs of 2016 or 2017. Participants included representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus and the Czech Republic, foreign diplomatic missions (of Albania, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain) and UN Environment / Mediterranean Action Plan.

Greece will be going through the VNR process in New York during the HLPF in July 2018. To this end, Greece, through the “Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee” and under the

leading of the General Secretariat of the Government, has already begun national preparations for the drafting of the National VNR Report. The outline of the Report has been agreed by all Ministries and now all Ministries are in the process of providing their inputs to the actual elaboration of the Report. The plan is to submit a draft of the VNR Report to the Greek Parliament, for its guidance and comments, in order to finalise it. Therefore, the Parliament's involvement will clearly be an important one in this process. Since the 5 SDGs selected for the in-depth thematic review during the 2018 HLPF are of an "environmental nature" (i.e. SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15), an important part of the work to be done regarding the thematic analysis falls under the responsibilities of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy. Greece plans to elaborate a National Implementation Action Plan after the VNR process is completed, which is due to be finalised in 2019, also with the involvement of the Parliament.

### **Italy: National Sustainable Development Strategy approved by Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

The Italian National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSDS) has been formally approved by CIPE (Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2017, in accordance with the provisions of Law 221/2015. The NSDS is an update of the former Environmental Action Strategy for Sustainable Development in Italy 2002/2010 and a first step towards a holistic policy framework, widened to include social and economic dimensions, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

Following the 2030 Agenda, the NSDS is organized in five core areas: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. The former four areas mainly cover the domestic dimension; the latter covers principles and purposes of international cooperation, as integrating and qualifying part of Italian foreign policy, draft by law 125/2014. Each area identifies a system of priorities (National Strategic Choices) delivering strategic goals. The goals are strongly integrated, as they embody and synthesize the most relevant issues emerged from the consultation process. The NSDS has been, also, provided with a set of "sustainability vectors" with as crosscutting, transversal areas of action, essential to guiding, managing and monitoring the integration of sustainability into national policies, plans and projects.

A Plan of Action will be developed and will include numerical and quantitative targets at 2030, as well as monitoring and review mechanisms and analytical models capable of measuring the impacts of policies on the NSDS objectives.

The Presidency of the Council of Ministers has the lead in coordinating and managing the Strategy, with the support of the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, respectively for the domestic and external dimension.

With regard to the domestic dimension, the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea will ensure the participation of civil society and relevant stakeholders by creating a Forum on the Strategy for Sustainable Development. The Ministry of Finance will be tasked to create strong synergies between the NSDS implementation and the formal economic policies and to coordinate models required to define such objectives. The implementation of the NSDS is

tightly interlinked with the existing national programming documents, namely the National Reform Programme and the Economic and Financial Document.”

### **Poland: Preparing a Voluntary National Review (VNR) for the HLPF 2018**

Poland has actively started preparations for the next year's Voluntary National Review (VNR) for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, defined within the framework of the UN resolution of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For the purpose of developing the national report, a set of analytical materials was prepared and a series of consultations on the national priorities for sustainable development have been carried out.

A participatory model for the preparation of the report involving in cooperation and consultation process a wide range of stakeholders was agreed. The representatives of ministries and the social partners work together on the structure of the report. The Ministry of Economic Development has the role of the national coordinator for Agenda 2030 implementation at the national level and is responsible for Polish preparations for VNR. The body cooperating with an advisory voice is the special Task Force for the coherence of the Strategy for Responsible Development with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

On December 6, 2017, the conference, entitled “SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals”, took place in the Ministry of Economic Development. During this conference the initiative of the Partnership for the SDGs implementation was continued. Another 24 signatories joined the Partnership. In total, there are more than 70 entities declaring activities in everyday business or organizational activities in order to achieve the SDGs. Important is the fact that the Partnership, in addition to business representatives, is also joined by social organizations, foundations, industry and sectoral associations.

### **Other News:**

### **UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2018**

The [HLPF 2018](#) will take place this year from July 9th – July 18th! The theme will be "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". 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, which will be considered each year:

- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

## **UNECE: The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD), March 1-2, 2018**

[The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development \(RFSD\)](#) held on March 1-2, 2018 follows up on and reviews the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UNECE region. Focusing on practical value-added and peer learning, it creates a regional space to share policy solutions, best practices and challenges in SDG implementation and helps identify major regional and subregional trends. For government representatives and other stakeholders wishing to participate in the Regional Forum, registration should preferably be completed by February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

## **European Commission's Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the SDGs**

The implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved with a strong commitment and involvement of all stakeholders. Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union assigns the Union the task *to work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment*. Based on this fundamental article, the Commission shows full commitment to including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) into EU policies and initiatives, which is also expressed and highlighted by the communication on "Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability" ([COM\(2016\)739](#)).

To ensure the implementation of the SDG in Europe, the Commission created the Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the SDGs ("the platform") on 22 May 2017 ([C\(2017\) 2941 final](#)). The aim of the platform is to develop cooperation and coordination between the Commission and stakeholders on matters related to the realization of the SDG at Union level and to foster an exchange of experience and good practice in the field of the SDG. It should support, advice and assess the Commission and all stakeholders involved on the fulfilment of the SDG. Other tasks are the selection process for an annual sustainability award and the provision of a forum for exchange of experience and best practice on the implementation of the SDG across sectors and at local, regional, national and Union level. The forum should enable stakeholders an engagement in debates about sustainable development and provide information about related successful initiatives in organising specific activities decided by the platform. The ESDN has an observer status in the network.

As a subgroup of the platform a management committee was established to take care of its day-to-day activities, to operationalise the guidance set out by the platform and to help organising specific activities decided by the platform. At the moment there is one other subgroup for the SDG Award.

The platform is chaired by the First Vice-President of the Commission, the management committee by the Secretariat-General of the Commission.

On 10 January 2018, the members and observers of the platform assembled for their first meeting and were welcomed by First Vice-President Timmermans. Following his opening words a tour de table enabled the exchange of key interests of the work of the platform (e.g.

education; employment, poverty and inequality, health; agriculture and food, the circular economy, climate change). Ann Mettler, Head of the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), gave a presentation on “Sustainable Development Leading by Example and Delivering for the next Generation”. After an explanation of the rules and procedures for the platform by First Vice-President Timmermans, he invited the platform members to participate in a targeted consultation on the long term implementation of the SDG. At the next meeting in October 2018, there will be an exchange of views on the results of this consultation, which will feed into the Reflection Paper “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030”.

To ensure maximum transparency of the platform, all relevant meeting documents are being published on the dedicated [website](#).

### **European Commission/Eurostat: 2017 communication package on EU SDG monitoring**

On 20 November 2017, Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, published its first [EU SDG monitoring report](#), based on the new EU SDG indicator set developed for this purpose in spring 2017 (see ESDNewsletter July 2017). The report provides a statistical overview of EU trends related to the SDGs. Two periods are considered: the short term, accounting for EU progress over the past five years, and the long term (when allowed by data availability), looking at the EU trends over the last 15 years. To provide a snapshot of overall development for each SDG, a synopsis presents a summary at goal level, while thematic chapters, one for each of the 17 SDGs, provide a detailed assessment of each related indicator. Overall, 100 indicators are analysed.

The monitoring report is part of a communication package also including a short visual brochure, a series of Statistics Explained articles and a new dedicated section on Eurostat's website. Among others, the latter offers a visualisation tool to explore the current progress towards each of the SDGs on the EU level and user-friendly time graphs to compare trends in individual countries.

The full data series of the 100 EU SDG indicators are available in Eurostat database (see Sustainable Development Indicators). The indicators are continuously updated as new data becomes available.

### **European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC): 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in October 2018**

The Chairs of the EEAC member councils launched their [Message from Maastricht](#) on 14 December 2017. The Chairs have set down their conclusions, based on the outcomes of the 25<sup>th</sup> EEAC Annual Conference, the deliberations they had, and the reflections received.

The EEAC Chairs share their thoughts on some of the issues raised at the conference and they also highlight the actions they intend to take to contribute to the implementation of sustainable development by means of the 2030 Agenda, and beyond.

The Network will organize its 26<sup>th</sup> EEAC Annual Conference in Berlin, October 2018. The conference will be hosted by the German Council for Sustainable Development, the German Advisory Council on Global Change, and the German Advisory Council on the Environment.

### **ICLEI: Local Renewables Conference 2018**

The [Local Renewables Conference 2018](#), “Urban Transformation to a Circular Economy”, will take place on 24-26 October 2018, in Freiburg (Germany) and Basel (Switzerland).

Rising global energy needs remain a major challenge, with cities and regions being central players in making energy more secure, clean and sustainable. To transform from a linear to a circular economy there is a growing need to take advantage of renewable resources, including energy. The conference will address the following key issues:

- How can we ensure that global energy goals, including the 2015 Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals will be reached?
- What is the potential of the circularity of local renewables?
- What transformation is needed in cities for shifting to a circular economy? And how will circular economy shape transformation?
- How can we manage the transformation from a linear to a circular economy?
- What investments are needed and what are the financing options?
- How can relevant stakeholders, such as citizens, public authorities and the private sector be engaged in the urban transformation?

### **University Alliance for Sustainability (UAS): Spring Campus Conference 2018**

Registrations for the UAS Spring Campus Conference 2018 are now open! From April 9-13, 2018 Freie Universität Berlin will host the third Spring Campus on the topic “Moving Beyond the Ivory Tower: How do Science and Universities Contribute to the Sustainability Transformation?”. Innovative sustainability research from various disciplines will be presented in five workshops, which will facilitate inter- and transdisciplinary exchange and foster the dialogue with representatives from the city of Berlin and other public institutions. All workshops invite contributions from universities across the globe. The respective calls for contributions, as well as the registration form, are available on the [UAS website](#).