

## ESDNewsletter April 2019

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- **The European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC):** 27th EEAC Annual Conference 18-20 September 2019 in Lisbon
- **German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE):** The 19th Annual Conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) will be held on 4 June 2019 in Berlin.
- **ICLEI Europe:** 9th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns 30 September - 2 October 2020, Mannheim, Germany

### **New ESDN Quarterly Report on “Budgeting for the SDGs in Europe: Experiences, Challenges and Needs”**

The topic of this European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) Quarterly Report (QR) is budgeting for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Europe. It provides an overview how European countries are approaching budgeting for the SDGs in their attempts to align budgets along the Goals, which experiences they made, and which challenges still lie ahead. This Report represents one of the first attempts to provide a comprehensive overview on this topic in Europe. The Report acknowledges the increasing importance of this topic for European policymakers and hopes that the information contained herein spurs further discussion on budgeting for the SDGs in Europe, as only a couple of countries have explicitly integrated the SDGs into their budgets so far.

Please find the new ESDN Quarterly Report [here](#).

### **4<sup>th</sup> ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit Report is now available**

The 4<sup>th</sup> ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit, which took place on 6-7 March 2019, brought together policymakers from the national and regional level to share, exchange, discuss, and learn from one another about the progress being made in European countries on budgeting for the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, especially on budgetary provisions for the SDG implementation.

To read the Peer Learning Platform and Visit Report in full, please find it [here](#).

### **17<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop, 23-24 May 2019, Berlin Germany – “Populism and Sustainability Policy”**

The 17<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop will take place in Berlin, Germany from 23-24 May 2019. The topic of this year's Workshop will be: "Transformation towards Sustainability in Times of Rising Populism". The Workshop is organized by the ESDN in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The objectives of the 17<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop will be to provide an in-depth exploration and lines of explanation of the rise of populism in Europe over the past few years and the role it plays in the policy-making process with respect to sustainable development and sustainability policy, especially with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. The Workshop will seek to impart knowledge to participants on the general outlook of populism in Europe and seek to define common concepts of populism and also focus on how populism impacts sustainability policy in practice.

You can find the agenda of the Workshop at the [ESDN homepage](#). More information will be available in the coming weeks.

### **ESDN Conference 2019, 30-31 October 2019, Helsinki Finland – “Sustainable Europe Beyond 2020”**

The ESDN Annual Conference 2019, "*Sustainable Europe Beyond 2020*", will take place on October 30-31, 2019 in Helsinki and will be an official event of the incoming Finnish EU Presidency!

More in-depth topics and a draft agenda will be announced in the coming weeks.

### **European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2019, May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup>**

The ESDW is organized for the fifth time this year! The ESDW 2019 is taking place from May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup> 2019. The launch of the ESDW website for event registrations took place in early March 2019! Everyone is encouraged to develop and register events that pertain to the SDGs! Please visit the ESDW website at <https://www.esdw.eu/> to register your event, browse activities that are taking place this year, or access the archive for activities from previous years. Please support this important Week and spread the word to your colleagues, stakeholder communities, etc.!

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

#### **Belgium: How Belgian federal public services are delivering on SDGs & Flanders update**

After three years of implementation, the Belgian federal public services presents how they are contributing to the SDGs. The Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable Development published its members report (04/2019) by listing best practices, interviews and actions. The

report, which is available in Dutch and French, can be consulted [here](#) (Dutch) and [here](#) (French).

## Flanders update

### **Focus 2030 and its corresponding Flemish set of indicators**

The SDGs have been translated into Flemish objectives for 2030 in “Focus 2030”, which is based on the SDGs and linked to “Vision 2050”, the long-term strategy for Flanders presented in March 2016 by the Government of Flanders. Focus 2030 is focused on Flanders and is dynamic and evaluative. It will be completed by other long-term policy plans in preparation.

Focus 2030 was created by analyzing the existing objectives for 2030 (based on screening of policy plans and documents, studies, etc.) and mapping them to the SDG-framework. As a result, new objectives were defined and some existing objectives were actualized through collaboration between the political level (government) and the administration in all policy domains. The first approval of Focus 2030 by the Government of Flanders took place in March 2018, followed by an official request for advice of the Strategic Advisory Councils. Adjustments of the 2030 objectives were made at the political level.

In the meantime, an adapted monitoring and reporting system, as is a **Flemish set of indicators**, has been prepared to monitor the implementation of Focus 2030. This set of indicators is based on the EUROSTAT and Flemish public statistics frameworks and has been set up with the advice and quality assurance of Statistics Flanders. It is the result of collaboration between the administration in all policy domains and the political level. A second approval of Focus 2030 took place in February 2019, as well as a final discussion with stakeholders (socio-economic partners and representatives of society in the Strategic Advisory Councils). It was decided to link Focus 2030 to the budget and the yearly reporting in each policy domain (BBT).

It is the intention to finalize and submit Focus 2030 together with the corresponding Flemish set of indicators, for formal approval to the Flemish Government on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2019.

### **Integration in public institutions**

The SDGs are being integrated in the internal operation and management of Flemish public institutions by raising awareness through trainings: generic workshops for all civil servants, specific workshops for management and executive boards, higher education and social profit, and communication by CIFAL Flanders and through our website and social media. An SDG-Learning Network for participants of all public institutions in Flanders (from local to regional administrative levels) has been set up. And an SDG manual for public institutions was developed and introduced during the trainings. Good practices and failures are being exchanged.

### **Planned activities for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs**

Implementation in the next legislature will require continued active participation of the stakeholders through multi-actor governance with shared responsibilities, involvement, transparency, co-creation and interaction between the public and private partners. The sharing of good practices and tuning of approaches and working together towards recognizable approaches and communication is needed as well as identifying needs for support and stimulating horizontal and vertical integration and partnerships.

A gap to target analysis by means of the Flemish set of indicators must identify the objectives with a large gap to target that will require remedial actions.

Good practices are being further endorsed through the seven transition priorities that were set up by the Flemish government to realize Vision 2050. These transition priorities are linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and can accelerate its completion.

The integration of the SDG's, also through Focus 2030, will be continued in our public institutions, as well as the collaboration between Flanders and its provinces, cities and municipalities which plays an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Associations of Flemish provinces and cities and municipalities are privileged partners in an SDG-pact for the implementation of the 2030-objectives.

### **Finland: Results of the first Finnish citizens' panel on sustainable development**

The first citizens' panel on sustainable development brought together about 500 Finns to assess the state of sustainable development in Finland, all of them participating in the work on a voluntary basis. The results of the questionnaire will be used to promote the work on sustainable development by the Finnish Government and Parliament.

The citizens' panel, organized in the beginning of 2019, was the first of its kind. Each panel member answered an online questionnaire on the state of sustainable development. The process included an opening event and a closing event where the results were published. The questionnaire was based on the sustainable development indicators managed by the Prime Minister's Office, expert analyses on these, and citizens' dialogues. The indicator data has been divided into monitoring baskets designed in cooperation between scientists and experts. Read more about the monitoring baskets on this website at [Monitoring](#). The topics of the monitoring baskets include the state of the natural and other environments, social inequality, and housing and communities.

The panel members commented on the various aspects of sustainable development, including the state of the natural and other environments and social inequality. The focus was on the state of affairs in Finland in 2018. The different aspects of sustainable development were grouped into four categories: issues where a good state must be secured in future, good developments that must be strengthened, what gives cause to worry, and where the situation is so bad that a plan of attack is needed to combat the situation.

The citizens' panel will continue as an ongoing process so that the National Commission on Sustainable Development receives information on what the citizens think about the state of

sustainable development in Finland. New members may be included in the panel on an annual basis.

To find out more about the individual results of the Citizens' Panel, please visit [here](#).

### **Germany: State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development adopted a resolution to promote sustainable finance; new statistical report 2018; and 5<sup>th</sup> Sustainability Bond issues in North Rhine-Westphalia**

#### **State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development adopted a resolution to promote sustainable finance**

In a meeting of the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development on 25 February 2019, the Committee adopted a [resolution](#) (available in English) to promote sustainable finance in an attempt to support the objectives of both financial market stability and of sustainability policy.

#### **New statistical report 2018**

Germany released its new statistical report at the end of 2018. The [report](#) is currently only available in German.

#### **Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia issued its fifth Sustainability Bond in March 2019**

The State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) issued its fifth Sustainability Bond in March 2019 to refinance 52 eligible projects with a clear environmental or social benefit from the State's 2018 budget (total volume of € 2.25 billion). The NRW Sustainability Bonds are targeted at investors who value sustainable and responsible investments. [The Sustainability Strategy for North Rhine-Westphalia](#), which aims to implement the 17 SDGs, serves as the political reference for the Sustainability Bonds.

Further information about the bonds can be found at the [website of the NRW Ministry for the Environment](#).

### **Greece: National Strategy for Circular Economy recently adopted**

In Greece, the National Strategy for Circular Economy was adopted by the Ministry of Environment & Energy in December 2018. To read the Strategy in English, please go [here](#).

### **Romania: Current and planned activities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD**

The Romanian Government recently released „Romania’s sustainable development Strategy 2030”, which provides the guidelines for implementing the SDGs at the national level. Reviewing the Strategy was an entire process of deliberations with several stakeholders covering all the country regions, and was coordinated by the Department of Sustainable Development. The outcome is a holistic document that gives the SDGs a more suitable adaptation to Romanian social, economic, and environmental reality.

In the first stage, and in cooperation with the ministries, the Department is working on the Action Plan - Horizon 2020. Moreover, the Department and the National Institute of Statistics are establishing the national SDG indicators.

Romania’s sustainable development Strategy 2030, adopted in November 2018, sets the mechanism for implementation at the national level. A successful implementation requires a consolidated legislative and institutional framework with functional mechanisms and clearly defined roles.

The Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development, comprised of ministries and chaired by the prime minister, will approve the Action Plans and submit yearly reports to the Romanian Parliament regarding national progress of implementing the SDGs.

Sustainable Development Hubs, established at the level of the central public authorities, which has competency in the field of sustainable development, will be the bridge between their institutions and the Department of Sustainable Development on the one hand, and the National Institute of Statistics, on the other.

The Advisory Council for Sustainable Development joins representatives of the academic community, the research community, and civil society, and it has the role of offering advice and scientific and technical support, and of initiating and drawing up policy documents and methodologies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Coalition for Sustainable Development, made up of representative of civil society, will facilitate the permanent public participation and consultation regarding the implementation of the National Strategy.

In order to strengthen the administrative capacity of the public institutions involved, the Department of Sustainable Development will facilitate the provision of training courses given by experts in sustainable development for staff involved in the implementation of the Strategy.

In two years, the National Institute of Statistics will update the National set of indicators based on the new priority goals established in the Strategy, taking into account the set of indicators established at the UN and EU level for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to measure the implementation of the SDGs.

## **Spain: Basque Country update on the governance of sustainable development**

### **New Documents**

The [Monitoring Report](#) of the Agenda Euskadi Basque Country 2030, corresponding to the year 2017, was published on February 2019 and presented on March 1, 2019, by the Secretary General of External Action of the Basque Government, voluntarily, at the Commission for European Affairs and External Action of the Basque Parliament.

## **Switzerland: New Organizational Structure for the 2030 Agenda Implementation**

At its meeting on 22 March 2019, the Federal Council (government) appointed two delegates for the 2030 Agenda, which is the framework for Switzerland's sustainability policy. The Federal Council attaches great importance to the 2030 Agenda and is putting in place a new federal government structure to strengthen its implementation. The creation of a new interdepartmental 2030 Agenda Steering Committee and the appointment of Daniel Dubas as a delegate and Jacques Ducrest as a deputy delegate are core elements. The new structure will fully anchor the 2030 Agenda in Switzerland's federal administration. The 2030 Agenda will continue to be implemented within the framework of the sectoral policies of the federal offices and departments.

For more information, please read the [press release](#).

## **ESDN Country Profile information and updates**

Please regularly check the [Country Profiles](#) on the ESDN homepage for information on national SD strategy and policy activities and regular updates!

## **News on the governance of sustainable development from the EU:**

### **European Commission: Reflection Paper “Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030”**

At the end of January 2019, the European Commission presented its Reflection Paper, [“Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030”](#). Announced as a follow-up to President Juncker's 2017 State of the Union Address, the Reflection Paper is presented as part of the EU's commitment to deliver on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. By reviewing the breadth of challenges for Europe and presenting illustrative scenarios for the future, the Reflection Paper seeks to steer the discussion on how these goals can be best achieved and how the European Union can best contribute by 2030. The Reflection Paper puts forward three scenarios to stimulate the discussion on how to follow up on the SDGs within the EU. These scenarios are illustrative



and aim to offer different ideas and spur debate and thinking. The three scenarios are: (1) An overarching EU SDGs strategy guiding the actions of the EU and its Member States; (2) a continued mainstreaming of the SDGs in all relevant EU policies by the Commission, but not enforcing Member States' action; and (3) an enhanced focus on external action while consolidating current sustainability ambition at EU level.

### **European Parliament: Annual Strategic Report on the Implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals**

In March 2019, the European Parliament published its [Annual Strategic Report on the Implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). This report, the European Parliament stresses that the Union should renew its commitment to being a global frontrunner in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure a horizontal approach to the SDGs in their policies; welcomes the Commission Reflection Paper entitled 'Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030'; regrets that the Commission has not yet developed an integrated and holistic SDG implementation strategy; calls on the Commission to establish an in-depth gap analysis of existing policies and their implementation in order to identify critical areas of synergies and incoherencies; urges the Commission to draw up an ambitious, overarching and all-encompassing strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, fully integrating the SDGs in EU policies and governance, providing guidance for both the EU institutions and the Member States in their implementation, monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda, and outlining detailed roadmaps, concrete targets and deadlines; etc.

### **European Council Conclusions: "Towards an ever more sustainable Union by 2030"**

The Council of the European Union met on 9 April 2019. The Council Conclusions on the topic ["Towards an ever more sustainable Union by 2030"](#) underline the urgent need for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda both globally and internally, as an overarching priority of the EU. The Council stresses a strong and urgent need to shift to a comprehensive, overarching and ambitious approach at EU level, which builds upon elements of the scenarios presented in the Commission's Reflection Paper (see above). And the Council is urging the Commission to elaborate a comprehensive implementation strategy outlining timelines, objectives and concrete measures to reflect the 2030 Agenda and mainstream the SDGs in all relevant EU internal and external policies, based on what more needs to be done until 2030, in terms of EU policy, legislation, governance structures for horizontal coherence and means of implementation.

### **Other news:**

**Aalto Sustainability Hub: 2 events on sustainability in 2019**

### Sustainability Science Days 9-10 May 2019 in Helsinki, Finland

The thematic focus of the event is sustainable production and consumption, which is the Sustainable Development Goal 12 where Finland's performance, according to the SDG indicators, needs to be considerably improved. During the two-day event, this challenge will be approached via researcher-meets-practice dialogues and popular discussion events. Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science (HELSUS) and Aalto Sustainability Hub (ASH) organize the conference jointly. Full program and practical information: [www.sustainabilitysciencedays.fi](http://www.sustainabilitysciencedays.fi); see also: [Aalto event](#)

### The Nordic Association of University Administrators Forum 14-16 August 2019 in Univ. Tromsø in Northern Norway

The Forum is about digitalization & universities. To find out more, please visit the event website [here](#).

### The European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC): 27<sup>th</sup> EEAC Annual Conference 18-20 September 2019 in Lisbon

The 27<sup>th</sup> EEAC Annual Conference will take place in Lisbon on 18, 19 & 20 September 2019. The Conference will discuss partnerships for sustainable development with special attention paid to water, energy and oceans. More information will follow soon.

### German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE): The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) will be held on 4 June 2019 in Berlin

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the RNE will take place on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in Berlin.

For more information about the themes and topics that will be covered during the Conference, please see the RNE's website [here](#) (available only in German).

For more information on the Conference's program, please visit [here](#).

### ICLEI Europe: 9<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns 30 September - 2 October 2020, Mannheim, Germany

The conference will demonstrate the urgent need for local governments to assume responsibility for urban transformation and lead the way in guiding Europe towards a secure and sustainable future. The world is facing major environmental, economic and social challenges that require a substantial transformation in all aspects of society. Without this transformation, global and European self-set goals like the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable

Development Goals and the Europe long term strategy on GHG emission reduction will remain unreachable. For more information, visit [www.esct2020.eu](http://www.esct2020.eu), contact the organizers at [esct2020@iclei.org](mailto:esct2020@iclei.org), or follow the event on Twitter: @sustain\_cities #ESCT2020.