

## ESDN Newsletter December 2019

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### ESDN has become an Association

The ESDN has recently become an Association under Austrian Law, which has given the network the status of a legal entity.

The main purpose and functioning of the ESDN will not be different than it has been over the past 15 years. However, since 1 November 2019, the ESDN Co-Chairs, Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler and Wolfram Tertschnig (both from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism), have stepped down after 15 years leading the ESDN and have passed over leadership to Finland. Ms. Annika Lindblom from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment is now the President of the ESDN Association and is accompanied by three Vice-Presidents: Mr. Daniel Dubas, Delegate of the Federal Council for the 2030 Agenda in Switzerland, Ms. Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, and Mr. Sami Pirkkala from the Prime Minister's Office of Finland.

The ESDN will continue to operate as a network platform that deals with relevant challenges and opportunities related to sustainability and sustainable development. The ESDN will still mainly consist of public administrators and other sustainable development experts.

### **ESDN Conference 2020, 12-13 October 2020 in Berlin, Germany**

The ESDN Conference 2020 has already been scheduled for next year! The Conference will take place in Berlin, Germany on 12-13 October. Please stay tuned to the ESDN over the coming months to find out more about the topic of the Conference. This Conference will be held in conjunction with the German EU Presidency.

### **ESDN Quarterly Report in December 2019 on "The Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at the National Level in Europe – Taking stock of governance mechanisms"**

The [ESDN Quarterly Report](#) is a comprehensive study on the current state of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs at the national level in Europe. The report includes a comparative analysis of more than 30 European countries on issues like policy strategy, leadership, responsibility, and budgets for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs; horizontal and vertical policy integration mechanisms and experiences; stakeholder participation, including activities with, and for, future generations; evaluation and monitoring; and the cooperation between the European and national level. The analysis will be based on a survey that was conducted among sustainable development policymakers from national government ministries responsible for the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation that the ESDN Office undertook. Information from the Voluntary National Reviews and other reports and literature on the topic was also used for those countries that did not fill out the ESDN survey.

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

## **Belgium: “Sustainability and Poverty” Report and instruments to support SDG integration**

The Belgian Combat Poverty, Insecurity and Social Exclusion Service recently published a report “Sustainability and Poverty”, illustrating the need to leave no one behind in Belgium. Based on the experiences of people living in poverty, it shows interlinkages with the SDGs and proposes several recommendations towards public authorities.

After instruments to support public services to integrate the SDGs in their sustainable action plans or in their sustainability reporting, the Belgian Federal Institute for Sustainable Development launched 4 pilot-projects to link the materiality of their core-business with the SDGs. The objective was to step up from a typical “alignment” approach of existing policies in favor of the SDGs towards an identification of new priorities and actions to fill the gaps and contribute to the 2030 Agenda.

## **Germany: Update and revision planned for the National Sustainable Development Strategy**

Germany is planning to update and revise the German Sustainable Development Strategy next year. As in the past, a broad-based dialogue process with stakeholders will accompany the drafting of the Strategy. The kick-off of the dialogue process took place by the end of October 2019 in Berlin – with a one-day conference, opened by the Head of the Federal Chancellery, Helge Braun. In November, Germany started a series of regional dialogue conferences, which will be attended by Ministers of the *Länder* (Federal States) and Ministers of the Federal Government. Together with other representatives from politics, experts from science, business and society current challenges and possible adjustments of the Strategy are being discussed. The results of the conferences will feed into the draft of the Strategy. Next summer, the broader public will have the opportunity to comment on the draft as part of an online consultation. It is intended to adopt the new Strategy by the end of next year.

In addition, the first annual conference of the Science Platform Sustainability 2030 took place in early December. A paper with recommendations for the revision of the Strategy have been presented. The Science Platform Sustainability 2030 provides a central forum for science to engage with representatives from politics, business, and society on urgent issues pertaining to sustainability policy.

## **Germany: 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development**

Save the date! The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development will take place on Monday, July 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 in Tempodrom Berlin. More information will be available in February 2020. Check back at the [website](#).

## **Germany, Hessen: New developments on the Hessian Strategy for Sustainable Development**

In 2019, the Hessian Strategy for Sustainable Development had its 10th birthday. For this occasion, the government decided to organize a Peer Review report by external experts, chaired by Günther Bachmann. The peer review offered a positive assessment of the first 10 years and formulated suggestions for further development. Some of the recommendations are now in the process of implementation.

### **Governance of the Hessian Strategy**

The Sustainable Development Conference, consisting of high-level representatives of civil society organizations and the Hessian Government, now has a refocused mandate as decision-making body and is renamed as Hessian Alliance for Sustainability. It meets once per year, makes strategic decisions and selects the key priority theme for the next period.

As a second body, the “Sustainability Forum” prepares the decisions of the “Alliance”. The relevant actors and interested citizens are invited to develop new ideas for the key priority themes and to exchange new ideas.

### **New Initiatives**

The Strategy will be enriched by a new vision, a narrative on what Hesse aims to achieve in the view of sustainable development. This vision develops from the already existing sustainable development indicators and goals for Hessen, which are consistent with the global SDG’s.

Representatives from society, Economy and Public administration discuss structure and content of the vision, which will be officially adopted by the Alliance in spring 2020.

The “Economics Initiative” invites enterprises from Hessen to address their concerns and organize their contributions to the overall strategy. It aims to disseminate best practice, improve information, to strengthen sustainable development aspects in professional formation, and to check existing regulations for their fitness for sustainability. The work starts with an inquiry on the needs of the Hessian business sector.

For more information, please visit: [www.hessen-nachhaltig.de](http://www.hessen-nachhaltig.de)

### **Poland: Pioneering tools created**

A pioneering tool on the Polish market was created to measure the impact of business on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals - the "Impact Barometer". It was developed under the "17 Goals Campaign" in cooperation with the Central Statistical Office. This year’s Campaign was conducted under the slogan "Joint Actions". Over 20 institutions have been involved in the process of extensive expert consultations of this tool, which includes a list of key indicators for Polish business.

"17 Goals Campaign" is an initiative carried out in a wide partnership of companies and institutions under the patronage of the Ministry of Economic Development - the coordinator of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Poland. It mobilizes business to take actions to implement the SDGs.

More and more business initiatives and cross-sectoral activities for the SDGs are emerging on the Polish market, but there is no proper way to assess their contribution to achieving the Goals. The new tool, which was presented on September 25, on the Global Day of Action for SDGs, will allow Polish companies to measure their contribution to sustainable development. Thanks to the short list of indicators, companies can calculate their result, compare it with the market average and check their strengths and weaknesses. It was ensured that the indicators were most suited to the specifics of companies, and the method of calculating them as simple and universal as possible.

For the creators of the "Impact Barometer", it is crucial that companies measuring their contribution to the 2030 Agenda become an impulse to take action that will allow them to achieve better results next year. Implementing positive changes in certain areas will require cross-sectoral cooperation.

In addition, the initiative of the Partnership for the SDGs' implementation in Poland was continued. In total, there are more than 120 entities declaring activities in everyday business or organizational activities in order to achieve the SDGs. They have made over 180 specific commitments. Important is the fact that the Partnership, in addition to business representatives, is also joined by social organizations, foundations, industry and sectoral associations. We note with satisfaction that other organizations reports to be interested in joining the Partnership.

### **Slovakia: Update on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

The key National Sustainable Development Strategy called "The Vision and National Development Strategy until 2030" has not yet been adopted by the Slovak Government. The document will most likely be postponed until after-election time (parliamentary elections), i.e. after the end of February 2020.

#### **Planned activities**

The National Monitoring Report on progress achieved in the implementation of the 6 national priorities of the 2030 Agenda implementation (approved in 2018) will be due in June 2020. The Agenda 2030 Coordination Department within the Deputy Prime Minister's Office will be organizing meetings with the Agenda 2030 stakeholders with the aim to discuss contributions to a national monitoring report.

### **Spain: Spanish Progress Report was launched in September 2019**

The Spanish Progress Report includes information on Spain's progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The document can be found here (only available in Spanish).

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

Please regularly check the [Country Profiles](#) on the ESDN homepage for information on National Sustainable Development Strategies, policy activities and regular updates!

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

### **European Commission: The European Green Deal**

The European Commission presented [The European Green Deal](#) – a roadmap for **making the EU's economy sustainable** by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and making the transition just and inclusive for all.

**President Ursula von der Leyen** said: *'The European Green Deal is our new growth strategy – for a growth that gives back more than it takes away. It shows how to transform our way of living and working, of producing and consuming so that we live healthier and make our businesses innovative. We can all be involved in the transition and we can all benefit from the opportunities. We will help our economy to be a global leader by moving first and moving fast. We are determined to succeed for the sake of this planet and life on it – for Europe's natural heritage, for biodiversity, for our forests and our seas. By showing the rest of the world how to be sustainable and competitive, we can convince other countries to move with us.'*

### **Other news:**

#### **OECD: Issues Recommendation on Coherent SDG Implementation**

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released a [Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development \(PCSD\)](#), which provides a response to demand for guidance on the “how” of coherent SDG implementation. The Recommendation focuses on essential enablers to facilitate governments' efforts to enhance PCSD.

The 'Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development' represents a joint proposal from the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and Public Governance Committee (PGC) and is a revision of the OECD Council's 2010 Recommendation on 'Good Institutional Practices in Promoting Policy Coherence for Development,' to respond to the universal commitments made under the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The need to enhance PCSD is underlined in SDG target 17.14 on means of implementation for the Goals.

The new Recommendation, which was adopted on 11 December 2019, draws on DAC peer reviews and PGC country experiences, as well as lessons learned by OECD through more than

20 years in promoting policy coherence. It can be tailored to adapt to specific national capacities and realities.

### **UNECE: Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region**

The Regional Forum will take place on 19-20 March 2020 at the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG).

### **UN SDG Action Campaign: 2020 SDG Global Festival of Action (1-3 April, Bonn Germany)**

The 2020 edition of the SDG Global Festival of Action will be a space to meet the key SDG change-makers, activists and leaders, discover the most innovative ways to inspire action for the SDGs and experience the transformation taking place for people and the planet.

### **University Alliance for Sustainability: Spring Campus Conference 2020**

#### **Spring Campus Conference 2020: “Commitments for Future: Sustainability in Higher Education”**

UAS announces that the calls for abstracts for oral & poster presentations for the 5th Spring Campus Conference of the University Alliance for Sustainability:

“Commitments for Future: Sustainability in Higher Education” are now open. The conference will be hosted at Freie Universität Berlin from March 30 – April 3, 2020.

#### **Program focus and objectives**

In 2019, social movements raised the awareness of climate change and sustainability in public and scientific discourse, urging political leaders, business executives, and public institutions to “act now, not later”. This discourse has also reached Higher Education Institutions around the world. While sustainability has been increasingly rooted in research, teaching, and on the university campus, the current development has brought a new political and social dimension to campus:

- How do universities as public institutions respond to calls for action from their community and stakeholders?
- How do universities shape their governance structures in light of new participatory demands?
- How does the current discourse impact the societal and political role of universities?