

ESDNewsletter March 2020

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COVID-19's Impact on ESDN events in the coming months

Many of us have already reshuffled our working lives and are working from home to help in mitigating the spread of the virus. Together, we will see this crisis through!

The ESDN wishes to remain optimistic during these next weeks and months, but at the same time offer pragmatic solutions to the events that we offer our members. We will continue planning our events for this year with all sensitively required in the given situation. Further below, you will find our scheduled plans for this year and measures undertaken in case of further travel restrictions. The safety of all our members and friends is of the utmost importance to us!

Spotlight – An ESDN Interview Series about the SDGs and Sustainable Development

February 2020 marked the launch of the ESDN's new interview series, *Spotlight*, in which experts in the fields of sustainable development, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the SDGs are interviewed. The series addresses current topics in the debate surrounding sustainable development and the SDGs, such as the “Global Sustainable Development Report 2019”, the role of businesses in achieving the SDGs, the Circular Economy, the 6 transformations, and the role of the local level, to name only a few.

Spotlight interviews will be released every month on the ESDN website and on the ESDN's YouTube channel. The first two episodes feature interviews with Guillaume Lafortune from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. His interview, "Evidence-based Policymaking, Transformations, and the SDGs", was February's episode. March's episode features an interview with Eeva Furman, who is a member of the Global Sustainable Development Report Group of Scientists. Her interview, "Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 - Science for Achieving Sustainable Development", looked at the main objectives of the *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019*. We encourage everyone to check out the video interviews and subscribe to the channel: [European Sustainable Development Network](#), so you do not miss any of *Spotlight's* interviews.

ESDN Peer Learning Webinar, May/June 2020 (TBA)

The ESDN is introducing a new virtual format for learning and exchange, the ESDN Peer Learning Webinars. The Peer Learning Webinars aim to offer policymakers another event in which to learn from one another and exchange good practices on topics regarding sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The first ESDN Peer Learning Webinar is scheduled to be held in May or June 2020. The Webinar will last for about 90 minutes, in which the good practice case will be presented and Webinar participants will be able to discuss the good practice in-depth and ask questions. The first Webinar will focus on Finland's Voluntary National Review Peer Review process and the experiences they have made.

More information and the exact date of the first ESDN Peer Learning Webinar will be made available over the next weeks. Please stay tuned!

18th ESDN Workshop, 24-25 June 2020

The 18th ESDN Workshop is scheduled to be held in on 24-25 June 2020. The topic of this Workshop will be the European Semester and will focus on the European Union Green Deal.

Please be aware that COVID-19 is having an impact on the planning of this event!

The Workshop is tentatively scheduled to take place over two half-days in Bucharest, Romania.

At this time, the ESDN is hoping the situation with COVID-19 improves by the end of June and the Workshop can take place as a physical meeting. However, we are very aware that the situation with the virus has not improved in Europe, but rather the opposite. The situation is changing with each passing day and will need to be continuously monitored. Should it be the case that travelling and public and in-person gatherings are still not possible by the Workshop's date, the Executive Committee of the ESDN has decided to hold the Workshop virtually.

The ESDN will inform you in due course as to the final decision on whether the 18th ESDN Workshop will be held in person or virtually.

European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2020 has been postponed and will now take place from 20-26 September 2020

The ESDN has been able to reach a decision regarding the ESDW 2020. The impact that COVID-19 is having across Europe, and the world, cannot be ignored and the situation in Europe, in particular, keeps changing rapidly. Therefore, the ESDN has chosen to postpone the ESDW 2020 until the fall.

This year, the ESDW 2020 will take place from 20-26 September 2020. However, in order to allow some flexibility of event organizers in the different European countries, we will accept registrations from 18 September - 8 October 2020. Event organizers can already register events that will take place during this timeframe!

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

The ESDN Conference 2020 will take place in Berlin, Germany on 12-13 October! The title of this year's Conference is "The European Green Deal: Our pact for the Future". The Conference will be held in conjunction with the German EU Presidency and is being organized in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The Conference will focus on keynote speakers and interactive sessions that will address topics relating to the EU Green Deal, such as sustainable growth, sustainable food systems (farm-to-fork), sustainable finance, and sustainability and democracy. This Conference will also seek to be explicitly future-oriented and look at the ways in which sustainability could be used in politics to be more fit-for-purpose in planning for the future.

As COVID-19 is still a major concern for Europe at this time, future thinking is highly relevant and new ways of approaching crises are needed. It is the hope of the ESDN that the situation with COVID-19 is under control by the time of the Conference. Should this not be the case, the ESDN Office and the German hosts will think of new formats to make sure the Conference can take place.

Ending on a more positive note, Chancellor Angela Merkel is already confirmed to give a keynote speech at the Conference on 13 October! In addition to Chancellor Merkel confirming, the German Minister for the Environment, Svenja Schulze, has also confirmed her participation and will also deliver a keynote speech on 12 October!

The ESDN encourages you to save-the-date 12 – 13 October 2020! The registration for the Conference and Conference Draft Agenda will be provided within the next two weeks!"

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

Belgium:

Preparedness review of the SDG's by the Belgian Court of Audit

The Belgian Court of Audit has performed a review concerning the preparedness of all authorities in Belgium (national, federal and regional level) for the implementation, follow-up and reporting on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the UN. This report will be published later this year.

Belgium, The Brussels-Capital Region:

Public inquiry into the new draft of the Regional Sustainable Development Plan (RSDP)

The Brussels-Capital Region has undergone profound changes and is now facing challenges, such as rapid demographic growth, access to housing, access to employment, training and education, functional and social diversity, poverty, environment, mobility and internationalization. Between 13 January and 13 March 2017, the Brussels Government held a public inquiry into the new draft of the Regional Sustainable Development Plan (RSDP). It sets priorities to make the Brussels-Capital Region more attractive, more inclusive socially and economically, more competitive, more creative in research, and greener and more efficient in its use of energy and resources

The Brussels-Capital Region defined its vision for 2040 by adopting the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) in July 2018. The regional plan for sustainable development aims to provide an appropriate response to the above challenges and concerns facing Brussels as a diverse and dynamic urban area. The RSDP defines the general framework to be considered when drawing up and implementing relevant thematic plans/strategies. Among these thematic plans/strategies: [“Good Food Brussels”](#), [Brussels Regional Programme for a Circular Economy](#), [Nature Plan](#), [Good Move Plan](#), Innovation Plan, etc.

Belgium, Flanders:

Further development of Focus 2030 and its corresponding Flemish set of indicators

The SDGs have been translated into Flemish objectives for 2030 in “**Focus 2030**” and linked to Flanders’ “**Vision 2050**”, the long-term strategy for Flanders presented in March 2016 by the Government of Flanders.

Focus 2030 together **with the corresponding [Flemish set of indicators](#)**, formally approved by the Government of Flanders on the 5th of April 2019, is dynamic and evolutive and so it is being further developed and adjusted according to (new) long-term Flemish policy plans or new developments in the EU-approach on the SDGs. This dynamic approach is necessary as many of the objectives from the 2030 ASD are set out in long-term sectoral policies that are being drawn up. We have chosen to let these plans follow their own development path. Following the adoption of these long-term policy plans, their 2030 objectives will form an integral part of Focus 2030 and thus complete it. The 2030 objectives framework and the

associated indicators are thus adjusted on the basis of these (new) long-term policy plans and after evaluation by the Government of Flanders.

The Flemish set of indicators, based on the EUROSTAT and Flemish public statistics frameworks is also being further developed to monitor the implementation of Focus 2030. For a number of Flemish 2030 objectives, no indicators are available yet in the Flemish Public Statistics or new indicators need to be developed. As the list of Flemish Public Statistics is revised annually, statistics can be added (or omitted) at a later date. For any proposal to change the set of indicators feedback is given via the working group between Ministers' offices before making any changes. For a number of relevant indicators that are not yet available at the Flemish level, contact has been made with the actors involved to see to what extent these indicators can be broken down and used regionally.

The monitoring of Focus 2030 through the reporting of the adjusted Flemish set of indicators, is planned once a year alongside the September Statement of the Flemish Government.

Activities for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs

A basic SDG and Focus 2030 PowerPoint presentation, which can be tailored according to the needs and expectations of the applicant, has been made up as an educational tool within the Flemish administration. This tool can also be used for raising awareness through trainings of external partners.

A cooperation with the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities on this subject has been planned later this year.

The merging of the Flemish Foreign Affairs Department and the Flemish Chancellery and Administration

This has been decided by the Flemish government. The merging takes place in different phases this year as well as next year. The Flemish Government cannot yet estimate the impact on their work for the SDG's and Focus 2030.

Belgium, Wallonia:

New SDGs indicators report

Wallonia has published a new report analyzing the regional progress towards SDGs. The indicators-set is composed of 80 indicators related to environmental, social, economic, and governance issues. The report presents the temporal evolutions of these indicators and makes recommendations drawn up by academic experts in order to improve the monitoring process of SDGs in Wallonia. More information can be found [here](#).

Germany:

The Federal Ministry for Education and Research established 25 projects (ReziProk) dealing with a resource efficient circular economy

The Federal Ministry for Education and Research supports the research and development of innovations for a resource efficient circular economy. The goal of the research projects is to close the production loops through business models, design concepts and digital technology, in order contribute to the implementation of a resource efficient circular economy.

The results of the projects should be quickly scaled and used in practice in the economy and market ready products and thereby strengthen the competitiveness of companies in Germany in providing circular economy solutions.

To find out more about ReziProk and the projects being lead, please visit the [ReziProk website](#) (in German).

Event: Environmental Aspects in Public Procurement in Europe in Berlin on 1 October 2020

The aim of the event is to bring together decision makers, experts, scientists and practitioners from all over Europe to talk about the latest topics on green public procurement. The event will take place in Berlin, Neue Mälzerei, Friedenstraße 91. Registration will open soon.

The conference will be hosted by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the German Environment Agency (UBA) and organized by the Berlin Energy Agency GmbH (BEA).

Latvia:

The National Development Plan sets the stage for SDG implementation until 2027

On February 25th, the Latvian government approved the National Development Plan 2021-2028 for consideration by the Parliament. The plan defines the strategic goals, priorities and tasks and indicative investment needs to achieve sustainable and balanced development in the upcoming seven years. It was co-created by over 150 different stakeholders working in six working groups organized by the Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre under the Prime Minister. Over 1,400 comments were received in the public discussion on the draft document. Once approved by the Parliament, the National Development Plan will guide the state budget and EU Funds' investments.

The NDP covers all of the Sustainable Development Goals and comprises over 100 indicators. A mapping of the SDGs is expected in May or June 2020.

Cross Sectoral Coalition for the Implementation of the SDGs Established

The NGO platform LAPAS, in collaboration with its member organization- the Center for Education Initiatives, on February 6th, 2020 spearheaded the establishment of a Cross Sectoral Coalition for the Implementation of the SDGs. Attending were representatives of different NGOs, local governments, businesses and business organizations, academic institutions, the Central Statistics Office and the Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre. The Coalition will both follow SDG policies and promote information exchanges about communication, education and cooperation projects on sustainable development.

Luxembourg:

Plan for Sustainable Development adopted by the Government on 22 December 2019

Luxembourg's Plan for Sustainable Development (in French) was adopted by the Government on 22 December 2019. The Plan covers 10 priorities.

In addition, the entire set of indicators used by Luxembourg can be found at the Administration for Statistics.

Romania:

The Department of Sustainable Development has finished the institutional framework necessary for the implementation of Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030

The Department of Sustainable Development has finished the institutional framework necessary for the successful implementation of Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030.

Government established the Consultative Council for Sustainable Development

Two months ago, the Romanian Government established the Consultative Council for Sustainable Development which brings together 34 experts who will contribute with scientific know-how to the implementation process. The work of the 34 members of the Council will also sustain Romania's efforts to deliver as soon as possible a National Action Plan and SDGs indicators.

The development of Sustainable Development Hubs (SDH) is in progress

The development of Sustainable Development Hubs (SDH) is in progress. These hubs are formed by existing staff who pursue the implementation of the goals of sustainable development relating to the field of activity specific to their institution while also acting as liaisons between their institutions and the Department of Sustainable Development on the one hand, and the National Institute of Statistics, on the other.

Department of Sustainable Development facilitates the provision of training courses for sustainable development experts

In order to grow the administrative capacity of the public institutions involved, the Department of Sustainable Development facilitates the provision of training courses for sustainable development experts. In this respect, the Department of Sustainable Development already started the legal procedure and will hopefully have a framework by the end of the year.

Coalition for Sustainable Development is being set up

At the level of civil society, the Coalition for Sustainable Development is being set up by representatives of young people, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local authorities, unions, employers' associations, research, development and innovation institutions, the academic community, mass media, the religious denominations, farmers, the elderly and families.

Strategy Implementation Support

The process of the Strategy implementation is supported by an important project, named "România Durabilă / Sustainable Romania" funded by Operational Programme for Administrative Capacity (European Social Fund). The most important goals of the project are: 2030 Action Plan and national SDGs indicators, Romanian Sustainability Code and occupational standard for sustainable development experts, including training courses.

"Linking policy planning and budgeting to support the implementation of the SDGs in Romania"

The Department of Sustainable Development has a project in partnership with the OECD for assistance, entitled "Linking policy planning and budgeting to support the implementation of the SDGs in Romania". The project aims to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to help implement Romania's 2030 Strategy and thus the 2030 Agenda, and to support transparency on monitoring and reporting of SDG-related public spending.

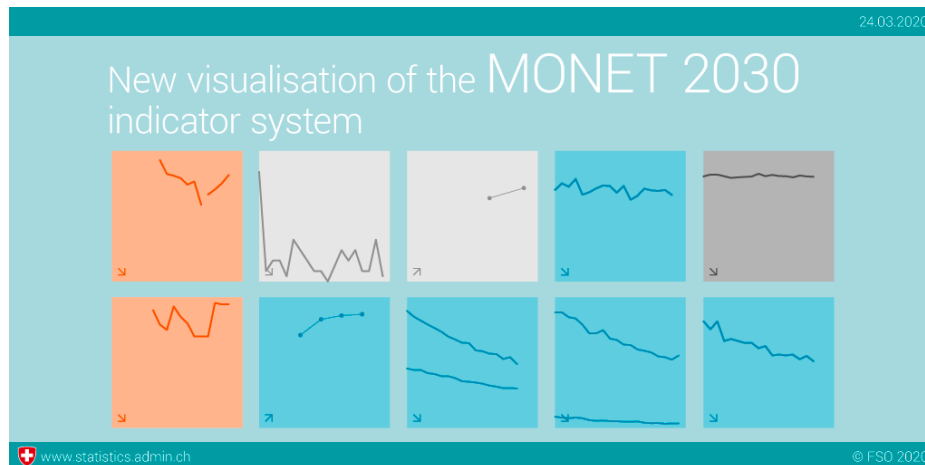
Developing a National Set of Indicators

One of the challenges Romania encounters is a lack of data. Romania tries to overcome this by strengthening the cooperation with the National Institute of Statistics. In this respect, Romania is a partner in a project financed by the European Union, where the task is to develop the National set of indicators based on the new priority goals established in the Strategy and taking into account the set of indicators established at UN and EU level. Hopefully, the national indicators will be finished by the end of the year.

Switzerland:

Colored tiles to show the mosaic of sustainable development

The new visualization of the [MONET 2030 indicator system](#) offers an overview of the system, with each of the over 100 indicators being represented by a coloured tile that includes the main information. The "indicators-tiles" can be arranged from several points of view, creating a modular mosaic. The user is invited to discover the information through the different doors offered by the MONET 2030 indicator system by choosing themes that will reduce the number of indicators presented. She/he can focus on indicators relevant to the Agenda 2030 or those relating to cross-cutting approaches such as gender equality or social cohesion, for example. In addition, the indicator tiles can also be reorganised as to detect certain trends.



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!

Other news:

World Economic Forum: *Global Risks Report 2020* is published

The 15th edition of the World Economic Forum's [Global Risks Report](#) is published as critical risks are manifesting. The global economy is facing an increased risk of stagnation, climate change is striking harder and more rapidly than expected, and fragmented cyberspace threatens the full potential of next-generation technologies — all while citizens worldwide protest political and economic conditions and voice concerns about systems that exacerbate inequality. The challenges before us demand immediate collective action, but fractures within the global community appear to only be widening. Stakeholders need to act quickly and with purpose within an unsettled global landscape.

Switzerland

United Nations World Data Forum 2020 and *Road to Bern* in Switzerland

The Swiss Confederation is organizing in collaboration with the United Nations the third edition of the [United Nations World Data Forum \(UNWDF\)](#), to be held from 18 to 21 October 2020 in Bern.

By adopting the [2030 Agenda](#) in 2015, countries also committed themselves to measuring progress towards the sustainable development goals (SDGs), thus generating a global need for quality statistical data and information. This need is particularly acute in developing countries. The United Nations created the World Data Forum to have data on everyone and for everyone and to leave no one behind. The forum aims to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data to objectively assess the situation in countries. It allows different communities of data producers and users to present innovative approaches to data compilation, processing and communication. To participate in the forum, you can [register here](#) from 1 June – 1 August 2020.

The UNWDF 2020 is a welcome opportunity for Switzerland to use both existing events and to organize new ones, which would contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. These events are part of [Road to Bern](#) whose goal is to promote and consolidate the dialogue between private and official data producers and data users and to support the exchange on topics that will be discussed at the UNWDF 2020.

