

ESDNewsletter October 2020

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ESDN Conference 2020, “The European Green Deal: Our pact for the Future”, 12-13 October 2020, virtual event

The ESDN Conference 2020 will be taking place virtually on 12 – 13 October 2020. The Conference is being organized by the ESDN in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The Conference will be a 2-day event of the German EU Council Presidency. The Conference will bring together sustainable development policymakers and experts from different stakeholder groups from all over Europe.

The title of this year’s Conference is **“The European Green Deal: Our Pact for the Future”** and will focus on the European Green Deal in the perspective of the needs for a sustainable transformation of Europe and especially of the expectations of the next generation as advocates of change – and the future. To that effect, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment is organizing a **European Youth Camp** in the run-up to the ESDN Conference in an effort to make sure young people can also discuss the challenges ahead. Results of the Youth Camp will be presented during the Conference.

The Conference itself will focus on many topics relating to the Green Deal and will have a very future-oriented focus regarding sustainable development. Amidst the troubling times of the Corona-Pandemic, topics include how to address future challenges to sustainable development and what that means in concrete terms. The Conference will also look into repercussions the European Green Deal might have on other European Commission priorities, such as its ‘Farm to Fork Strategy’, Sustainable Growth, Democracy, Sustainable Finance and

Resilience. It will also look at ‘missing links’, and thus discuss aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that are not included in the Green Deal.

More information about the conference will be made available on the [ESDN homepage](#). If you are interested in the conference or want more information, please send an email to the ESDN Office at esdn-office@sd-network.eu.

5th ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit to take place virtually at the end of November/early December 2020

The 5th ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit will be organized virtually at the end of November or early December 2020. The Platform and Visit will be organized by the ESDN in cooperation with the Ministry of Sustainable Affairs and Infrastructures of Luxembourg.

The topic for this Peer Learning Platform will be ***The Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Need for Sustainable Finance***. Apart from the overarching topic of sustainable finance, likely sub-topics include: 1) The Taxonomy Regulation; 2) the European Green Deal and Sustainable Finance as a follow up to the ESDN Conference 2020; and 3) How to implement sustainable finance and what are the necessary tools that are needed.

For the Peer Learning Visit portion of the Platform, Luxembourg is working on a Sustainability Check and will share the experiences that Luxembourg has made in setting this up.

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

Spotlight – an ESDN Interview 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. The series started in February 2020. The latest interviews are briefly described below:

July 2020 interview with Arnau Queralt Bassa – European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils

July’s ESDN *Spotlight* interview is available on the [ESDN website](#) and on the [ESDN’s YouTube channel](#). This interview features Arnau Queralt Bassa from the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC). Arnau’s interview, ***The Role of National Sustainable Development Councils in Policy Implementation***, goes into more detail on the important role that councils for sustainable development play in helping to implement sustainability policy and how they advise governments and parliaments.

September 2020 interview with Leena-Kaisa Piekkari – The Finnish Approach to Circular Economy

September's ESDN *Spotlight* interview is available on the [ESDN website](#) and on the [ESDN's YouTube channel](#). This interview features Leena-Kaisa Piekkari from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment. Leena-Kaisa's interview, *The Finnish Approach to Circular Economy*, goes into detail about how Finland is dealing with the topic of Circular Economy to make the country more sustainable.

European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) 2020 is running and ends on 8 October

The ESDW 2020 will still be accepting event registrations until 8 October 2020. Those still interested in organizing and registering an event for the ESDW can still do so via the [registration form](#) on the ESDW website.

So far, the **ESDW 2020 has over 3,800 events that are taking place in 25 countries**. Please visit the [ESDW website](#) to see the different events that are taking place all over Europe!

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

Ireland

Ireland's progress reports on SDGs 1-4

The Central Statistics Office of Ireland has published [progress reports](#) on SDGs 1-4. It includes how Ireland is doing in relation these SDGs.

Poland

Inauguration of the project *Public Administration Capacity Building Programme to support implementation of the SDGs and sustainable development*

The Ministry of Economic Development, as the coordinating body for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in Poland, assumes great responsibility for the success of this task. The ministry is aware of fact that people, their knowledge and skills, including us - public administration - play an important role in the process of achieving SDGs.

That is why Poland decided to combine these two aspects and to seek the support of the European Commission to create a programme for developing the competencies of public administration employees for sustainable development and SDG implementation. Successful

implementation of all the SDGs and an effective response to the clearly stressed direction of action at the European level requires well-prepared staff that is committed to change and with the ability to combine competencies and cooperate across silos. This calls for the continuous acquisition and expansion of interdisciplinary knowledge, due to the multidimensional nature of sustainable development, and a holistic approach to addressing different issues. This process must be accompanied by changes in mechanisms and tools, so that economic, social and environmental policy actions contribute to achieving SDGs in an effective and coherent manner.

Developing the capacity of public institutions (in terms of staff competence), and indeed at all levels, is key to meeting the challenge of building a more crisis-resistant economy and achieving the SDGs in these adverse conditions. This is essential to develop and implement national plans, develop scenarios, assess and review progress, and collect and analyze statistics.

Portugal

Local and international NGOs to guide the transition of Portuguese municipalities towards sustainability (and SDGs implementation) and support city governance

Two publications surrounding the transition of 18 municipalities in Portugal towards sustainable development. The first publication, [*Assessing the Ecological Footprint and biocapacity of Portuguese cities: Critical results for environmental awareness and local management*](#), outlines the initial results and framing in terms of the SDGs.

The second publication, [*Sustainable food transition in Portugal: Assessing the Footprint of dietary choices and gaps in national and local food policies*](#), looks at the Food Sustainability issue by investigating the current sustainability of Portuguese food systems and evaluating the existence (or not) of food policies that are capable of transforming current food systems. It concludes that strengthening the capacity of local governments to work on these issues (with multidisciplinary groups of qualified professionals, from nutritionists to forestry and agricultural engineers), strengthening coordination with national policies, particularly with the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security, and investing in strong education and awareness of civil society and businesses for behavior change, are essential paths for transforming food systems in Portugal.

Romania

First meeting of the Romanian Sustainable Development Hubs

The Romanian Sustainable Development Department organized on the 15th of September the first meeting of the Sustainable Development Hubs. Over 60 specialists from all ministries attended the discussions.

The sustainable development hubs are an important structure that will contribute both to the Horizon 2020 reporting and the elaboration of the 2030 Action Plan and subsequent annual reports, corresponding to the 2030 TARGETS. The role of specialists within the hubs is to pursue both sustainable development related to the field of activity of the institution, as well as to build bridges between each institution, the Department of Sustainable Development, and the National Institute of Statistics.

In order to ensure the implementation of the Strategy, with the support of all ministries, the Department managed to strengthen the institutional strategic framework by completing the establishment of sustainable development hubs at the level of public authorities. The Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development has also been set up, which brings together all ministers and is chaired by the Prime Minister. At the same time, the procedure for setting up the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development will be launched soon, which will be composed of experts for each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

OECD Report: Romania has a strong institutional framework to coordinate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

The Organization for Economic and Development Cooperation (OECD) experts presented two reports, [Romania: OECD Scan of Institutional Mechanisms to Deliver on the SDGs](#) and [SDG Budgeting in Romania: Linking Policy Planning and Budgeting to Support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), regarding Romanian capacity to implement the 17 SDGs. These are the result of a joint project put in place by the policy coherence for sustainable development OECD division and Romanian Department of Sustainable Development which analyzed institutional, planning, and budgetary mechanisms that can contribute to the implementation of the “National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania 2030”. The two reports reconfirm Romania's position as a regional hub in promoting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

According to OECD experts, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new governments' challenges in balancing urgent priorities with those of long-term implementation of sustainable development goals. Recommendations for overcoming this period include the integration of the concept of sustainable development into key government processes and the integration of sectoral indicators into the set of national sustainable development indicators.

The Netherlands

4th Dutch National SDG report (2020)

The [4th Dutch National SDG report](#) contains information on how the Netherlands contributes to reaching the SDGs. It is drafted jointly by the central government, local and regional government, the private sector and financial institutions, knowledge institutions, civil society organizations, youth and the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights.

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:

Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) publishes the results and lessons learned from its 2017 – 2019 pilot project

VVSG is the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities. It represents all 300 local governments in Flanders, Belgium. VVSG has worked on localizing the SDGs since the signing of Agenda 2030. Most of the work has been concentrated in a pilot project (2017-2019) with 20 local governments. The report, [VVSG SDG Pilot Project with Local Governments 2017-2019: Approach and Lessons Learned](#), describes the approach and methodology of the pilot project and the lessons learned. It serves as a learning document for associations of local governments worldwide.

German Environment Agency is organizing the 5th European Resources Forum (ERF 2020 online) as a virtual conference

On behalf of the German Environment Agency (UBA, Umweltbundesamt), SBS systems for business solutions is currently organizing the 5th European Resources Forum (ERF 2020 online) as a virtual conference. The full-day digital event **takes place on November 3rd, 2020**. The European Resources Forum contributes to the development and implementation of common positions for policy-making in Europe and internationally. The ERF is an instrument for communication on resource issues and for setting up networks and initiating stakeholder alliances at the European and international level.

For further information, the program and registration please visit the conference homepage www.resourcesforum.eu.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and PLATFORMA publish study on the SDGs

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and PLATFORMA have published a study on the SDGs, [The 2030 Agenda through the eyes of local and regional government associations](#), that was launched in the framework of the UN High Level Political Forum.

This study is based on a joint survey conducted by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), PLATFORMA and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). It was sent out in March 2020 to CEMR members and PLATFORMA partners. The purpose was to collect updated information on how and the extent to which local and regional government associations have been involved in the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).