

ESDNewsletter July 2021

This ESDNewsletter informs about the following topics and activities on sustainable development in Europe.

Announcements from the ESDN

19th ESDN Workshop: “Parliamentary Mechanisms in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda”

The 19th ESDN Workshop took place in Vienna, Austria on 14-15 June 2021. The title of this Workshop was “Parliamentary Mechanisms in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda” and looked more closely at national level and stakeholder mechanisms in Europe that exist to aid in Parliamentary involvement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Workshop featured a mixture of keynote presentations, interactive sessions, and many opportunities for discussion. Due to COVID-19, the Workshop was held as a hybrid event: Day one (14 June) took place at the Austrian Parliament for a small contingent of speakers, but was open to all participants virtually. On Day 2 (15 June), the Workshop was held virtually.

Leonore Gewessler, the Austrian Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, Karoline Edtstadler, the Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution at the Austrian Federal Chancellery, and Harald Dossi, Secretary General of the Austrian Parliament, were keynote speakers!

The Workshop featured parliamentarians from Romania, Finland, Hungary and Austria as well as representatives from several civil society organizations in Europe that push for more engagement with the SDGs in parliaments, either in their home country or at the European Parliament.

The [Workshop agenda](#), [Discussion Paper](#), and the [PowerPoint presentations of speakers](#) can be found on the ESDN website.

In case you were unable to join the Workshop, or would like to revisit the discussions, the Workshop Report is available [here](#): three main questions were investigated:

1. How do parliamentary mechanisms in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda work?
2. What are strategies and methods to implement the SDGs by parliamentary means?
3. How can the parliament and civil society collaborate effectively to implement the SDGs?

6th ESDN Peer Learning Platform: Civil Society and Citizen Involvement and Engagement for the 2030 Agenda

The ESDN is happy to announce the 6th ESDN Peer Learning Platform, which **will be taking place this year in Åland (Finland) on 30 - 31 August 2021**. The title of this Peer Learning Platform is “Civil Society and Citizen Involvement and Engagement for the 2030 Agenda” and will look more closely at how governments can engage and involve civil society and citizens more actively when dealing with the

2030 Agenda. The Platform is being organized by the ESDN in cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Government of Åland.

Day 1 of the Platform (30 August) will focus on the ReGeneration Week and fostering inter-generational knowledge sharing and dialogue between Youth and policymakers, and provide a platform to grow common and increased understanding of the topics discussed and encourage Youth to articulate their demands, culminating in a Youth Declaration.

Day 2 of the Platform (31 August) will focus on a combination of presentations on good practice examples from governments on their civil society and citizen engagement, as well as from civil society organizations. This will be coupled with interactive components that will seek to deepen discussions amongst policymakers and civil society.

We encourage everyone to check back after the summer to find out more about how this event went!

European Sustainable Development Week 2021

The ESDW is a European-wide initiative to stimulate and make visible activities, projects and events that promote sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **It will take place this year from 18 September – 08 October, with the core of the Week taking place 20 September – 26 September.**

Event Registration is open and will run until 08 October 2021! To register an event, please visit the registration page on the [ESDW website](#).

ESDN Conference 2021: European Recovery and Resilience Mechanisms - Challenges in systemic approaches in SD

The ESDN Conference is taking place on 30 November – 01 December 2021 in Ljubljana, Slovenia! The title of this year's ESDN Conference is "European Recovery and Resilience Mechanisms - Challenges in systemic approaches in SD". It is being organized by the ESDN in cooperation with Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia and the SLOGA Platform.

Please check back on the [ESDN website](#) over the next weeks for more information and for the Conference agenda!

3 ESDN Blog entries published in April and May 2021

France's Eco-responsible public services: Speeding up the current ecological transition

Gwenaël Roudaut, ESDN Advisory Board Member, Ministry for the Ecological Transition, France, wrote his ESDN Blog entry on the French public service. Be the change you want to see in the world! To support France's efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and climate neutrality goals, the French public service has adapted its own strategies to become greener and more environmentally friendly. The Blog describes how these measures include many aspects of daily operations, from the sustainability of buildings to employees' mobility and the quality of food in the canteens of public service employees.

To read the full Blog, please visit the [ESDN website](#), or download it [here](#).

ESDN by 2025 -new strategic steps under way

Annika Lindblom, ESDN Association President, Ministry for the Environment, Finland, explains that the newly developed ESDN Mission for 2025 underlines the importance of the ESDN as the main network of Sustainable Development professionals in Europe.

In this Blogpost she outlines the different roles the ESDN plays in the sustainable development landscape, including as a peer-learning platform, a space for informal knowledge exchange and as a knowledge hub.

As economies are starting to recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to have strong networks that can advocate for using the SDGs as a compass to build back better. Strengthening the ESDN's capacity and extending its outreach will be a key aspect of pushing for a more sustainable Europe and world in 2030.

To read the full Blog, please visit the [ESDN website](#), or download it [here](#).

It takes Two to Tango - Whole of society to achieve SD transition

Sami Pirkkala, ESDN Vice President, Secretary General of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, Finland, talks about Finland's whole-of-society approach to sustainable development in his ESDN Blog post. He shares Finland's long history of societal contributions toward sustainable development. The Finnish National Commission has been around since 1993 and has always been seeking ways to bring all aspects of Finnish society together. Currently, the Commission is preparing a roadmap for the 2030 Agenda that is highly participatory in nature. The roadmap will focus on six key transformations: 1) a food system that promotes well-being, 2) a sustainable energy system, 3) the use of land and forests to strengthen biodiversity and carbon neutrality, 4) knowledge, learning and sustainable lifestyles, 5) health, well-being and social inclusion, and 6) economy that promotes well-being, work and sustainable consumption.

He also touches upon the need for more societal engagement at the European Union level. The need to strengthen the whole of society approach at the European level was also noted by the EU Council in its recent conclusions on the 2030 Agenda implementation. The Council recalled the important role played by the Multi-Stakeholder Platform in enriching the debate on how to make progress toward the SDGs, and urged the Commission to establish "a platform that engages a wide range of stakeholders in the EU's work with the SDGs, both at EU and global levels, with inclusive and representative membership, to facilitate the whole of society approach to enhance action and delivery on the SDGs and seek good cooperation with initiatives, such as the European Climate Pact and the Conference on the Future of Europe".

To read the full Blog, please visit the [ESDN website](#), or download it [here](#).

2 ESDN Spotlight Videos Published

Multilevel Governance in Smart Cities

This *Spotlight* Interview focuses on the question of whether we can use public law to foster sustainable development. **Verena Madner**, Professor of public law, environmental law, public and urban governance and Vice President of the Austrian Constitutional Court, who was part of elaborating the City of Vienna's Smart City strategy, explains the need to create frameworks for citizens to make it easy to live a sustainable life. She talks about the procedures and challenges of working out the Viennese Smart City Strategy and the importance of monitoring progress. National policy makers can learn a lot from the city level, according to Verena Madner, for example the holistic approach towards tackling challenges.

To watch the full interview please visit the [ESDN website](#) or the [ESDN YouTube Channel](#).

The Future of a Sustainable Europe

Angela Merkel held a speech at the last ESDN Conference. The ESDN is particularly pleased that the German Chancellor delivered this important message at this annual event of the ESDN, a Europe-wide network that has been successfully connecting leading policymakers for nearly 20 years.

"Ahead of us lies the path towards a truly comprehensive transformation."

Europe has "a leading role to play in this regard. We must prove that economic growth can be decoupled from emissions and the consumption of resources."

"We must not stop encouraging, informing, inspiring and also criticizing each other time and again when it comes to pursuing the most sustainable way of living and working possible."

To watch the full video, please visit the [ESDN website](#) or the [ESDN YouTube Channel](#).

News on Sustainable Development Governance from European Countries

Finland: National 2030 Agenda Roadmap

The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development is currently preparing a national roadmap for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The preparatory process is inclusive and everyone will be involved, the completed roadmap will be presented at the December Commission meeting.

The 2030 Agenda roadmap is a plan for the Finnish society as a whole to achieve all the SDGs by 2030. Although Finland is one of the world's most progressive countries in implementing Agenda 2030, approximately one quarter of the SDG targets still require further action. The roadmap will build a path towards these targets. The path will be constructed through focusing on six areas of transformation, where systemic changes need to take place.

During the spring, the Commission has identified six areas of change that simultaneously affect several Agenda 2030 objectives: 1) a food system that promotes well-being, 2) a sustainable energy system, 3) the use of land and forests to strengthen biodiversity and carbon neutrality, 4) knowledge, learning

and sustainable lifestyles, 5) health, well-being and social inclusion, and 6) economy that promotes well-being, work and sustainable consumption.

The roadmap will play a key role in promoting Finland's implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The six areas of change represent the themes in which our activities should change significantly, in order to secure people's wellbeing within the planetary borders. Six areas of change thus concretise the content of sustainable development in Finland. At their best, they also increase the long-term and consistency of national policies.

In the coming years, the work of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development will be structured around these areas of change. This makes the work of the committee more focused and concrete. Through these areas of change, the members of the Commission will also deepen their understanding and competence on sustainable development and attach themselves to the Commission's common objectives.

Germany:

Hannover: Sustainability Report Published

The German city of Hannover published their sustainability report for 2020. The report is only available in German and can be downloaded [here](#).

Switzerland: Federal Council adopts 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan

The Federal Council adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy and an Action Plan for the period 2021–2023 on 23 June 2021. The strategy sets priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2030 SDS sets out the guidelines for the Federal Council's sustainability policy and establishes sustainable development as an important requirement for all federal policy areas. The Strategy now has a timeframe of ten years instead of the usual four. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) with its 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides the reference framework.

The 2030 SDS is first and foremost an instrument to coordinate between policy areas, and works in particular to make sustainable development a core component of the numerous federal sectoral activities. As a transversal strategy, it formulates guidelines for federal policy and sets goals for the period up to 2030, as well as directions for domestic and foreign policy strategic with corresponding political priorities. All federal agencies are called upon to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 2030 SDS within the scope of their responsibilities and to integrate the principles and goals into their regular planning, budgeting and policy management processes.

The Sustainable Development Strategy and accompanying Action Plan can be read and downloaded in [French](#), [German](#) and [Italian](#). The English version is currently in translation, please occasionally check back [here](#).

News on European Governance for Sustainable Development

Eurostat: Sustainable development in the European Union - Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context

On 15 June, Eurostat published its [fifth annual report](#) on how much headway the EU has made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year, the publication comes with a number of novelties, including a chapter on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected Europe's progress in this area last year.

Since 2017, the EU has regularly monitored and reported progress towards the SDGs. The 2021 edition of Eurostat's report presents the detailed monitoring results for the 102 EU SDG indicators in 17 chapters, one for each SDG. It also includes a chapter on how individual Member States are doing compared to the EU average, and, for the first time, it presents a selection of experimental indicators to estimate the spillover effects of the EU's actions on the ability of other countries to achieve the SDGs. This year's report also looks into how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the EU on its way towards achieving the SDGs.

The report provides a statistical overview of the progress made over the past five years. Overall, the EU made headway towards most goals. But progress in some goals was faster than in others, and there was also some movement away from the objectives in specific areas of a number of goals as well as in two goals overall.

Communicating progress on the SDGs to a wide range of target audiences is one of Eurostat's main priorities. The comprehensive report is therefore accompanied by several additional, easy to use communication outlets:

- The full report is also available as a series of [Statistics Explained articles](#) – the statistical Wiki of Eurostat.
- The [brochure](#) presents the main results
- With the [interactive digital publication SDGs@me](#) you can and explore and evaluate the situation of your country of choice compared to others for a subset of the EU SDG indicators.
- The [country scores tool](#) allows you to compare Member States' performance against the EU average.
- All indicators have been updated with the latest data and are presented in the [SDG tables in Eurobase](#).
- All information on the report, the accompanying materials and the indicator set, can be found on the [Eurostat SDG dedicated website](#).