

ESDNewsletter October 2021

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

Announcements from the ESDN

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

The 6th ESDN Peer Learning Platform took place on August 30 - 31, 2021 in Mariehamn, Åland Islands. It was organized by the European Sustainable Development Network together with the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Government of Åland. The objectives of the Platform were to learn from one another on good practice examples from all over Europe on how governments are involving and engaging with civil society and citizens when it comes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In case you may have missed the Platform, please read the Platform [Discussion Paper](#) and [Report](#). Due to Chatham House Rules, the names of individuals have been removed.

European Sustainable Development Week 2021

The European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) began on 18 September and will end on 08 October. So far, the ESDW has over 5,000 registered events in 27 European countries!

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 is still not too late to register an event!

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 Youth Workshop 2021

The ESDN is organizing a Youth Workshop for UN Youth Delegates and other youth representatives on 13 November 2021. The Youth Workshop is building on the previous year's Youth Camp, which was organized in the run up to the ESDN Conference 2020 by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment. The German Ministry for the Environment is also sponsoring the ESDN Youth Workshop. The goal is to bring Youth Representatives working on sustainable development related issues from all over Europe together to discuss topics that are important to them.

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!

2 ESDN Blog entries published in July and September 2021

Circular Economy- A key lever to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals Seven principles by Luxembourg Council for Sustainable Development

Marguy Kohnen, ESDN Advisory Board Member, Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development, Luxembourg, wrote on the topic of circular economy. Recurrently mentioned as a key solution for implementing SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, circular economy is a forceful tool for also achieving several other SDGs, including SDG 6 on energy, SDG 8 on economic growth, SDG 11 on sustainable cities, SDG 13 on climate change, SDG 14 on oceans, and SDG 15 on life on land.

The implementation of a circular economy entails, however, a paradigm shift in value creation and fundamental modifications on multiple levels of the existing socio-economic system. It is therefore necessary to provide clear visions and guidance, as well as involve all public and private stakeholders in jointly building new product and value chains.

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

The 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDG's are all about generosity and empowerment

Micke Larsson, development and sustainability strategist for the Government of Åland, describes the Åland islands' inclusive approach to the implementation of sustainable development strategies. In 2014, Åland decided to achieve full sustainability latest by the year 2051. The backbone of achieving the seven goals that were identified for the islands is a network formed by citizens, business leaders, politicians, civil servants and civil society representatives. This way, the voices of all stakeholders are valued and exchange between different groups is promoted.

Micke also presented this approach as a good practice example at the [6th ESDN Peer Learning Platform](#), which focused on citizen and civil society engagement for SDG implementation.

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

2 ESDN Spotlight Videos Published

The role of parliament in SDG implementation

"Environmental policy and sustainability issues have always been in need of democratic and parliamentary attention for integration into our policies."

Austrian Federal Minister for Climate Action, Leonore Gewessler, gave a speech at the opening of the 19th ESDN Workshop. Her speech highlighted the importance of parliamentarians to make the right decisions to achieve the 2030 Agenda, but also **the need for civil servants to implement those decisions**. She explained how Austria is **building back better** and what is necessary to **leverage synergies to achieve the SDGs**.

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

How think tanks bridge the gap between policy and science

Spotlight – Interview with **Camilla Bausch** on how think tanks bridge the gap between policy and science

Camilla Bausch is the Scientific and Executive Director of Ecologic Institute Europe, which is an independent think tank for environmental and policy analysis.

Climate protection is a leading theme for all policy areas and environmental policies require a broad scientific background. As independent organizations, think tanks link research to policy and provide options and solutions to improve policies which are actually actionable.

This Spotlight Interview examines the role of think tanks for policy making and sustainable development. “As think tanks are not enclosed to election cycles or votes, they have the freedom to look more broadly on issues in the society and identify the topics of tomorrow”, Camilla Bausch says. Working in much longer time spans than politicians, think tanks develop solutions which are sustainable in the long term.

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

News on Sustainable Development Governance from European Countries

Belgium:

Flanders: 114 Flemish municipalities celebrated local heroes for sustainable development

From 18 to 25 September, the VVSG (Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities) organizes for the 4th year in a row the Week of the Sustainable Municipality. This year, no less than 114 municipalities (almost 40% of all local governments) participated, the highest number so far!

During this week, local governments celebrated local heroes for sustainable development. These are organizations, schools, business and individual citizens, who, in their daily lives or work, contribute to a more sustainable community and world. During the campaign week, local governments also raised the SDG-flag and organized activities together with their local heroes to raise awareness on Agenda 2030 amongst their population. This year, we focused on the Planet pillar.

The VVSG supports participating municipalities by providing a campaign manual, giving tips and advice on the selection of heroes and the organization of activities, facilitation exchange between participants and providing both online and physical campaign material. This year, the campaign material included a brochure for citizens on the SDGs with low-threshold information on the 17 Goals and what each and every one of us can do to contribute to these goals.

All information can be found on the campaign website www.duurzamegemeente.be.

Wallonia: 3rd Walloon Sustainable Development Strategy

The 3rd Walloon Sustainable Development Strategy is under preparation, to be adopted by the Walloon Government in 2022. This strategy will integrate quantified targets related to SDGs, fitted to the regional context. A proposal of action plan will be elaborated in a participatory process with different stakeholders: a new structure named “Walloon Partnership for a sustainable development” will be established in the autumn 2021.

Estonia:

- In 2021, the long term strategy “[Estonia 2035](#)” was approved by the Parliament. The goal of the strategy is to provide a long-term sustainable direction for Estonia’s development.
- In 2021, the [list of sustainable development indicators](#) were updated and published by the Statistics Office.
- By the end of 2021, there will be published [co-creation platform](#). The aim of the platform is to share relevant information about SDGs and Estonia 2035 and to bring together different stakeholders to join the challenges which contribute to the implementation of SDGs.
- In autumn 2021 there will be organized the opinion journey for students to collect new ideas how to implement Estonia 2035 strategic goals.

Germany:

Towards a sustainable economy

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy has published its second report on sustainability. The report describes the economic policy environment that is needed in Germany to boost sustainable development across the board and shows the wide range of measures the ministry is undertaking to help individual industries become more sustainable. In light of the particular importance of innovation and digitalization, one chapter focuses on the ministry’s initiatives in this area. The report goes on to present the ministry’s wide range of activities for transforming the energy system as the basis for meeting SDG 7 and explores how the ministry is adhering to the principle of sustainability in its own administrative actions and on its premises.

The report is available in [English](#) and [German](#).

Promoting dietary shifts for a healthy climate: the role of public procurement in the EU

Together with ClimateFocus, Climate and Land Use Alliance and GIZ, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment is organizing an **event on public finance, public procurement and dietary shifts in the EU**. There are thematic links to the UN Food Systems Summit, COP26 and of course the Farm-to-Fork-Strategy. **The event takes place on October 6 (online) and will feature** an online panel discussion, which will explore how public food procurement within the European Union can be used to support the transition to more sustainable and climate-friendly diets. The event will explore how redirecting this public finance can help to establish more sustainable food systems, adopt healthier diets, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. **To attend this even, please register with this [link](#).**

Greece:

- Greece has adopted its National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) in 2019, setting a very ambitious national goal of 56% GHG emissions reduction by 2030, compared to 2005 levels, which demonstrates Greece's commitment to contribute to the EU effort for climate neutrality by 2050. Moreover, in the light of the climate policy developments in the EU (i.e. new climate target for at least 55% reduction of GHG emissions and European Climate Law), Greece is currently in the process of formulating a national climate law, through public consultation, that will define concrete and updated national climate objectives. In this context, Greece also aims to revise its NECP and fully align it with the increase in of the European climate target for at least 55% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. Already, Greece has embarked on a very ambitious front-loaded effort to fully de-lignite its energy mix by 2028, with all but one existing lignite power plants expected to be decommissioned by 2023.
- Greece has adopted a National Strategy for Circular Economy since December 2018. Based on this, and taking into account recent developments at the EU level in 2019 and 2020 (e.g. the EU Green Deal and the new EU Circular Economy Action Plan), Greece finalized the elaboration of its new National Circular Economy Action Plan in March 2021. This new Action Plan includes a series of concrete actions to be implemented over the period 2021 – 2025 through increased cross-sectoral arrangements, and is building on recent national legislation, like Law 4736/2020 for incorporating EU Directive 2019/904 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment (the SUP Directive), the new National Plan for Waste Management as well as the new national Green Public Procurement National Plan. The opinion of the National Council for Circular Economy (a board of involved national professional producers' associations) and of the Interministerial Committee for Circular Economy have been taken into account in drafting the new National Circular Economy Action Plan, ensuring a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach. The Plan includes an analysis of the key entities in charge for the implementation of each one of the actions foreseen; it encompasses production, consumption, waste management as well as horizontal issues related to governance and administration; it focuses on products and services with a high circularity potential such as electronics and ICT, batteries and vehicles, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction and buildings, food waste, and water use. The Plan is also coupled with an operational part where provisions for the monitoring of its implementation are analysed as well as with a presentation of the matching funding sources for its timely delivery.

- With regard to plastic pollution, as above mentioned, Greece has incorporated in its national legislation the EU SUP Directive (Directive 2019/904) with Law 4736/2020, in October 2020, much earlier than the date of entry into force of the Directive (July 2021) due to the importance given to the reduction of plastic waste generated at source and the promotion of more sustainable and reusable materials. The Law is expected to have a considerable positive outcome on urgently addressing plastic marine litter that negatively impact on marine ecosystems and on important economic activities such as tourism and fishing. The Law is guided by the principles and objectives of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, having a direct contribution to the achievement of SDGs 12 and 14. Based on this Law, Greece is committed to promote more sustainable materials and to reduce the most environmentally damaging single use plastic products, in particular single-use plastic beverage and food containers, at least by 30% by 2024, and at least by 60% by 2026 compared, to 2022.
- A new entity, the Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (NECCA) of Greece, has been established by Law 4685/2020 in September 2020: it is supervised by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy (MoEE) and is responsible inter alia for coordinating and supervising the management bodies of the several protected areas of the country (that correspond to around 30% of land area and to around 20% of territorial waters of the country) for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems through a multi-stakeholder consultative approach, ensuring a high and effective conservation .

Hungary:

Updates from the Hungarian National Council for Sustainable Development

- The National Council for Sustainable Development (NFFT) has completed a study about the decarbonization possibilities of the construction industry sector in Hungary. The study was conducted by the former chief architect of Budapest, Éva Beleznay, who is currently the senior sustainability advisor of the Hungary Green Building Council. The study is filling a gap, as there was no study available before about this important topic. The [study](#) is currently available only in Hungarian, but an English summary might be available soon.
- The NFFT is currently working on the bi-annual report on sustainable development in Hungary, which is one of the most important tasks the Council is regularly conducting. The NFFT is mapping and measuring the country's sustainability status and performance against several sustainability indicators bi-annually, and the fourth of such a report is currently under preparation with the involvement of several experts.
- The British Embassy of Budapest and the Business Council for Sustainable Development Hungary organize a regular meeting event - the Fit for 55 meetings - with senior representatives of the Hungarian National Bank, The Ministry for Innovation and Technology, the Agro-Ministry, the NFFT and the Office of the Hungarian President. NFFT is also participating in this important high level discussion and knowledge transfer forum about the EU's ambitious plans.

Romania:

Romanian activities in European Sustainable Development Week 2021

The European Sustainable Development Week was celebrated this year in Romania with a lot of activities that aimed to promote the SDGs. The Department of Sustainable Development of the Romanian Government acted as a catalyst for all stakeholders and sectors of society to put forward their ideas and input on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Romania and raise awareness about sustainable development.

The Department of Sustainable Development was the main partner in a series of events. Throughout the 6 days of activities (18-23 September 2021), a platform was created, one that puts emphasis on the importance of a sustainable lifestyle. We saw the power of partnerships, of dialogue and of open and transparent collaboration between all members of society, especially when they have a common goal: to do more for ourselves and future generations.

The week debuted at "Dambovita Street Delivery" (18-19 September), where the Department had its own pavilion where it greeted citizens with fun activities on the 2030 Agenda such as quizzes on a sustainable lifestyle and information about the department's work. The whole street festival was situated on the shore of the Dambovita river and its main purpose was to raise awareness about sustainable use of the river which would help not only to prevent pollution but would be an important asset for a more sustainable community. Also, our partners from the Association for Education, Development and Youth Involvement (EDIT) organized, with the support of the Titi Aur Academy, the Romanian Police and General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, road education classes, and first aid courses.

BILD MIT KONFERENZ

On Monday, the 20th of September, we started the series of conferences that throughout the SD week focused on key elements that were encompassed this year in our work: education for sustainable development and food waste. On this note, we had 2 conferences with outstanding results and impressive presence on "Education for Sustainable Development" (September 20), with circular economy workshops, adult education and education for food waste prevention and one on the "International Year of Fruits and Vegetables" (September 21), which focused on the need for a more balanced diet, while preventing food waste. Both events had also the objective to bring together SDGs stakeholders to increase cohesion and share best practices.

Moreover, we have also launched on the 22nd of September the national project "Romania in Safety" which will be focused on the urgent need for road safety education in Romania.

The statistics are alarming: Romania is in first place in regards to the number of deaths caused by road accidents, having, in 2019, an average of 96 deaths / million inhabitants, a figure that is double the European Union average.

BILD MIT SPIELENDEM KIND

The week finished with two main activities: a day solely for youth and youth organizations and the debut of events "Sustainable business incubators" in Sfantu Gheorghe. Together with 5 youth organizations, UnYouthRomania, the Romanian Youth Forum, USR, LSRS, FASMR we organized in a creative space:

- Interactive games with the 17 SDGs
- Workshops on public education in Romania, financial education, sex education, nutrition and smart consumption, implementation of healthy habits, medical misinformation

- Information stands with topics such as: Daily sustainability and civic involvement, sustainability of foreign universities, blood donation campaigns.

News on European Governance for Sustainable Development

No submissions were received for this edition of the ESDNewsletter.