

ESDN Newsletter

(December 2023)

News from the ESDN

ESDN Youth Workshop 2023

The ESDN Youth Event 2023 took place in Berlin on 25-28 October. Under the title “How can Europe shape a sustainable world?”, the event dealt with the topic of spillover effects, Europe’s responsibility for them and policies to address such effects. 41 Youth Representatives from 21 European countries attended the event. For the first time this year, young ESDN civil servants were also invited to take part.

The event served as a platform for European youth, ESDN members and experts on the topic of spillover effects to exchange ideas and experience, to learn how different European countries are dealing with the topic and to network. On the first day, Youth Representatives had a chance to learn more about spillovers from experts and to exchange their thoughts on the topic in small working groups. After listening to more input from the experts and hearing about experience of the ESDN civil servants on the second day, the Youth Representatives presented the results of their discussions. The topics that concerned the young people the most were climate justice and triple planetary crisis, fast fashion, transformative system change and climate migration. The Youth Representatives also wrote an [ESDN Policy Brief](#), which can be accessed on the ESDN website.



Youth Workshop 2023 Group Photo (Oct. 25-28, 2023, Berlin)

8th ESDN Peer Learning Platform & Visit

The Peer Learning Platform and Visit took place on 09-10 November in Bern, Switzerland! The topic of this year's [#PeerLearningPlatform](#) was "Spillover Effects in the Context of SDG Implementation". The ESDN was happy to cooperate with the [Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE](#), the [Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA](#), and [foraus - Swiss Forum on Foreign Policy](#) over the 2-day event, which brought together over 50 participants from 14 European countries. More about the results can be found below by reading the ESDN Policy Note on spillovers, which builds upon the keynote presentations and interactive group work that took place during the Platform and Visit. The results from keynote presentations and interactive group work were used in developing an [ESDN Policy Note](#) on spillover effects, which can be accessed via the ESDN website.



Group work on spillover effects at the Peer Learning Platform

New ESDN Executive Committee 2024 Elected at the ESDN General Assembly

The ESDN has elected a new ESDN Executive Committee for 2024! [László Borbély](#) from the Prime Minister's Office in Romania will be the new ESDN President! [Marguy Kohnen](#) from the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity in Luxembourg and [Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler](#) from the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology in Austria will reprise their roles as ESDN Vice Presidents. The ESDN is also very happy to welcome its newest member to the Executive Committee, Taru Savolainen from the Prime Minister's Office in Finland, who will also serve as a Vice President!



President László Borbély, Vice Presidents Marguy Kohnen, Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler, and Taru Savolainen

ESDN Youth Representatives Elected to the ESDN Advisory Board

In an effort to bring the ESDN Youth Network closer to the ESDN, it was decided by the ESDN Executive Committee include 2-4 Youth Network Representatives in the ESDN Advisory Board. These elections were held amongst the Youth Representatives and the ESDN is happy to announce that the following 4 Representatives will join the Advisory Board starting in 2024: [Miriam Egger](#) from Austria, [Lara Bertemes](#) from Luxembourg, [Dana Patricia Novăcescu](#) and [Anamaria Lăzăruc](#) from Romania.

The ESDN congratulates them on their election and to working with them during 2024 to help and ensure that the youth perspective is taken more into account.



Miriam Egger, Lara Bertemes, Dana Patricia Novăcescu and Anamaria Lăzăruc

ESDN Events in 2024

In the first half of 2024, the **ESDN will be focusing on the overarching theme of transformative policies**. We have seen from the Global Sustainable Development Report that no country is on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda. We need to act now in a transformative way and use the levers of change to be able to reach the SDGs. The ESDN already has events scheduled that will be addressing that topic. The topic for the second half of the year has yet to be defined. Visit the [ESDN website](#) to find out more information over the upcoming weeks and months regarding events.

1. **ESDN Young Civil Servant Event** on 15-16 April 2024 in Vienna on "Transformative Policies - How can young civil servants have an effect"
2. **ESDN Conference 2024** on 05-06 June 2024 in Brussels on "Transformative Policies"
3. **ESDN Youth Workshop 2024** (late-August/early-September)
4. **European Sustainable Development Week** on 18 September - 08 October 2024
5. **ESDN Workshop** in Montenegro (Date to be confirmed)
6. **9th ESDN Peer Learning Platform & Visit** in the 2nd half of 2024

News in Sustainable Development from Europe

The ESDN is happy to bring you news from Europe on the latest developments in sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In this edition, we have news from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, and Switzerland!

Austria - Results of the SDG Dialogue Forum 3.0

The Dialogue Forum sought to answer the following questions: Where does Austria stand in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and what successes or successes have been achieved? What challenges have shaped the years 2020 – 2023? What strategies and solutions can be used? What can advance the SDGs in Austria and globally? A summary can be found [here](#) (only in German), as well as a [YouTube video](#) of the highlights.

Austria - Global Goals Check

With the Global Goals Check, you can quickly and easily assess how well your project aligns with the SDGs and how you can contribute to making the world a little fairer, more ecological, and sustainable. Your project can be from work or from your private life. It can be big and complex or small and simple. You can find out more about the Global Goals Check [here](#). Currently, there are only Austria-specific information and only in German. In case there is interest in cloning this tool, please contact the Federal Ministry for Climate Action.

Belgium (Wallonia) - 3rd SDG Monitoring Report

Wallonia is committed to regularly monitoring the implementation of 17 SDGs on its territory, based on indicators. The [2023 edition](#) (third report available in French) has been published as well as a [new website](#), showing the evolution of 113 indicators. The majority of them are linked to the 89 quantitative objectives related to SDGs that the Walloon Government has adopted through the third Walloon strategy for sustainable development (2022).

Furthermore, this report was enriched by the perspectives of Walloon societal actors (i.e. members of the Walloon Partnership for sustainable development): a dedicated chapter addresses key messages to the Government for accelerating the implementation of SDGs in Wallonia.



Germany

Germany wants to speed up sustainable development. To this end, the Federal Cabinet adopted a decision paper on sustainable development titled "[Shaping the future together with courage](#)" on October 4, 2023. With this resolution, the German Federal Government reaffirmed the importance of sustainable development and its commitment to further ambitious, even faster implementation while at the same time describing the challenges for sustainable development worldwide and in Germany.

At the same time, Germany launched the process to revise the German Sustainable Development Strategy with a kick-off event on 19 October 2023 in Berlin and a regional conference on 7 December 2023 in Bremen, counting on broad participation from all areas of science, business and society as a whole. Follow [this link](#) to find out what Germany is doing to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Iceland - New National Sustainable Development Strategy for 2030 will use SDGs as guiding principles

The world is now at the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda and need to demonstrate unprecedented resolve in accelerating action towards sustainable development. Almost exactly one year ago, Iceland's Prime Minister's Office strengthened its national sustainable development framework with a new platform called Sustainable Iceland, [as can be seen in the VNR from this year](#). Iceland established a large sustainability council with members from government and across society and are working on the last bits of the new national strategy for sustainable development for 2030, using the SDGs as guiding principles.

Iceland's national strategy is built on an analysis of what stakeholders in the sustainability council found to be of most importance in a [green paper](#) (only in Icelandic), including ideas from the Prime Minister's journey around the country to gather suggestions from the public, as well as an analysis of where Iceland stands in [international comparison](#). Iceland decided to not only focus on how to i.e. improve the livelihoods of people in Iceland by contributing to a just green transition, but also to think global and make efforts to better manage and minimize negative [spillover effects](#).

Malta - Training Sessions and Workshops on Embedding the SDGs along Policy Cycles

During the first week of December 2023, the Sustainable Development Directorate within the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Energy and Enterprise (MEEE) in collaboration with the Cabinet Office within the Office of the Prime Minister organised a training session for Government officials on embedding the SDGs along the policy cycle. Maltese Government officials had the opportunity to exchange views with Government representatives from Czech Republic and the Netherlands about their experience in applying sustainability to their Regulatory Impact Assessment process. This was followed by two workshops organised in collaboration with Malta Enterprise aimed at mainstreaming sustainability in the blue economy in Malta. Some highlights of the training session can be found [here](#), and more information on the workshops can be found [here](#).

Malta - 36 Events Registered to the European Sustainable Development Week

As part of the European Sustainable Development Week 2023, the MEEE carried out the *Malta Sustainable Development Action Days: Be Part of the Change*, which is a yearly initiative organised by the Ministry aimed at promoting and fostering awareness on sustainable development and the SDGs. Its main objective is to inspire more individuals, entities, businesses, and organisations to take more action and showcase their commitment towards sustainability. This year, 36 initiatives, which can be viewed [here](#), taking place all over Malta and Gozo were promoted on various social media channels and websites, as well as through a highlight feature, which can be seen on YouTube [here](#).

Netherlands - Concept of Well-being

There is growing attention to the concept of Well-being ('Brede Welvaart', national beyond-GDP concept) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in policy and society in the Netherlands. At the same time, there are questions about what exactly both concepts mean, if they are not more or less the same, and how they can be used for policy. In this [policy brief](#) (in Dutch), PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency provides insight into the history of Well-being and the SDGs, their use in policy and society, and their most important similarities and differences. The policy brief looks at policy use in the Netherlands as well as how other European countries deal with (their own form of) Well-being and the SDGs in their policies. For more information about the country approaches to the SDGs and Well-being, you can get an overview [here](#) and to the case studies [here](#).

Netherlands - Halfway the SDG's: in search of game changers – National SDG conference Netherlands

The Netherlands government invited all sectors to discuss the 'game changers' needed to speed up SDG implementation at national level on 9 November. Business, the financial sector, NGO's, youth organizations, decentralized governments and knowledge institutions came up with a number of recommendations, including a call to strengthen partnership and cooperation around sustainability challenges, developing transition skills (IDG based) for civil servants and other decision-makers, developing a joint vision for the future and applying a generational assessment to all policies. The latter is already being developed and will be added to the Policy Compass, a policy making tool introduced earlier this year, which requires assessing new policies against the SDG's, against spillovers on developing countries and against effects on future generations.

Netherlands - SDG Future Generations Chair ('Toekomststoel')

At the conference all participating ministries were given an 'SDG Future Generations Chair': the idea of a 'Future Chair' originated with Dutch politician and writer Jan Terlouw. With other sustainability leaders, he encourages all organizations to put an empty 'Future Chair' (Toekomststoel) in all meetings where important decisions are taken: this will help decision-

makers to take the interests of future generations into account. The Dutch Penitentiary Service (part of the Ministry of Justice) took this idea and designed an ‘SDG Future Generations Chair’, upcycling old office furniture with the help of social entrepreneurs.



DG's and directors of 5 ministries receiving the Future Chair - Photo from ESDN Advisory Board Member Sandra Pellegrom

Netherlands - SDG School ‘Future Lab’

In the Netherlands, the first ‘SDG School’ kicked off on November 20th in Amsterdam. This ‘Future Lab’, part of the primary school ‘De Toekomst’ (the Future), provides kids from both the school and the wider neighborhood with opportunities to learn about inclusion and sustainability with the SDGs. Besides including these themes in the regular schoolwork, it offers after school activities to reach as many children as possible.



‘SDG Voices’ (Youth Ambassadors) of SDG Netherlands before their guest lesson at the school - Photo from ESDN Advisory Board Member Sandra Pellegrom

Netherlands - IDG Summit and Watch Party

The second [IDG Summit](#) held in Stockholm on 11-12 October was a major success with around 1500 people participating in person and another 6000 to 7000 watching online around the world. More and more national and regional IDG Hubs are being set up all around the world,

including in many European countries (see [website](#) for locating hubs). The importance of transition skills for managing transformative policies in organizations is increasingly recognized and the IDGs offer a concrete path in support of the SDGs. In the Netherlands, the Ministry of the Interior and the National SDG Coordinator jointly organized a 'watch party', which included discussions about how to strengthen the capabilities of Dutch civil servants to work on transitions. The IDGs are used as an inspiration to strengthen transition skills in the government's guide on civil service ethics and workmanship in terms of such skills.

Romania - The Balance of all SDGs

Wanting to communicate all the SDGs as attractively as possible to Romanian citizens, the Department for Sustainable Development installed decorative objects in the form of balances in schools, train stations and airports. These SDG balances are accompanied by a QR code to a web page with information related to sustainability. The transition to sustainable development can only be achieved with the help of civil society, with the help of people of all ages. That's why we are devoted to our role of SDGs communicator.



The Balance of the SDGs in action

Romania - 'Balneomap'

Romania has third of the thermal and mineral springs of Europe, but many of them are not known to tourists.

The spa resources of the country can now be discovered with a click on the website [here](#). With the help of the Department of Sustainable Development, specialists in the field have created an interactive map where we can see all the treatment places in the country, as well as their history.

"BalneoMap" contains 121 localities and 500 springs, thermal waters, mineral waters and mud lakes that work wonders for health. You can see the story of each one, but also what conditions they are indicated for, from treating stress to medical recovery or cardiovascular disease.

WELCOME TO THE LAND OF BALNEOLOGY!

The BalneoMap is a KNOWLEDGE BASE in the form of an interactive digital map showing the healing resources of Romania: mineral springs, mofettas, saltwater lakes, settlements and their history. The aim of the site is to bring people closer to these natural treasures, which exist to help us maintain our health in a natural way, in the spirit of the bathing culture.




BALNEOLOGY is both a science and an art: it explores and harnesses the therapeutic effects of natural resources. Sustainable development is an indispensable pillar in the pursuit of excellence, which can only be achieved through close cooperation between stakeholders: decision-makers, economic operators, researchers, scientists and educators, and communities must think and act together to make Balneology an integral part of the national wealth ecosystem. This is what BalneoMap will help to achieve, by exploring, integrating and showcasing the untapped potential of nature.

Switzerland - Toolbox 2030 Agenda for businesses

The Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE has developed a new 2030 Agenda toolbox for businesses. It aims to motivate, support and guide companies on their way to sustainability. The toolbox presents sector-specific sustainability goals and appropriate measures to achieve them. It also provides practical examples of companies that have already integrated sustainability into their key processes and strategies. Finally, it provides an overview of the most important Swiss instruments, standards, support and funding programmes. The toolbox is available in the official languages of Switzerland: German, French and Italian can be found [here](#).



TOOLBOX AGENDA 2030

business.toolbox-agenda2030.ch

