National SD Strategy processes in Eastern and Southern EU in the context of current socio-economic and environmental challenges

Umberto Pisano & Katrin Lepuschitz
ESDN Office - Institute for Managing Sustainability
Austria

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1. Selected countries, method and overview

**CEE countries (CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, PL, SK, SI):** NSDSs developments in light of 10-years EU accession

**Southern EU Member States (EL, ES, IT, PT):** socio-economic and environmental challenges after the crises

**Method:**

- Updated ESDN **country profiles**

- Overview of **5 main Eurostat indicators**

- **10 telephone interviews** with national SD experts based on a semi-structured questionnaire
Overview on socio-economic challenges …

Real GDP per capita
• In Southern EU crises had strong effects
• All CEE countries increased their GDP between 2004 and 2013

Unemployment rate
• High in the Southern EU, with high youth unemployment
• The majority of CEE countries have unemployment close to EU average

Inequality of income distribution
• Spain and Greece had the highest income inequality across the EU in 2012
• Varies among CEE countries, but all of them have decreased it
GHG Emissions dropped in the majority of countries

- In all four southern European countries GHG Emissions dropped sharply mainly because of the economic crisis
- The majority of CEE countries reduced their GHG emissions

Share of renewable energy is increasing

- Portugal, Estonia and Latvia reached a share of approximately 25%
- All CEE countries increased the share of renewable energy: varying from 10% to 40%
2. Basic info on NSDS processes

Adoption of NSDS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>NSDS current version</th>
<th>Number of revisions</th>
<th>Year of adoption and revisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2004, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2007, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2002, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2001, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revisions of NSDSs:

- Five CEE countries have already revised their strategies
  → six plan revisions in 2015
- No revisions in Southern countries so far
3. EU influence on NSDS processes

- **EU SD policy framework** has influence on NSDS processes in terms of i.e. guidance, definition of objectives, awareness, etc.

- **EU SDS** is not a major steering document, but often serves as justification for NSDS processes.

- In CEEs, **Europe 2020 strategy** is perceived as having an indirect influence on NSDS processes. In Southern countries, it appears to have a stronger influence.

- **EU Cohesion Funds** are often linked to SD policies.
4. Challenges addressed by SD policies (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SD MEASURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt</td>
<td>EL: Raised emphasis on economic pillar of SD and structural reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Unemployment</td>
<td>LV: Vocational training and monitoring of unemployed people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Change</td>
<td>SI: Promotion of intergenerational exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Inequality</td>
<td>LV: Tax exemptions for minimum income salaries and young families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Challenges addressed by SD policies (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SD MEASURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GHG Emissions</td>
<td>ES: Promotion of biofuels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity Loss</td>
<td>EL: National Strategy for biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Management</td>
<td>SI: Investments proposed by cohesion policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>LT: NSDS guides the National Waste Management Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Role of NSDS in steering different policies

• **Umbrella strategy or long-term guiding tool** for national sectoral strategies and programmes

• **Consensual framework, coordinating and advisory tool** for the preparation of sectoral policies

• **Awareness raising tool** for society and politics

• NSDS takes care of the **commitments** with EU and internationally
6. Reflections (1)

- EU SD framework has influence on NSDS processes in terms of i.e. guidance, awareness, support for defining objectives:
  → Should we link the EU SD framework with EU cohesion funds and NSDSs objectives?

- Common challenges of selected countries: unemployment, demographic change, public debt, GHG emissions, biodiversity loss
  → How to give national challenges an ‘SD approach and solution’?
6. Reflections (2)

- NSDS processes address challenges through long-term objectives and sectoral policies develop medium-term measures
  ➔ Consider a systemic approach to guarantee coherence of NSDS

- Role of NSDSs: steering different policies, as tools for awareness raising and strategic decision making, advising for other policies
  ➔ Consider checking national policies against SD objectives (i.e. impact assessment)
THANK YOU!!