



ESDN Discussion Paper

Halfway to 2030 – Where does Europe stand and how does it move forward?



ESDN

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Please cite this publication as:

Mulholland, Eric. (2023). "Halfway to 2030 – Where does Europe stand and how does it move forward?", ESDN Discussion Paper, March 2023, ESDN Office, Vienna.

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INTRODUCTION

This Discussion Paper will provide participants taking part in the European Sustainable Development Network's Conference 2023 with some background on the Conference and the topics that will be covered by speakers and presenters. This year, the Conference title is "Halfway to 2030 – Where does Europe stand and how does it move forward?". It will be taking place in Stockholm, Sweden, on 15-16 March 2023.

This Discussion Paper should serve the purpose to provide participants with the state of the art on Europe when it comes to where it stands at the halfway point to achieving the 2030 Agenda. There will be an entire session in the Conference program dedicated to explaining where Europe stands, what it has done well, and where the challenges still rest until 2030.

Chapter 1 of this Discussion Paper will focus on Session 1: "Europe and the 2030 Agenda – Where do we stand and what do we need until 2030?" and will have presentations from experts in science from the Stockholm Environment Institute and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, who work on publishing the Global Sustainable Development Reports (GSDR). The European Commission will also be featured, as 2023 marks the first year the European Union is conducting a Voluntary Review (VR) for the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

The goal of Session 1 is to provide the background to how Europe is doing when it comes to the SDGs and will focus on the Eurostat SDG Report, the Global Sustainable Development Report 2022 for Europe, as well as what can be expected from the 2023 edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report.

Chapters 2 and 3 will provide more information on the interactive portion of the Conference, the 'Exchange Spaces'. The 'Exchange Spaces' are designed to showcase good practice examples from the national, subnational and local level in implementing the SDGs. The topics being focused on by presenters encompass many important themes, topics, and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The hope is to provide a place to share knowledge of what works well, why it works well, as well as to provide a chance for participants to ask questions, share their own experiences and work through challenges.

'Exchange Space 1' will have 11 different presentations to choose from and 'Exchange Space 2' will have 10 different presentations to choose from. Participants will be able to visit 2 tables per 'Exchange Space' for a total of 4 presentations. Therefore, participants should familiarize themselves with the topics being discussed in this Discussion Paper and choose the

topics that are most interesting. Each table is foreseen to have between eight and ten participants.

CHAPTER 1: EUROPE AND THE 2030 AGENDA – WHERE DO WE STAND AND WHAT DO WE NEED UNTIL 2030?

This chapter will cover the current state of the art when it comes to where Europe is in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It will focus on the results of the Eurostat Report 2022, the Global Sustainable Development Report 2022 for Europe, as well as to what can be expected from the 2023 edition of the GSDR.

This chapter will also briefly look at the European Union's Voluntary Review 2023, as this is the first one the Commission is doing and represents an important stock taking process for the European Union.

EUROSTAT REPORT 2022

A brief summary of how the European Union stands according to the Eurostat SDG Report 2022 can be broken down into three distinct levels relating to progress towards each of the 17 SDGs. However, it should be noted that for some SDGs, the impacts of Covid have been reflected, i.e., in SDG 7 on energy, but not fully reflected in other SDGs, such as SDG 3 – Good health and well-being, as well as SDG 1 – No poverty.

The first level used by the Eurostat Report is denoted by significant progress made towards achieving the SDGs. According to the Eurostat Report, The EU made progress in this category in SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong

institutions, in SDG 1 – No poverty, in SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth, in SDG 7 – Affordable and clean energy, and in SDG 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure.

The next level the Eurostat Report uses to distinguish between progress made is the range between modest and significant. The SDGs falling into this range that exhibit good progress are SDG 3 – Good health and well-being, SDG 14 – Life below water, and SDG 5 – Gender equality.

The rest of the SDGs in this level experienced only moderate progress and include SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities, SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities, SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production, SDG 4 – Quality education, SDG 13 – Climate action, and SDG 2 – Zero hunger.

The remaining three SDGs fall within the last level, which is moderate movement away when it comes to progress. These SDGs include SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals, whereby SDG 17 is more along the neutral line when it comes to progress. The remaining SDGs, SDG 6 – Clean water and sanitation, and SDG 15 – Life on land, show a backslide in progress.¹

Figure 1, below, from the Eurostat Report synopsis, shows a graphical

¹ Sustainable development in the European Union, Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context. Eurostat. 2022 edition. p. 9.

version of the SDGs and where they fall regarding the EU's progress towards fulfilling them.

Figure 1: Overview of EU progress towards the SDGs over the past 5 years



GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT EUROPE 2022

The Global Sustainable Development Report Europe 2022 was published in December 2022. It highlights the role Europe has regarding the SDGs, as well as where it stands. The Conference will hear from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, which was integral in putting together this report. It paints an honest picture of Europe. The Report's SDG Index seeks to outline where things are going well and where they are not going so well.

“Overall, SDG progress in Europe has stalled since 2020. The SDG Index

provides a measurement of human welfare that by design goes beyond GDP, by including 110 indicators covering social and economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. It also penalizes countries for outsourcing negative social and environmental impacts to the rest of the world through unsustainable supply chains and consumption or profit shifting and tax evasion.

The Report's SDG Index for Europe shows that the EU has made, on average, very little progress on the Goals since 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic and other international crises have led to reversals in progress in many European countries, notably on SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth).

The EU has achieved, or is on track to achieve, around 66% of the SDG targets included in the Europe Sustainable Development Report, yet progress has been limited on 20% of the indicators and is heading in the wrong direction on 13%. The EU faces its biggest challenges in the areas of responsible consumption and production and sustainable food systems (SDG 2 and SDGs 12–15). There are also important gaps in performance across countries on SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure).

Inequalities within countries have increased in several countries over the past two years, as shown by the lack of

progress at EU level on many dimensions of the 'leave no one behind' Index presented in this report.

Finally, while they top the global SDG Index due to better performance on socioeconomic SDGs, European countries generate significant spillover effects on the rest of the world, notably through unsustainable supply chains.

Achievement of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals) also face significant challenges in Europe, partly because only four EU members have met the target of dedicating 0.7% of their gross national income to official development assistance.

The EU needs to show the world how it plans to achieve the SDGs and demonstrate this by realizing six key SDG Transformations. The EU has shown remarkable leadership on the SDGs both before and since their adoption. Yet it still lacks clarity on how it plans to achieve the SDGs. Seven years after their adoption, the EU lacks politically agreed targets for many SDG indicators.

Thus, Eurostat, in its annual SDG report, tracks progress towards quantified targets for only 22 of the 101 indicators. It can, therefore, only present a partial evaluation of whether the EU is on track to achieve major economic, social and environmental transformations.

As emphasized by the SDSN, the European Parliament and other

organizations, the EU needs to develop an integrated and comprehensive approach to implementing the SDGs and must communicate clearly on them. It can build on the 2020 European Commission staff working document and the conclusions published by the Council of the European Union on 22 June 2021.

The SDGs may be the right compass to reduce the complexity of EU policies and instruments for sustainable development and to better engage with citizen and scientists to define pathways at various levels. The concept of key SDG transformations can help provide a more operational narrative and pathway to achieve the SDGs."²

GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2023

The Global Sustainable Development Report 2023, published by the United Nations Independent Group of Scientists, will be released this year. Some key messages can already be outlined as the world reaches the halfway point to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

At the half-way mark, sufficient progress towards the achievement of the SDGs has not been made. Unsustainable development has led to recent globally cascading crises and shocks, exacerbating their impact.

²<https://eudashboards.sdgindex.org/chapters/executive-summary>

Making progress on the SDGs is a way to build in resilience to the global system that guards against new crises and shocks, making an acceleration towards SDG implementation more crucial.

The GSDR presents a framework that can serve as an overarching approach to guide action in a systematic manner by using robust, incontrovertible evidence, which should be used to inform the policy-making process and support acceleration in reaching the SDGs.

Bold decisions are required that might not be politically popular, but transitions will come, and the world needs to be able to steer those transitions in a sustainable manner and build up systemic resilience or face surmounting risks in the future.³

The advanced draft of the 2023 GSDR should have been shared with Member States for comments already in January or February 2023. Member States can expect the final unedited version in March 2023, with the final version being released at the SDG Summit in September 2023.

One of the people responsible for drafting the upcoming Global Sustainable Development Report is based at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), which is an international non-profit research and policy organization that tackles environment

and development challenges. The Institute's work spans climate, water, air and land-use issues, governance, the economy, gender and health.

SEI offers scientific support to the conceptualization, implementation, and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. SEI develops innovative methods and tools to enhance capacity within governments and with other actors to put systems-thinking into practice in SDG decision-making and implementation. One of the key tools, used by and together with local and national governments around the world, is the [SDG Synergies tool](#) to systematically and in a participatory way explore and assess interactions between the goals in their local, national, sectoral context.

The knowledge and findings are accessible to decision-makers and civil society: as open access material, in leading academic journals, and repackaged for effective decision support. Stakeholder involvement is at the heart of SEI's efforts to build capacity, strengthen institutions and equip partners for long-term change.

SEI has offices in five continents and works locally, regionally, and globally, with its headquarters in Stockholm.

EUROPEAN UNION VOLUNTARY REVIEW 2023

³<https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/GSDR%202023%20Member%20State%20briefing.pdf>

The EU's Voluntary Review (EU VR) is being done under the coordination of the Secretary General and direct authority of Commission President von der Leyen. One of the main goals of the EU VR is to raise the visibility of what the EU is doing not only to the global level, but also within the EU.

In putting together the VR the inputs from stakeholders was important for this exercise. The Commission received input from the 'You're your Say' platform, as well as through a consultation process that was conducted by the European Economic and Social Committee.

The EU VR aims to be clear and honest on SDG trends and challenges, as well as by showing interlinkages with an innovative methodology that addresses risks of double counting. It will also provide an opportunity to see how the EU's commitments and targets are contributing to reaching the SDGs, including policies and trends.⁴

The EU VR should be finished by April or May 2023 ahead of the HLPF in July 2023.

"EVERYONE CAN FLOURISH: SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND THE 2030 AGENDA" – INITIATIVE OF THE ÅLAND ISLANDS

The rapidly unfolding climate crisis, the loss of unique species, the high levels of inequality, and the weakening of democratic institutions are defining issues of our time and requires resolute responses.

What is needed to solve the sustainability crisis is nothing short of a fundamental cultural transformation, changing our worldviews. The transformation should rest on core concepts of sustainability, which means an agreed scientific understanding of what sustainability entails, and a common vision for how the society should enable the flourishing of everyone. Such a transformation should be inclusive and led by citizens while leaving no one behind.

Since 2016, the autonomous Åland Islands in the Baltic Sea have holistically worked with sustainability and created an agenda for achieving strategic goals through a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches while simultaneously grounding the work in a scientific understanding of sustainability. The process involved hundreds of citizens and organizations on Åland. Åland's vision for the future, "Everyone can flourish in a viable society on the islands of peace", is a concrete example of a worldview different from the current paradigm. It sets the framework for increased human well-being without increasing the use of

⁴ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/policy-forum-development/documents/pfd-workshop-eu-voluntary-review-sdg-implementation>

energy or natural resources while simultaneously engaging citizens and local stakeholders, leading to increasing trust and participation.

Åland has taken the first steps on a journey to transform its society. When presenting the sustainability work of Åland, the same, reoccurring questions are often asked: “Can the approach and model be exported to other contexts?” and “Can the approach be scaled up?”. The aim of the proposed project “Everyone Can Flourish – Sustainability Beyond Agenda 2030” is to answer these two questions by replicating and developing the approach together with partners from all parts of the world. The result will hopefully be the creation of a robust and scalable framework for sustainability beyond the 2030 Agenda.

LOCAL LEVEL PERSPECTIVES ON AGENDA 2030 PROGRESS

SDG implementation on the local level is key to achieving the SDGs overall. Local and regional governments play a major part in whether we will look back on the 2030 Agenda in 2030 and think of it as a success or failure. However, the term Sustainable Development Goals or 2030 Agenda has been less prominent in recent years and seems to have decreased in importance.

What is the status of SDG implementation in European cities? Are they still relevant or replaced by

other goals and ideas? How do these ideas connect to the SDGs? We will address these questions and look at what the 2030 Agenda has achieved in cities so far. What can it achieve? And what might happen in the next 7 years? As we pass this important halfway point, let us take stock of the SDGs on the local level in Europe.

CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVES – RELAUNCHING THE 2030 AGENDA

Progress on SDGs in Europe has stalled since 2020, and reversals in the rest of the world can also be seen. Therefore, an urgent rescue effort is needed. Now more than ever, the EU needs to invest in SDG credibility and should lead international efforts to accelerate SDG implementation.

The Commission's decision to undertake the first-ever EU-level Voluntary Review is very relevant, and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) appreciates the Commission's request to provide a written contribution. Nevertheless, a more structured involvement of civil society in the process with the possibility to comment on the draft report would have been desirable.

The EESC hopes this EU Voluntary Review is the occasion to define a regular involvement of the European civil society in the eight years ahead of and puts forward a series of proposals to boost the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE PATHWAY TO 2030

Since its creation, youth engagement has had a special place in the ESDN network. On the occasion of its 20-year anniversary, we aim to take this cooperation to the next level and are proud to present our perception of the ESDN-Youth-Network, which is composed of a team of diverse and enthusiastic former and current youth representatives. In our presentation, we would like to take you through our vision of how our youth network should efficiently work hand in hand with the provided ESDN structures. We want to outline our envisioned priority themes, give an insight into our understanding of the work and goals of the ESDN and provide you with concrete steps we would implement to reach our targets.

In our vision, the SDGs should be at the heart of policymaking and every political action. Having in mind the Conference theme, we decided to create a video project in an effort to outline concrete and urgent steps to achieve the goals. For this the ESDN-Youth members, from 15 different countries from Europe, collaborated, proposed ambitions and recorded their views. With great aspirations and truthful commitment, we are looking forward to presenting and engaging in constructive exchanges.

CHAPTER 2: PRACTICAL SDG SOLUTIONS AND EXPERIENCES FROM THE NATIONAL, SUBNATIONAL, AND LOCAL LEVELS

This chapter will cover the Exchange Space 1 of the Conference, which will feature 11 different good practice cases in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs from the national, subnational, and local level.

The topics that each good practice case will cover are briefly outlined below. Conference participants should use this to make their decisions on where they want to go for during the Exchange Space part of the Conference, as there will only be two rounds of Exchange Space 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC – COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN OF SDGs

The Ministry of the Environment realized its media campaign in 2021. The media campaign was based on public procurement and the content itself was launched on sustainable development social media from July to November 2021. The campaign's motto was "How to Sustain". The main part of the campaign consists of short videos with Czech celebrities highlighting various simple sustainability topics and inviting the public to simple challenges on how they themselves can live more sustainably. The videos were posted as stories, Instagram posts, and Facebook posts. The result was a significant increase in the number of followers of the Czech sustainability social networks.

FINLAND – GOVERNMENT POLICY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The Finnish government is launching a new sustainability assessment of government policy preparation and implementation. The work will be coordinated from the Prime Minister's Office, where a new team of a handful of experts will be established in spring 2023.

The team will produce sustainability assessments based on 5 accounting systems – , social & health, democracy & safety sustainability, and ecological, economic, and human & cultural capital – to support government policy making and state budgeting. The work is an outcome of the Sustainability Roadmap of the sitting government, and it is supported by a process of round tables that has brought together all government ministries to jointly develop shared understandings for policy making and preparation.

ICELAND – SUSTAINABLE ICELAND

In 2022, a new cooperation platform, 'Sustainable Iceland', was established with the aim of accelerating actions to achieve the SDGs and Iceland's Wellbeing priorities with a whole-of-government approach and multi-stakeholder engagement. Mapping of current projects is currently underway and Iceland's first National Strategy for Sustainable Development will be

submitted to the parliament before the end of the year. Furthermore, Iceland will present its second Voluntary National Review at the High-Level Political Forum in July 2023.

IRELAND – NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO ADVANCE THE PRINCIPLE OF LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

As part of Ireland's 2021 SDG consultation process, respondents called for a national dialogue on what Leaving No One Behind means for Ireland and for steps to be taken to ensure that marginalized and under-represented groups or communities are prioritized in their participation and ownership of SDG implementation in Ireland.

In response to the consultation feedback, several measures were committed to under the National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024, including to:

- Hold an accessible and inclusive recruitment campaign to attract a diverse range of SDG Champions for the 2023-2024 Programme.
- Establish an SDG Forum Committee to design an improved, accessible and inclusive format for the SDG National Stakeholder Forum.
- Hold an SDG National Stakeholder Forum dedicated

to the topic of Leaving no one behind, to better explore the concept and what it means in an Irish context.

- Develop guidance on the principle of Leaving no one behind based on the outcomes of the National Stakeholder Forum, research and existing relevant tools and resources which is incorporated into the training and toolkits being developed for civil servants and local authorities over 2023.
- Incorporate the principle of Leaving no one behind into Ireland's 2023 VNR.

SLOVENIA – ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Every year, the Slovenian Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development prepares the Development Report. While the Institute, as an independent government body, has as its main objective the preparation of macroeconomic forecasts and analyzing productivity and development objectives, it is also tasked to monitor the realization of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030.

With the Development Report, the Institute keeps track of the fulfilment of that task, and the document represents the baseline for implementation of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030. The

Strategy is aligned with the SDGs and has an overarching objective to provide a high quality of life for all.

SPAIN – THE SPANISH SD STRATEGY FOR 2030: PROCESS AND CHALLENGES

The presentation will introduce the main steps of the 2030 Agenda implementation in Spain since 2018, with the governance structure created in 2020, and a focus on the Sustainable Development Strategy for 2030 (SDS2030) approved by the Council of Ministers in 2021. This focus on the SDS2030 includes the redaction process steps, the main structure of the implementation strategy and the tools linked to the Strategy for measuring the progress and the performance with different tools and the way to deploy in local governments and social entities the 2030 Agenda implementation.

ÅLAND ISLANDS – “EVERYONE CAN FLOURISH – SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND THE 2030 AGENDA”

Refer to Chapter 1.

CATALONIA – CATALONIA ALLIANCE 2030

The [Catalonia 2030 Alliance](#) is a partnership between public and private organizations committed to the SDGs. It is a space for the exchange of information, visions, and good practices, for mutual learning, for

promoting projects and influencing public policies.

It was established in February 2020 following a mandate from the Parliament of Catalonia, which in its Motion 20/XII urged the Government to promote an agreement for the 2030 Agenda and create an alliance of actors that, having signed said agreement, would contribute to the localization of the SDGs through concrete commitments.

The agreement was co-created by a driving group with organizations from civil society, the local world and various government consultation and participation councils.

The Alliance is made up of more than 70 organizations (some second level), plus the Government, and is open to new members.

Fully active since March 2022 (following the post-COVID 19 recovery), the Alliance will count with the participation of the Catalan Government Ministers in its plenary sessions (4 per year). It is a way of political influence that gives relevance to the participation of so many different organizations. On 27 January 2023, the Catalonia 2030 Alliance's 4th Plenary Session took place with the active participation of the Minister of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda and the Minister of Social Rights.

TALLINN EU GREEN CAPITAL 2023 – LOCALIZING SDGs

One of the aims of the European Green Capital - Tallinn 2023 is sustainability governance. The OECD estimates that 65% of the 2030 Agenda targets can only be reached with the proper engagement and coordination with local and regional governments. Still, the action gap is significant, and no European capital city or metropolitan area has yet achieved the SDGs. We argue that for cities to tackle multidimensional challenges concerning people, planet, peace, prosperity and partnerships, the integration of the SDGs into local strategies requires deep transformations at the local level. The 17 SDGs must be integrated into every aspect of the city governance, which requires a transition from a checklist mentality towards the SDGs as a holistic disposition of administration.

Tallinn is a Lead Partner of the URBACT Global Goals for Cities network of 19 cities from 19 European countries, focusing on accelerating progress towards localizing the SDGs, through peer learning and adopting the SDGs as a common background for local planning and actions. In this session, Tallinn will introduce the main outcomes of the GG4C network and the follow-up initiative of setting-up the European cities' co-creation platform on sustainability governance, as well as alignment of the city of Tallinn goals and targets with the SDGs and re-shaping the city administration

to enable better horizontal cooperation and co-creation.

VÄRMLAND COUNTY – POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND AGENCY DRIVE FROM A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Visit this table at the Conference for a subnational level good practice example on implementing the 2030 Agenda and the ingredients it takes.

COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES – HANDBOOK FOR LOCAL CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANNING IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) is continuing its efforts to provide the support for local authorities in better aligning with the 2030 Agenda and supporting the efforts of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) to promote low-carbon economies across sectors and policies mainstreaming climate change and establishing partnerships for cooperation.

As climate change affects everyone, and municipalities are at the forefront to adapt to climate change, priority should be given to identifying major long-term climate risks, allowing to apply least cost and nature-based adaptation measures.

The "Handbook for Climate Change Adaptation Planning in the Baltic Sea Region" provides specific guidelines for local governments to prepare and

plan climate change adaptation strategies in the Baltic Sea Region. It was developed under the “Climate Mainstreaming Locally in the Baltic Sea Region” (CliMaLoc) project, funded by the Swedish Institute and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The CliMaLoc Handbook is a vital resource for local governments in the BSR seeking to adapt to climate change impacts.

It provides a 10-step approach for preparing and drafting climate adaptation plans in the region. These steps taken will help to ensure that local authorities adequately plan to prevent risks and will allow them to save costs and to protect citizens, infrastructure, services, key economic sectors and living environments from damages provoked by the changing climate.

CHAPTER 3: PRACTICAL SDG SOLUTIONS AND EXPERIENCES FROM THE NATIONAL, SUBNATIONAL, AND LOCAL LEVELS

This chapter will also cover an Exchange Space (Exchange Space 2) of the Conference, which will feature a further 10 good practice cases in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs from the national, subnational, and local level.

The topics that each good practice case will cover are briefly outlined below. Conference participants should use this to make their decisions on where they want to go for during the Exchange Space part of the Conference, as there will only be two rounds of Exchange Space 2, or four rounds between the two Exchange Spaces.

CYPRUS – ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP FOR THE SDGs

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires universal efforts not only by the government, but also by the private sector and by all social actors whose contribution is imperative. These social actors include non-governmental organizations, local authorities, academic institutions, organized groups of citizens, and businesses. It is a diverse network united in promoting a multi-stakeholder approach for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In Cyprus, the office of the Commissioner for the Citizen coordinates all voluntary and non-governmental organizations and encourages the cooperation with local

authorities. Through policy recommendations, the Commissioner for the Citizen encourages active citizen participation with emphasis on the young generation and utilizes European Programs to fund NGOs and programs that support active citizenship.

Even though Cyprus has a tradition of voluntary engagement, since 12.4% of the population aged 16 and older are engaged in voluntary activity, their effective mobilization was a major challenge. This has been strengthened with the setup of a [web platform](#), which supports NGOs in their effort to find volunteers and gain supporters/sponsors. Additionally, the Office of the Commissioner, by developing protocols for the safe mobilization of volunteers, including insurance coverage, in times of crisis and emergencies, was successfully put in action as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This approach will be used to encourage more volunteers to be activated and involved in actions related to the SDGs.

ESTONIA – PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION PLANS

In Estonia, the long-term development strategy "Estonia 2035" outlines long-term goals and main development needs, which should be addressed in the coming years. Both the private sector and the scientific are increasingly interested in participating in the search for solutions to so-called

major societal problems, for example finding environmentally friendly technologies and energy solutions, implementing circular economy principles or new mobility solutions. It is smart to find solutions that would alleviate social problems as well as create new business opportunities for companies. As the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global issues are integrated into "Estonia 2035" then all the programs contributing to the "Estonia 2035" are also contributing to the SDGs. On the implementation level, the SDGs are integrated into the development plans and programs prepared based on the "Estonia 2035" strategy.

For the coming years, Estonia has started a program based on the needs of "Estonia 2035" to support experimenting and exploring innovative solutions to its main challenges. Estonia is primarily looking for research-based, innovative solutions in smart specialization focus areas:

1. solutions in every area of life;
2. Health technologies and services;
3. Valuing local resources; and
4. Smart and sustainable energy solutions.

Estonia has already prepared a framework to introduce experimentation as a part of policy making and is working on the guidelines and best practices of public innovation, which will give a supporting environment to nurture the innovation culture.

ITALY – ENABLING THE NSDS – POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On the review process of the NSDS and within its unfolding, Italy elaborated National Action Plan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD NAP). [The PCSD NAP](#) has benefited from the scientific advice of the OECD, the support by the EC - DG Reform and an intense process of involvement and engagement of national stakeholders, both institutional - at all levels - and non-governmental.

Italy's PCSD NAP brings together the institutional mechanisms, evaluation frameworks and coherence tools needed to integrate sustainable development into government policy making. This Action Plan shows how to streamline existing mechanisms to improve policy coherence across levels of government and to involve civil society more closely in policy formulation. It also suggests how to make the most of complementarities across existing data collection efforts. The Action Plan includes suggestions for better linking mandates across departments and levels of government to avoid overlap and make greater progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Finally, it provides targets and measurable processes for each action to help track progress. Italy's PCSD NAP

was presented within the [Italian VNR 2022](#) together with the renewed NSDS and the other two key focus themes: territorialization and stakeholder engagement.

LATVIA – LEAN: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VNR UNDER CONDITIONS OF LIMITED RESOURCES

Latvia presented its VNR in 2022 – following COVID-19, during Russia’s unprovoked war on Ukraine, under conditions of increasing polarization and “social bubblization” and just before national elections. How do we keep our eye on sustainable development while maneuvering through these issues? And what do we do if the government does not dedicate heaps of resources to the SDGs *per se*? We keep it lean.

Latvia shares its best practice (only practice, actually) on how we maintain the integrity of our sustainability policies through our VNRs and squeeze the most out of the VNR process.

Hoping for good, practical ideas from other practitioners, since 2030 is just around the corner. It might be useful for those anticipating budget cuts, too.

NETHERLANDS – INTEGRATING THEMES OF WELLBEING WITH THE SDGs

The topic of wellbeing indicators is growing within the SDG realm. For more information on how the Netherlands is integrating wellbeing

with the SDGs, visit this table during the Conference.

NORWAY – EXECUTIVE FORUM ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2021, the Forum on Policy Coherence (later the Advisory Forum on Policy Coherence) was integrated into the new Executive Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals.

This forum is chaired by the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development. Several other Ministers are also part of the forum on a regular basis, including the Minister of Development. Selected top leaders in the private sector, civil society organizations, academia and labor and business organizations are also members.

From the governments side the name change reflects a prioritization of addressing issues of sustainable development at the top level in Norwegian society, including policy coherence issues. Meetings are held 2-3 times a year, and attempt to bring discussions forward, and attempt to also to address contentious issues, to ensure sustainable development and policy coherence.

The Forum has now had 3 meetings and it has been a success, while, at the same time, there are obvious challenges regarding how one connects the discussions and recommendations from the Forum into policy making.

POLAND – CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM FOR THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND EXAMPLES OF PUTTING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

The topic of the presentation will be the Capacity Building Program, co-created with the OECD, together with a knowledge exchange platform for the Public Administration in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a tool for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and expectations of well-prepared public administration, equipped with the ability to combine competences, willing to cooperate, and to create partnerships. In view of this, raising the knowledge, awareness, and qualifications of current and new officials is a necessary and fundamental element of modernizing the development policy management system. Within the framework of the project undertaken, the administration focused on itself – the public administration employees. Public administration employees wanted to ensure that in a comprehensive, yet accessible and compact way, would equip experts working on development policies, in general, with knowledge and tools.

During the development of the program, conclusions and recommendations from the analyzed materials based on the OECD experience were introduced and implemented on an ongoing basis. An example is the involvement of

stakeholders in the VNR process, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology invited representatives of regions and civil society whose perspectives and views on sustainable development in Poland can be found in the VNR. This is a good practice that should be shared. It is worth emphasizing that the involvement of the partners working on the 2030 Agenda does not end at the stage of the VNR; activities continue at the Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals, through which the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology already brings together more than 150 companies.

In addition to being able to participate in the VNR process, partners have been participating in the National Stakeholder Forum. It is a space for exchanging good practices in implementing sustainable development in their organizations – for already six years.

SWEDEN – AT THE HEART OF THE 2030 AGENDA: POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Long before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, Sweden had a policy for global development. The Swedish Policy for Global Development (PGD) was adopted by the Parliament in 2003. Through the PGD, Sweden made a strong, ambitious, and quite unique commitment that all policy areas should comply with the goal of

an equitable and sustainable global development.

In 2020, the Swedish Parliament adopted an overarching goal for the 2030 Agenda that further reinforces the need for policy coherence for sustainable development at all levels, from the local to the regional, national, and global level. The previous PGD is an important tool and enabler for policy coherence and to mobilize a coherent whole-of-government approach in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Policy coherence is considered as the backbone and the core of the 2030 Agenda. However, what are the key factors and necessities to realize policies into practice? In this session, we discuss some of the key findings from Sweden's long record from this area.

FLANDERS – INTEGRATING THE SDGs INTO EXISTING LOCAL POLICY PROCESSES

To increase support for, and integrate the SDGs into municipal policy plans, the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) developed several tools to include the SDGs as a framework in different phases of the local policy planning process. During this session we will delve deeper into, among others, the monitoring phase, discuss tools, such as the SDG-check and the SDG Indicator Set, and discuss the role that both municipalities, local government associations and other levels of governments can play in monitoring local progress on the SDGs.

LJUSDAL – SWEDEN'S FIRST INTERNATIONALLY CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION JÄRVSÖ

Sustainable tourism is more relevant, discussed and debated than ever. In order to achieve true sustainability, all aspects – environmental, economic and social – must be acknowledged and actively engaged. In Järvsö, a small town in rural Northern Sweden, the community, as early as the 1980's, decided to use tourism as a tool for development. Starting out with a small ski-slope, it has now expanded to also feature downhill bike tracks, MTB, hiking, and trail running – still with the same purpose of community development. The real challenge has been to ensure all growth happens within the limits of the place and its inhabitants, which is why they decided to embark on a path of sustainable tourism in the late 2010's.

Järvsö is now the first destination in Scandinavia certified according to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. Through a public-private partnership, the Destination Management Green Team has worked to create a more holistic approach to tourism and has reached silver status, certified by Earthcheck. It also features two UNESCO-certified areas of interest, the Voxnadalen biosphere reserve and the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland cultural site, leading to unique challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism. As their next step,

Järvsö is now organizing a yearly Sustainable Tourism Summit where private and public sector meet to discuss challenges and opportunities. The first summit will take place in late August 2023.