



**EEAC**

European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils

## **Newsletter Autumn Edition 2015**

## IN THIS NEWSLETTER

[Introduction by the Chairman](#)

[News of the EEAC Network](#)

[EEAC member Councils News](#)

[New reports and publications of EEAC member Councils](#)

[EEAC Working Groups](#)

[Contact](#)

## INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR

Dear Colleagues,

We have just entered into autumn season with considerable –and exciting- global and European news and challenges. The United Nations General Assembly has just approved the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, which is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity (as stated in the text adopted on 25th September). Now it is the turn for the EU institutions and national and subnational governments to downscale the 17 sustainable development goals and the 169 related targets to their own territories. Some EEAC councils, as the German RNE and the Catalan CADS have already made concrete recommendations on this issue, or will do it next months.

In December, the international community will meet in Paris in order to negotiate a climate change global agreement in the COP21. Acknowledging the importance of this meeting, the EEAC network will have a formal presence in Paris two weeks before the start of the COP21 summit. As we have already informed our members, the 23rd EEAC Annual conference will take place on the 12-13th of November in the French capital, and as usual will include our annual plenary session and working group meetings.

The EEAC annual conference is always a very especial event for the network. This year the conference will deal with the role of civil society in climate change, and we will have the opportunity to learn from brilliant speakers (including Prof Jean Jouzel, Prof Claus Leggewie, Prof Miranda Scheurs, Ms. Teresa Ribera and Mr. Max Schön). Furthermore, it is important to mention that it is the result of a very positive cooperation with the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN). Finally I would like to thank the French National Council for Ecological Transition and the French Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy for their implication and also to the EEAC conference organization committee for its commitment and support.

Let me go back for a moment before summer. As you already know, the EEAC network was an official partner of the first European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW). The major success of this week shows once again broad bottom up commitment to a more sustainable future for our continent.

Furthermore, in early summer the EEAC organized several remarkable activities. With an in depth debate on the effect of nitrogen on the environment, EEAC members SRU and Minaraad made a valuable contribution to the European Green Week, while the EEAC working Group on Circular economy met in Brussels to discuss the major challenges of circular economy policies in the EU. The event included representatives from the European Commission and Parliament, as well as experts from academia, business and civil society. In this newsletter a summary of both events can be found.

In closing this foreword, I would like to encourage you to read the interesting news from the member councils included in this newsletter, such as the role of WBGU's Chairman in preparing Pope Francis' Laudatio Si encyclical, the RNE's annual conference and many interesting recent reports and activities.

I wish you a pleasant reading and great success in your work.



Arnau Queralt-Bassa  
Chair of the EEAC network  
(on behalf of the Steering Committee)

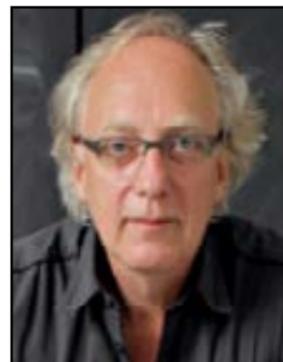
**EEAC NETWORK NEWS**
**23rd EEAC Annual Conference: 12-13 November 2015 Paris**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has clearly warned about the dangers of major and irreversible changes to our living environment that could follow from allowing temperatures to go beyond the guard rail of a 2°C temperature increase. The Paris climate negotiations will bring together close to 200 states to negotiate an international agreement to control greenhouse gas emissions and address the effects of climate change. It is crucial that these negotiations among states are paralleled by bottom-up civil society initiatives. Civil Society plays a pivotal role as a driver of policy change, policy implementation, and the development of innovative solutions. Social movements and non-governmental organizations are also critical actors as they critique the policy approaches of governments, raise expectations, monitor policies, offer credible assessments, disseminate good practices, act as a vehicle for public participation.

The 22nd EEAC annual conference will examine the role of civil society and its potential and limits in the international climate change debate by inviting both internationally well-known speakers as well as by giving the floor to grass root initiatives. The conference will present interesting case studies of initiatives that mobilize front line

actors. The EEAC is proud to present speakers such as Prof Jean Jouzel (IPCC), Prof Claus Leggewie (WBGU), Dr Mikael Karlsson (EEB), Mr. Max Schöne (German CEOs for Climate Protection) and Ms Teresa Ribera (IDDRI) as well as inspiring stories of frontrunner organisations from countries like Ireland, Portugal, Hungary and the Netherlands. The conference aims to engage in debate with participants representing governments, business, civil society, science and NGOs.

The 23rd EEAC annual conference will be held back to back with the ESDN Workshop entitled "Stocktaking and perspectives on environmental dialogue in Europe". The event will be hosted by the French Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy and will be held at Hôtel de Roquelaure, the headquarters of the ministry (246 Boulevard Saint-Germain). External registration will be open soon. External registration will be open soon on [www.eeac.eu](http://www.eeac.eu)


**Successful gathering EEAC Working Group on Circular Economy**

On Monday 15th of June 2015 the EEAC Working Group on Circular Economy organized the workshop 'Key Challenges for circular economy policies' in Brussels. By organizing the workshop the member councils of the EEAC network aimed to provide the opportunity to exchange views with scientists, governmental organizations, civil society and fellow strategic advisory bodies on the circular economy topic. Moreover, by presenting the facts and figures the EEAC network hopes to contribute to an evidence based approach when revising the Circular Economy policy package.

The meeting brought together a broad range of representatives from the European Commission, European Parliament, NGOs and business organisations as well as advisory councils from 9 member states. During the day broad consensus was reached about the importance of fostering a circular economy in Europe. Furthermore, the participants of the workshop concluded that the arguments in favor of the introduction of a circular economy include economic, social and environmental aspects. Moreover, in order to establish a circular economy business- and investment models should be changed, participants argued. A linear economic model should be ended and economic prosperity should be decoupled from the environmental impact.

According to the workshop participants the announced European legislative package should include economic instruments which overcome market distortions and change behaviour. Furthermore, the different positions of member states should be taken into account and the package should include the whole cycle from production to waste, including ambitious targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050.

Simultaneously it was acknowledged that enhancing circular economy in the 'real economy' includes several challenges. E.g. Circular economy busi-

ness models are often not well known, major investments are needed, but financial institutions do often hesitate. Moreover, it remains difficult to find solid partners to organize a cycle and the public incentive remains modest.

For detailed information please [click here](#)

## EEAC MEMBER COUNCIL NEWS

### Green Week Side Event by the German Advisory Council on the Environment (SRU) and Environment and Nature Council of Flanders (Minaraad)

The German Advisory Council on the Environment organized a side-event to the “Green Week” together with the Minaraad (Environment and Nature Council of Flanders) and the Environment and Agriculture Ministry of the State of Hesse, June 3rd in Brussels. The event aimed at raising awareness that nutrients from agriculture are a key environmental threat to biodiversity, water, clean air and climate.

The event which was attended by 50 participants facilitated a lively debate between science, public authorities and stakeholders. A variety of panelist engaged in the debate, including European Commission, Parliament representatives as well as representatives from Ngo’s, farmer organizations and the environmental bureau.

Video registrations are made and are available here. An inclusive summary of the event can be found on the EEAC website



### Irish National Economic and Social: National conference on creating an Affordable, Sustainable and Equitable Housing System

After issuing its advisory report on ‘Housing Supply and Land: Driving Public Action For The Common Good’ the NESC organized a national conference on the 10th of September. The gathering was designed to stimulate debate amongst senior decision makers in the public and private sectors on the theme of Creating an Affordable, Sustainable and Equitable Housing System in Ireland.

In order to reach the aims set, the conference included the following topics: Housing as an integrated system—policy and practice; The role of the private rental and social housing sectors in providing permanent and affordable housing; How to improve the supply of land and housing; and the role of regulation in delivering affordable and sustainable housing.

For more information please [click here](#)



### Montenegro its National Council for Sustainable Development Works on Post2015 NSDS

On the July 17th, the 28th session of the National Council for Sustainable Development and Climate Change was held. Council had a very demanding agenda that sought to cover the following key issues: Draft of State plan for Waste Management; Spatial Plan for Coastal Zone; Draft of the National Strategy for climate change as well as topics related to ongoing national and global process in the area of sustainable development such as development of National Strategy for Sustainable development for the period after 2015 and ongoing intergovernmental negotiations regarding Post 2015 Agenda.

As part of the the proces revising the National Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period after 2015 the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism has undertaken several paralel proceses. One of the current spearheads is an analysis of the institutional framework and legislation that will elaborate on several thematic topics. Amongst others the review of the outcomes and outputs of the previous National Strategy for Sustainable Development will be analyzed, an analyzis of the compatibility among sectoral policies and sectoral policies with NSSD was made and a review of the institutional and legislative framework that is in place for sustainable development of Montenegro was conducted.

For more information on the activities of the NSCDSS please visit their [website](#)



### Belgium's Federal Council for Sustainable Development organized seminar on the Addis Ababa conference

2015 is expected to be a very important year for international politics. Three major conferences will take place during this year. The first conference took place in July in Addis Ababa, discussing financing for development. In September, a summit in New York will decide on the post-2015 framework, including a new set of SDGs (sustainable development goals) and in December, in Paris, a new climate agreement has to be negotiated.

The success of the Addis Ababa conference will, most likely have its effect on the level of success of the other conferences. Therefore the FRDO organized a seminar on the desirable outcomes of the Addis Ababa conference.

For more information [click here](#) (only available in Dutch and French).



### Prof Dr Schellhuber, chair of the German Council for Global Change (WBGU) presents Pope Francis' environmental encyclical

Prof Dr Schellhuber, chair of the WBGU and director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), presented Pope Francis' [encyclical letter](#) on the environment together with Cardinal Turkson on 18 June in Rome. The encyclical deals with the protection of creation; it declares that "human-induced climate change is a scientific fact" and that "decisive mitigation of climate change is a moral and religious imperative for humanity."

Prof Dr Schellhuber also participated in the preparatory meeting entitled "Protect the Earth, Dignify Humanity – The Moral Dimensions of Climate Change and Sustainable Humanity", which was organized by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in coordination with the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and Religions for Peace. The declaration signed by all organizers states.

In its special report entitled "Climate Protection as a World Citizen Movement" published in 2014, WBGU already mentioned the increasing concern of the churches about the slow progress of climate negotiations and drew attention to their efforts, as a part of civil society, to influence cli-

mate policy. The Pope addressed the UN General Assembly in New York in September, when the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were adopted.



### 15th Annual Conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)

Global sustainability and global climate protection are putting old thought patterns on globalization to the test where the short-term "everything is possible" philosophy has predominated until now. Will we succeed in reaching a new order? How much global responsibility does the National Sustainability Strategy need to assume?

The 15th Annual Conference of the German Council for Sustainable Development discussed current

ideas and concrete policies. With Germany now having assumed the presidency of the G7, it is important that we ask how sustainability can be tangibly and effectively implemented. In 15 forums employing various formats, participants were requested to take an active role in developing solutions in the course of the day. The projects run by the Council, including the 100 youngest local politicians, who presented their work and made themselves available for any questions.

For more information on the conference [click here](#)



## New reports and publications of EEAC member Councils

### Dutch Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli): Between Brussels and the citizen report

The Netherlands is increasingly an integral part of Europe, in both the economic and administrative arenas. The Dutch Council Rli is asked to come forward with an advisory report on the question, 'how can central government ensure that opportunities for flexibility and a tailor-made approach are retained and fully used within both the preparation and implementation of European policy and legislation?' The Rli will issue its English report early autumn, on the eve of the Dutch chairmanship of the EU. For more information [click here](#) (the report is already published in Dutch).

### Environment and Nature Council of Flanders (Minaraad): orientation on multilateral climate policies on the road to Paris

The Minaraad met in plenary council setting on the 25th of June to be informed on the multilateral climate policies on the road to Paris (COP21). In order to inform the council members the secretariat drafted an indebt publication on the topic (which is available in Dutch [here](#)).

On the basis of the informative publication the Minaraad issued a unanimous advice which includes the following four main statements:

- The effects of climate change are real.
- The effects of climate change are major and go beyond Flanders borders.
- Flanders has a general interest supporting a global and binding climate agreement.
- The climate agreement should also lead to a level playing field for businesses and entrepreneurs.

### The Advisory Council on the Environment (SRU) issues Statement on the Future of Coal until 2040

Important decisions regarding energy and climate policies are currently being taken. By issuing its statement the SRU hopes to encourage the German government to begin a consensus-finding process on the future of coal and lignite within the lifetime of the current parliament. Germany has more ambitious goals on decarbonisation than most of their G7 partners. If these goals are meant seriously, then it is also necessary to make unambiguous statements about the long-term future of coal- and lignite-fired power generation, the SRU stated.

In its statement the SRU comes forward with ten concrete statements which can be found [here](#).



### Belgium's Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO) issues the 23rd Rio 20+ update

Negotiations for an agreement on the post-2015 agenda are entering their final phase. With negotiations wrapped up successfully in July, everything was ready for the special summit which took place on 25 - 27 September in New York.

In the 23rd issue the FRDO touches upon topics such as the EU's future agenda, the Challenge of Addis Ababa and policy coherence for SDGs. Especially the last topic gains interest. In the over the FRDO is clear by stating that in order to arrange a process of decoupling between economic growth and using (scarce) natural resources the answer should be found in policy coherence. For example, to emphasize the economic dimension alone, this will lead to regression for the aspects of social and environmental issues while SD demands an integrated and inclusive approach.

[Click here](#) to read the whole publication in English



### Irish National Economic and Social Council (NESC) an opinion on: Housing Supply and Land: Driving Public Action for the Common Good

The level of housing development and output is low in Ireland, despite evidence of strong current need and demand and likely future requirements. Many factors are suggested as have a bearing—costs and returns, finance, planning, regulation, infrastructure including water, standards and the capacity of the construction sector. There are also long-standing issues, Ireland's system of land allocation and housing supply and level of density and infrastructural connectivity and a sense that important reforms of the past 15–20 years, such as Strategic Development Zones, remain incomplete.

Under Construction 2020, the Irish government introduced a range of processes and measures. To address the lack of activity and new housing supply, these need to be taken further.

Therefore it is necessary to create an integrated approach in which action on costs and prices is embedded within more concerted public action and comprehensive reform, which can ensure that the planning and housing system works more effectively. Moreover, it is important and urgent that there is more authoritative public action on land and housing supply; the goal must be pro-

gress from a price floor on land to active land management that puts a ceiling on the degree to which land scarcity and costs feed into the price of housing.

Three actions are proposed:

- a) The public system should use its authority, capacities and resources to take the lead on the resumption of housing supply. This requires a high-level Government decision to enable some of the key capabilities and resources in NAMA, local authorities and other agencies, to be used.
- b) Sustained in-depth exploration and action on the reasons why the costs of housing provision and construction in Ireland make it so difficult to provide affordable housing of the right kind in the right locations.
- c) Drawing on the learning from these actions to address remaining institutional or organisational gaps in the areas of housing, planning and infrastructure.

For more information [click here](#).

### Dutch Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli) publishes its advise Circular economy: from wish to practice

The Netherlands can benefit from making smarter use of raw materials. To achieve this, a government-wide circular agenda is needed. This is one of the points stated by Rli in its recent advice 'Circular economy: from wish to practice'. According to this council, a government-wide approach can bring more coherence to the major efforts which are currently already underway in various places to make the economy circular.

According to the Rli, the challenge for the Netherlands is to build on the existing activities and to create more cohesion, thus spurring the circular economy to develop from an experiment to common practice. In relation to the national circular agenda which the government needs to draw up, the Council offers recommendations for each specific minister.

All ministers must contribute to the circular agenda based on their expertise and policy field. For example, the circular economy can be incorporated in the annual national Budget Memorandum formulated by the Minister of Finance. The top sector policy of the Minister of Economic Affairs can be geared to promising chains that serve as a figurehead for the Dutch circular

economy. And the Minister of Foreign Affairs can use the six-month Dutch presidency of the EU in 2016 to further develop the circular economy package.

[Click here](#) to read the whole publication in English.



### Germany Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) launches a report on Germany's Sustainability Architecture and the SDGs

In its paper (RNE) addresses the question as to whether and how a national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will impact the structures and institutions of Germany's sustainability policy. The publication is a reaction on the question as raised by the State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development in November 2014.

As part of its mandate, RNE fosters social dialogue on sustainable development at the national and international levels. The topics forming the basis for this statement are of common, general interest for a social dialogue. Both RNE and the German government regard the lending of full support to this social dialogue as an important task.

The comments made in the statement are the result of two work phases. During the first stage, the present state of affairs was explored. In the second stage, RNE drafted a detailed set of recommendations. Please find them in the publication. Besides the detailed set of recommendations the report included two general main recommendations:

1. The German government should publish this internal statement as soon as possible.
2. The German government should broaden the public debate on sustainable development. The dialogue process and the expectations placed on the participants should be transparent.

The whole publication is available [here](#).

### EEAC Working Groups

#### Working Group Marine and Water Affairs: second Brussels gathering

After interesting and diverse debate during the WG's first 2015 meeting the co-chairs of the Working Group are preparing a second session, which will take place in Brussels after the EEAC annual conference.

During the WG meeting the practical implementation of the Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning will be analysed. More details on the second WG meeting will be shared in September 2015



#### Working Group Sustainable Development: Overview Paper on SD and SD councils in the European Area

As chair of the Working Group Sustainable Development the German council for Sustainable Development (RNE) commissioned an overview paper touching upon:

- The development of Europe's SD strategies, including insights on the next SD strategies of the Juncker's Commission.
- The current state of play of National Sustainable Development Strategies in the different European, including a piece on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- The current challenges, tasks, functioning and composition of European SD councils.

The report will conclude with a call on the importance of SD policies in the EU by Mr Derek Osborn, director of the Board of the Stakeholder Forum.

The paper will most likely be published in October 2015.



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