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Issue 029

Update 2030 Agenda and EU 2020



Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO-CFDD)

In the spotlight

- [SD Knowledge Platform](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)
- [SDG Knowledge Hub](#)
- [Earth Negotiations Bulletin HLPF 2018](#)

The FRDO-CFDD is 25!

On Friday 12 October the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FDRO-CFDD) celebrated the [25th anniversary of its foundation](#). The National Council for Sustainable Development, established in 1993 partly as a result of the 1992 Rio conference, was renamed the Federal Council for Sustainable Development in 1997.

Honorary president Queen Mathilde addressed a celebratory session. She referred to the importance of sustainable development and the sustainable development goals, or SDGs. Former presidents Theo Rombouts and Magda Aelvoet and the new president François-Xavier de Donnée discussed the past and future of the Council.

The world has changed a great deal since 1993. The sustainable development project has not achieved what many had hoped for after the 1992 Rio conference. Since then, pressure on the planetary boundaries has only increased, and the inequalities in the world have not been resolved.

What direction will sustainable development take in the coming years? Will the SDGs provide the leverage to get the world onto a sustainable and just path? It was left to Anders Wijkman to reflect [in his speech](#) on the challenges that face sustainable development.

He suggested that we need to give serious thought to the economic model. Continuing to opt for conventional economic growth, he said, would only make the problems worse, and would not help us to achieve the [2030 Agenda](#) and the SDGs. He referred to a [new report](#) compiled for the [Club of Rome](#).

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Are we ready for the SDGs?

In a [recently issued opinion](#) the FDRO-CFDD called for the government that will take office after the 2019 parliamentary elections to ensure that the policy framework for sustainable development will be appropriately aligned with the international framework of the SDGs.

It asks that government to “give a fresh impetus to an ambitious project for sustainable development that is capable of giving coherent answers to the great national and international challenges of the future.” It calls for this future government to be “guided by a cooperative federalism”.



How can the SDGs be implemented?

In previous years the FDRO-CFDD has issued a number of opinions on the implementation of the SDGs in our country, and the role of the federal policy level in particular. See for example the [opinion](#) on the [Voluntary National Review](#) (VNR) presented by Belgium to the UN in 2017. The hope was that this first VNR, representing successful collaboration between the different national policy levels, would launch a process leading to consistent and ambitious implementation of the SDGs in our country. According to the common vision of the [national sustainable development strategy](#) the Interministerial Commission for Sustainable



Development should prepare an extensive progress report on the implementation of SDGs in our country (see also [our opinion](#)). As the first VNR was a sort of 'baseline measurement', this report would constitute the first real assessment. That report should be ready in the first quarter of 2019, when a major conference will be held ahead of the parliamentary elections. However, there will probably be no report and no conference.

At the federal level, the Federal Council for Sustainable Development has long been calling for a clear policy approach to the implementation van de SDGs. The

minister's 2019 [policy memorandum](#) states that a new federal sustainable development plan will be prepared. It will then be for the next government to translate this proposal into a draft policy plan for the implementation of the SDGs. The FRDO will not be involved in this draft, which will instead be prepared by individual stakeholders. The [Sustainable Development Law](#) normally provides for the FDRO to issue an opinion on the initial draft of the federal plan, after which the government proceeds to propose a draft plan, partly on that basis.

“Because the truth is that, when it comes to building sustainable prosperity from which everyone can benefit in the future, we are all ‘developing countries’.”

(Henrietta Moore)

Flash

A [special UN conference](#) will discuss the interaction between the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement | The [Rotterdam School of Management](#) has put the 17 SDGs at the heart of its mission. | The [German sustainable development strategy](#) was updated. | The OECD presented [a series of papers](#) on the transition to greater sustainability. | UNEP says we are doing too little to counter the [health effects of climate change](#). | PWC analysed how major businesses are [integrating the SDGs](#) in their [strategic](#)

[planning](#). | [The Alliance of CEO Climate Leaders](#) calls for governments to adopt a more ambitious climate policy. | Businesses and governments can [strengthen each other](#) for a sustainable economic policy. | The IBN presented [a study](#) on the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework. The FDRO-CFDD is organising a conference on this topic on 22 March. | How are the [2030 Agenda and migration](#) interrelated? ODI has prepared a series of policy papers. The IOM has produced a [special guide](#) for policy-makers. | [SDG](#)

[Watch](#) and [the German Institute for International and Security Affairs \(SWP\)](#) have some ideas for the reform of the HLPF. | The first [SDG forum](#) took place on 23 October.

HLPF will take stock in 2019

Every year the High-Level Political Forum ([HLPF](#)) reviews the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Countries can present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) explaining how they are implementing the SDGs. Belgium did so in 2017.

A summary of the VNRs submitted in 2018 can be found [here](#). Two meetings are planned in 2019. The [first](#) will take place on 9-18 July. This gathering will analyse the status of SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17, whereby all the SDGs will be addressed. 51 coun-

tries are [preparing to submit a VNR](#). A second meeting, the SDG Summit, is proposed for 24 and 25 SEPTEMBER, under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. At the summit, heads of states will review the whole implementation process for the 2030 Agenda.

9 - 18 JULY 2019

NEW YORK



Theme: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Do SDGs pave the way for a different kind of policy practice?

Commissioned by the FDRO, researchers at KU Leuven carried out [a study](#) into whether the SDGs are currently bringing about change in the way countries conduct their policy. The study considered good policy practices in a number of countries (in the form of six case studies) which could provide inspiration for our country. The study also looked at the way in which sustainable development policy is organised in Belgium. It did not aim to formulate practical policy advice.

On the basis of this study, the FRDO organised a [special seminar](#) on 25 June. During the seminar, representatives of Council members and political parties responded to the study's results.

In his [closing remarks](#) Professor Brent Bleyers referred to the 'window of opportunity' provided by the elections in 2018 and 2019. These elections could ensure that the SDGs become a lever for better sustainable development policy.



Flash

The FDRO-CFDD is preparing a [conference](#) on sustainable investment to take place on 29 January. | There is growing international attention to the financial aspects of the transition. The topic was addressed during a [forum on energy and sustainable development](#). It is time that we took an in-depth look at existing systems of [subsidising fossil fuel](#). Could a [treaty on sustainable investment](#) be a helpful instrument? The EU held discussions on [climate finance](#). There was also discussion of [sustainable investment](#) to sup-

port the SDGs, and ideas were put forward for [sustainable stock exchanges](#). Can [public and private finance](#) be deployed for climate action? What can the [financial sector](#) do for the SDGs? | The OECD published the [Development Co-operation Report 2018](#) and a special report on [policy coherence for sustainable development](#). | Eurostat published the new [Monitoring Report](#) on the implementation of SDGs in the EU. | How can we integrate [health](#) better into the 2030 Agenda? | [SDG Watch](#) expects more ambi-

tion from the EU. | UN Women published a [report](#) on the gender dimension of the 2030 Agenda. | Is the EU doing [enough](#) to promote the SDGs?

“Europe must be sustainable – or it will simply not be.”

(Luca Jahier)

30 recommendations for 2030

The platform [Think 2030](#) has presented a [series of 30 Recommendations](#) for a sustainable future in the EU. In 2019 the EU will have to make choices about its post-2020 strategy, following on from the EU2020 strategy.

The platform is calling for an [overarching strategy](#) in alignment with the SDGs. This would require a set of policy targets supported by scientific insights and fully incorporating the various dimensions of sustainable development. A [series of policy papers](#)

were prepared for this project, largely focusing on the SDGs.





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Multi-stakeholder platform presents report

How will the EU implement the SDGs in its own policy? That's still an open question. Ordinarily, an EU implementation strategy would have been developed some time ago, but there is still nothing. The Commission has not responded to repeated questions from both Member States and numerous organisations, and has postponed any discussion on the integration of the SDGs in its own strategy framework until 2019, to the period after the European Parliament elections in May.

The Commission is currently working on a 'reflection paper' entitled *Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030*. This forms a part of the [Future of Europe](#) process. It was expected by the end of 2018.

Important work has been carried out by the special [Multi-](#)

[stakeholder platform on SDGs](#) in recent months. The platform has completed an [extensive report](#) (see also this [infographic](#)) which serves as input for the reflection paper. The platform recommends the EU to develop an overarching, visionary and transformative Sustainable Europe 2030 strategy that can guide EU policy as a whole. This strategy should include medium and long-term targets.

The EESC recently organised a [conference](#) on these aspects. CONCORD hopes that these proposals will be reflected in the debate about the future of the EU.

The reflection paper was expected to be discussed at the Commission meeting on 19 December. Discussion has now been delayed to "[early 2019](#)".

