

Annual Plan 2020

Creating added value through exchanging, cooperating and liaising

The Board of Foundation E.E.A.C.

The Hague, approved on the 24th of January 2020



The Network

The European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC) Network brings together advisory bodies established by national or regional governments and parliaments. EEAC members offer independent advice to their respective national or regional governments and parliaments related to the environment and sustainable development.

Belgium	Federal Council for Sustainable Development
Denmark	Danish Council on Climate Change
Catalonia	Advisory Council for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia
Finland	Expert Panel for Sustainable Development
Flanders	Environment and Nature Council of Flanders
France	National Council for Ecological Transition
Germany	German Advisory Council on the Environment German Advisory Council on Global Change German Council for Sustainable Development
Hungary	National Council for Sustainable Development National Environment Council
Ireland	National Economic and Social Council
Luxembourg	National Council for Sustainable Development
Montenegro	National Council for Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Integrated Coastal Zone Management
The Netherlands	Council for the Environment and Infrastructure
Portugal	National Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development

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1. The EEAC Network: aims, tasks, and working methods

The EEAC is a European network of advisory bodies that advise their (sub-)national governments and parliaments on issues related to sustainable development and the environment. The EEAC Network aims to enrich the advice that individual advisory bodies can give to their governments and parliaments, to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and policymaking and to connect the work of the (sub)national advisory bodies and the European policy level with regard to the environment and sustainable development.

To achieve its aims, the EEAC Network has two main tasks:

- ❖ To provide an operational framework for joint activities, knowledge exchange, dialogue and informed debate among advisory bodies individually and among advisory bodies and other stakeholders and disciplines;
- ❖ To serve as a liaison between the work of the national and subnational and European policy level.

Different methods to enable exchange are put in place within the framework of the EEAC Network. Exchange is organised either online or offline. Online activities include the use of the EEAC website, social media, videoconference platforms and newsletters. Offline activities may include participation in and organisation of workshops, seminars, conferences and / or inter-council exchange sessions.

To fulfil its role as liaison, the EEAC Network, through its board and members, aims to participate in European and global forums and aims to continue to have a balanced presence in the global – but foremost – European sustainability and environmental policy arena. Furthermore, a different instruments will be used to enhance the flow of information from EEAC member bodies to European partners and vice versa.

2. The EEAC Board's Framework for Action

2.1. Tasks, Principles and Context

The statutes governing the EEAC Network task the EEAC board with:

- ❖ The management and financial management of the EEAC Network;
- ❖ Enabling the EEAC Network to function as an operation framework for exchange;
- ❖ Supporting and enhancing the liaison role of the EEAC Network;
- ❖ Presenting an Annual Plan for the EEAC Network.

The members of the board aim to fulfil these tasks to the best of their abilities while taking the following into account:

- ❖ The member bodies are the core of the EEAC Network;
- ❖ The board will centre-stage the needs of the member bodies and will cater to these needs.

Furthermore, the board expects the following events to create and alter the context in which the EEAC Annual Plan will be implemented in 2020:

- ❖ The United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) will meet once in July 2020 to discuss the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- ❖ The Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties (COP 15) will adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework in Kunming, Yunnan, China in 2020.
- ❖ The Conference of the Parties (COP 26) will take place in Glasgow in 2020.
- ❖ High Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (UN Ocean Conference) 2020.
- ❖ The Global Forum of Advisory Councils for Sustainable Development and similar multi-stakeholder bodies will have its inaugural meeting at the start of 2020 and will continue its activities throughout the year.
- ❖ The European Commission 2019-2024 took office in December 2019 and wishes to deliver a European Green Deal during the first hundred days of its mandate.
- ❖ Croatia and Germany will hold the EU presidency in 2020.
- ❖ The presidency of the European Economic and Social Committee's Sustainable Development Observatory will change during the summer of 2020.

In consideration of its duties and the context in which it will operate, the board has decided on the following set of concrete actions:

2.2. Actions to provide an operational framework for exchange

2.2.1. Actions to enhance online exchange

Following a year of trials and learning, the board wishes to enhance the usage of the GoToMeeting videoconference platform as an instrument for online exchange among advisory bodies and among advisory bodies and other stakeholders.

The website and Twitter account of the EEAC Network will continuously be used to inform interested parties about 1) recently produced (advisory) work by EEAC member bodies; 2) upcoming international events by the network or its members; 3) relevant news items from the member bodies or the network itself. To ensure that the latest information is communicated in time, the board also calls upon EEAC member bodies to proactively inform the EEAC secretariat in case news can be shared.

The EEAC Newsletter will be shared more often (currently on a quarterly basis). The board wishes to gain experience with the preferred frequency of launching the EEAC newsletter.

2.2.2. Actions to enhance offline exchange

The board has identified ten thematic areas of common interest based on the agendas of the member bodies include: 1) Biodiversity; 2) Circular Economy; 3) Digitalization; 4) Energy Policies and Climate Change; 5) Environmental Policies; 6) Food Policies and Agriculture; 7) Fresh Water Affairs; 8) Just Transition; 9) Sustainable Mobility; and 10) Sustainable Development. These thematic areas of common interest will serve as the building blocks for the EEAC agenda 2020. The board will facilitate exchange among advisory bodies, and among advisory bodies and external partners on the areas of common interest. The board will facilitate this exchange through for example workshops, seminars and conferences.

The board also aims to continue expanding the EEAC network to further strengthen exchange among a broader group of advisory bodies. In addition, the board aims to bring climate change advisory bodies to the network. To conclude, the board will look into the option of bringing more sub-national advisory bodies to join the EEAC Network as well. Time and financial means will – again – be made available to support this process.

2.3. Actions to enhance the board's role as liaison

Following the modest but growing presence of the EEAC Network within the European environmental and sustainable development policy arena, the board wishes to articulate the following ambitions for 2020:

2.3.1. Actions to enhance the board's role as liaison at Global level

At global level, the EEAC Network will actively engage in the work of the Global Forum of National Councils for Sustainable Development and similar multi-stakeholder bodies. Furthermore, the board will re-assess the possibility to once again contribute the UN Global Festival of Action for Sustainable Development and/or similar events.

2.3.2. Actions to enhance the board's role as liaison at European level

At European level, the Multi Stakeholder Platform for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the EU – if continued - will remain an important platform to participate in. Therefore the Chair – together with the co-chair of the EEAC Working Group on Sustainable Development – will take the necessary steps to keep the network as an observer to the MSP.

The board aims to continue its participation in non-governmental coalitions, such as Think2030 and the Ambition2030 initiative.

The board wishes to extend the role of the EEAC Network in informing EEAC member bodies about ongoing and upcoming policy developments at European level in the field of: A) the 2030 Agenda; B) energy and climate change; C) fresh water affairs and possibly D) circular economy. The information will be provided through so called EEAC Secretariat Information Memos.

The board will make sure that (advisory) work by EEAC member bodies is brought to the attention of: A) relevant members of the European Commission; B) Members of the European Parliament represented in the relevant Committees and Inter-groups, and C) the Chair and secretariat of the European Economic and Social Committee's Sustainable Development Observatory. In addition to the addressees within the European institutions, the board will make sure that (advisory) work by EEAC member bodies is brought to the attention of think-tanks and organizations that more often partner up with the EEAC Network at European level such as: IEEP, IDDRI, WWF, EEB and SDG-Watch.

In case EEAC member bodies wish to present their (advisory) work at European level, the board is ready to assist – also through the EEAC secretariat – with the organisations and execution of such events. This activity will only be demand driven.

3. Thematic areas of common interest

The board produced an overview of thematic areas that are on the agenda of EEAC member bodies. This overview included ten thematic areas of common interest. This section of the Annual Plan briefly introduces these thematic areas.

3.1. Biodiversity

With the upcoming COP-CBD in China (October 2020) and the political importance given to the subject by European institutions, biodiversity is expected to play a pivotal role in both the global as well the European policy arena. At national and regional level, several advisory bodies will also work on the issue. Whereas some advisory bodies will prepare (national) positions in prelude to COP-CBD, others will focus on specific national and regional biodiversity challenges.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: CNADS; CSDD; FRDO-CFDD; Minaraad; RNE

3.2. Circular Economy

The transition towards a circular economy is not only an important issue at European level¹. Also national and regional advisory bodies will continue their work on the transition towards a circular economy model. Advisory bodies – as gathered in the EEAC Network – will focus on several different elements of a circular economy. Whereas some take an environmental point of view, others focus on (international) trade or material flows.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: CNTE; FRDO-CFDD; Minaraad; NFFT; Rli; RNE; SRU; NFFT

3.3. Digitalisation

Several EEAC member bodies will (continue) to work on the issue of digitalisation in relation to the sustainability transformation. The advisory bodies work on the issue from different angles. Whereas some focus on the relation between digitalisation and the integrated concept of sustainable development, others focus more on digitalisation and its effects on sectoral developments, for example the labour market, mobility, and the human environment.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: NESC; Rli; WBGU

3.4. Energy Policies and Climate Change

With a decisive UN Conference of the Parties in Glasgow (COP26) on the agenda, and a variety of energy and climate action proposals to enshrine the European Green Deal, energy policies and climate change remain to be prominent on both the global as well as on the European policy agenda. Also a majority of EEAC member bodies have energy policies and climate change issues on their agendas. Some advisory bodies will work on the outcomes and/or consequences of (proposed) EU policies, such as the EU Green Deal, the National Energy and Climate Plans, the Carbon Border Tax, carbon prices and budgets, or the implementation of other EU energy directives. Others will

¹ European Commission (2019). *The European Green Deal*. Brussels. Through: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

focus on governance challenges in relation to energy policies. In correlation with energy policies, many advisory bodies also work on the issue of climate change and climate action, with both climate mitigation and adaptation on the agendas in 2020.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: CADs; DCCC; FRDO-CFDD; Minaraad; NCSDDC, RNE; Rli; OKT; SRU

3.5. Environmental Policies

Several EEAC member bodies will work on environmental policies. Global, European as well as national and regional perspectives will be taken when dealing with the issue. In practice, this means that some advisory bodies will work on the concept of Global Environmental Commons (as entry point for a sustainable world by 2030), and others will focus on (the future) of European environmental policies.

In addition, national environmental policies and programmes will also be centre-staged on the agendas of various other advisory bodies.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: FEPSD; Minaraad; OKT; SRU

3.6. Fresh Water Affairs

In prelude to the third Management Cycle of the EU Water Framework Directive, several advisory bodies will work on fresh water affairs. Advisory bodies either focus on the relation between the effects of climate change (droughts and floods) and fresh water, or on the ecological status of fresh water bodies at national and sub-national level.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: CADs; Minaraad; OKT; SRU

3.7. Integrated Food Policies Agriculture and Land-Use and

Integrated food policies in relation to agriculture, vital soils, environmental protection as well as land use are on the agendas of different EEAC member bodies. Future work will include governance approaches towards an integrated food system, soil quality and land use challenges as well as a study focussing on the relationship between agriculture and the status of the environment.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: CADs; CSDD; FEPSD; Minaraad; Rli; WBGU

3.8. Just Transition

While being a part of the global discussion (in the context of for example the COPs) and the European Agenda (in the context of the European Green Deal), also advisory bodies will focus on the concept of a just transition. Whereas several advisory bodies chose a thematic lens through which they will engage with the topic (e.g., low carbon and digital future), other advisory bodies, chose a broad societal lens, rather than a thematic lens to engage with the theme of 'a just transition'.

Other bodies are in the process of defining their lenses. Hence, the lenses used by advisory bodies differ quite a bit, but the advisory bodies share the common ambition to contribute to an in time but just transition process towards sustainability.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: CADS; FEPSD; FRDO-CFDD; NESC; Rli; WBGU

3.9. Mobility and Transport

For the first time, multiple advisory councils (Belgium, FRDO-CFDD, Luxembourg, CSDD and the Netherlands, Rli) work together on one overarching project: international rail services. The three councils jointly work on the issue since September 2019 and will continue to do so in 2020. In addition to this consortium of advisory bodies, also other EEAC members work on the issue of sustainable mobility and green infrastructure.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: CNADS; CSDD; FRDO-CSDD; Minaraad; Rli

3.10. Sustainable Development

Enhancing sustainable development is a core aim of most member bodies of the EEAC Network. Issues such as sustainable finance and fiscal instruments to enhance sustainability as well as the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are all on the agenda in 2020.

Advisory bodies that work on the topic include: CADS; CNADS; CSDD; FEPSD; FRDO-CSDD; NCSDCC; NFFT; RNE

4. Proposed exchange activities and a call for action

Concrete proposals for exchange among advisory bodies, and among advisory bodies and other stakeholders have already been developed in three out of ten areas of common interest: energy and climate change, fresh water affairs, and sustainable development. The proposals for exchange and liaising activities are outlined below.

The board of the EEAC Network calls upon the EEAC member bodies to submit ideas for exchange on the issues of: biodiversity, circular economy, digitalization, environmental policies, integrated food policies agriculture and land-use, a just transition and mobility and transport. Consequently, the agendas for exchange will be specified and updated throughout 2020. The board will support proposed activities to the best of its ability within the context of its mandate throughout the year.

4.1. Proposed Exchange & Liaison Activities: Energy and Climate Change

Climate change and climate action in correlation with energy policies remain to be center-staged in the agendas of many advisory bodies that gather in the EEAC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change. Simultaneously, these issues will also prominently remain on the top of global, European, national and sub-national policy agendas. It is therefore that the EEAC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change strives to serve both knowledge exchange as well as deliver in time information streams with regard to the fields of climate change, climate action and energy policies throughout 2020. Following consultation of the members of the EEAC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change, the following issues were made part of the working group agenda 2020:

4.1.1. Climate Change and Climate Action: The Global level

A total of 196 Parties came together in Paris in 2015 to negotiate the *Paris Agreement*. An important element of this *Agreement* are the – so called – Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). These INDCs should outline and communicate the post-2020 climate actions of individual Parties. INDCs are submitted every five years to the UNFCCC secretariat, with the next round of INDCs (new or updated) being submitted in 2020. For this reason, COP26 in Glasgow will mark an important mile stone and will enable stakeholders to take stock of global ambitions and progress.

Planned liaison activities: Following experiments with information gathering and information sharing during COP25 in Madrid in 2019, the working group aims to further strengthen information flows in prelude to, during and following COP26 in Glasgow. The working group aims to do so in order to help its members to better anticipate for relevant global developments.

4.1.2. Climate Change and Energy Policies: The European Level

The European Commission presented the European Green Deal in December 2019. At the heart of this *Deal* is the College its commitment to becoming the world's first climate neutral continent by 2050. To enshrine this ambition, the Commission proposes – among others – a European Climate Law (to be presented in March 2020). In addition to this Climate Law, proposals to beef up 2030 emission reduction targets are to be prepared in early 2020. Moreover, the Commission added the ambition to present an EU strategy on adaption by climate change and the transition of the European Investment Bank to a European Climate Bank on the list of the *European Green Deal*.

Planned liaison activities: In order to inform the members of the EEAC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change about the European context in which their work takes place, the working group will make continuous efforts to ensure a timely and fit for purpose information stream from the EU policy arena to the national and sub-national level. In case specific matters are raised on the European Agenda, on which advisory bodies or the working group produced content, the working group chair will actively seek contact with relevant institutional and non-governmental stakeholders to bring the messages from the working group members across.

4.1.3. A Just Transition

Major transitions with regard to the energy sources we use will generate both winners as well as stakeholders that lose. This potential division feeds the concern of growing inequality in societies at global, national and regional levels. In a response, politicians and policy makers call for a just transition. Also advisory bodies – as gathered in the EEAC Working Group on Energy and Climate Change – have started to work on the concept of a just transition, or indicated interest in the issue.

Proposed knowledge exchange: In the context of the transition to a Low Carbon and Digital Future in Ireland, and following European wide interest, the National Economic and Social Council in Ireland proposed to centre-stage the Nature of Just Transition Challenges as an overarching theme for the 28th EEAC Annual Conference. The theme is also closely related to another topic of interest to working group members: citizen participation in the energy transition. Through the EEAC Annual Conference, the members of the working group will be enabled to share their insights and views with each other and with other stakeholders. Moreover, the working group will – when asked – provide input to the preparatory process and/or the conference itself.

4.1.4. Agriculture in the context of climate change and energy policies

Agriculture is not only a major source of employment to many in the EU and beyond, it also ensures that food is produced for billions around the globe. However, several practices used to produce our food negatively affect our environment and pushes climate change. Through for example soil disturbance, carbon sequestration (occurring on land had it not been converted to agricultural use, input footprints such as the production of fertilizer, or the ruminant emissions of cows, the agricultural sector is responsible for 426.473 kilotons of CO₂ equivalent of greenhouse gases, about 10% of the EU's total GHG emissions².

Pushed by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), agricultural production has been increasing since the nineteen-seventies in the European area. Despite increasing ambitions to integrate environmental and more recently climate considerations in agricultural policies and practices, these integration efforts only have delivered mixed results and have therefore not been sufficient to address the scale of the sustainability challenges the sector faces.

Proposed knowledge exchange: The Working Group on Energy and Climate Change will focus on the possible impact of European climate action, energy policies and the proposals for reforming the

² Eurostat (2017) Agri-environmental indicator - greenhouse gas emissions. Brussels, through: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Agri-environmental_indicator_-_greenhouse_gas_emissions

CAP on national and regional options to reduce negative climate impacts of agriculture. Knowledge exchange will be served through (online) exchange platforms such as webinars and physical expert meetings.

4.1.5. General exchange

Topics related to climate change, climate action and energy policies are on the agenda of the majority of EEAC member bodies. The working group wishes to support knowledge exchange among individual members (inter-council-exchange) on topics where a clear knowledge transfer between advisory bodies is feasible and requested.

4.2. Proposed Exchange and Liaison Activities: Fresh Water Affairs

Fresh water affairs are expected to remain on the European policy agenda and a variety of advisory bodies that are member of the EEAC Network will work on the issue as well. It is therefore that the EEAC Working Group on Fresh Water Affairs strives to continue to serve both knowledge exchange as well as deliver in time information streams with regard to fresh water affairs from the European level to the (sub-)national level and vice versa. Following consultation of the members of the EEAC Working Group on Fresh Water Affairs, the following issues will be part of the working group's agenda 2020:

4.2.1. European Water Policies

Climate change and environmental degradation are putting pressure on Europe its fresh water resources. In light of these two crises, the broad objectives of the EU water Directives – tackling water pollution, curtailing freshwater biodiversity loss, and strengthening resilience to climate change impacts – will also play an important role in 2020 by co-determining the policy context of activities deployed at national and subnational level.

Planned liaison activities: The working group chair will ensure a timely and fit for purpose information stream from the EU policy arena to the national and sub-national level. In case specific matters are raised on the European Agenda, on which advisory bodies or the working group already produced content, the working group chair will actively seek contact with relevant institutional and non-governmental stakeholders to bring the messages from the working group and its members across. In particular, the working group will follow up on the recast of the drinking water directive, the evaluation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Proposal for a regulation on minimum requirements for water reuse and the initiatives that result from the fitness check of the Water Directives.

4.2.2. Water quantity governance in the context of climate change

Sound water management requires joint management of qualitative and quantitative aspects. To achieve sustainable protection and use of water resources, which will become even more important due to climate change, it is particularly relevant to ensure a balanced and coherent approach to the sometimes competing uses of water by different sectors. In the run-up to the third cycle of River Basin Management plans, the advisory bodies gathered in the EEAC Working Group on Fresh Water identified this topic as a priority.

Proposed knowledge exchange: The working group will continue the tradition to set up an open discussion meeting in Brussels (summer period) together with relevant European stakeholders. The overarching topic of such meeting will be water quantity governance in the context of climate change, with special attention paid to the link with land use. Participants from various sectors will be invited, to exchange knowledge and build insights on how to make the best possible use of the framework offered by the Water Framework Directive to address water quality governance challenges in the context of climate change.

4.2.3. Socio-economic aspects in the financing of water policies

In the last three years, the Working Group on Fresh Water Affairs has been working on an analysis of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. In this context, both the lack of adequate financing and the limited uptake of the WFD's economic thinking, were identified as issues to explain the partial success of the WFD. The implementation of art. 9 of the WFD, which deals with "cost recovery" and "adequate price incentives", comes with important social challenges, as is showed by the work of the OECD. There is a need for knowledge exchange and capacity building in this field.

Proposed knowledge exchange: Through the theme of the EEAC annual Conference – a just transition -, the members of the working group will be enabled to share their insights and views with each other and with other stakeholders. Moreover, the working group will – when asked – provide input to the preparatory process and/or the conference itself.

4.3. Proposed Exchange and Liaison Activities: Sustainable Development

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national and sub-national level remains to be an important element of the work of several advisory bodies as gathered in the EEAC Working Group on Sustainable Development. Following the thematic focus of EEAC member bodies, it is proposed to focus on several specific policy areas and issues related to the 2030 Agenda.

4.3.1. Implementing the 2030 Agenda at EU level

From the ambitions of the European Commission it seems that sustainable development left its policy niche. This is, however, no unnecessary luxury, since several publications³ show a rather grim picture for the EU when it comes to achieving the SDGs. The EU and its Member States are still a long way from reaching the SDGs by 2030. However, the current political moment seems favourable. The upcoming period will show whether for example the *Multi Annual Financial Framework* and *The European Green Deal* will be able to support a truly transversal and cross-silo approach towards implementing the 2030 Agenda in the European area and beyond.

Proposed liaison activities: The upcoming period will be decisive for the pace of Europe's transition towards successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In order to be informed about ongoing developments and in order to be able to share insights as presented by EEAC member bodies, representatives of the EEAC Working Group on Sustainable Development aim to continue taking

³ These publications include – among others – [the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019](#) and the [2019 Europe Sustainable Development Report](#)

part in for example the Multi-stakeholder Platform on the Implementation of the SDGs in the European Union, the Think2030 platform and the European Sustainable Development Week. In addition, relations with both institutional and non-governmental partners are to be further strengthened to support and enable in time and good information exchange.

Proposed knowledge exchange: Within the framework of the EEAC Working Group on Sustainable Development, advisory bodies will physically gather at least once a year to discuss the challenges these bodies face in executing their tasks in a European context. This ongoing exchange mechanism will continue in 2020. Knowledge exchange through online exchange forums will be facilitated more often by the working group.

4.3.2. Implementing the 2030 Agenda at Global level

In addition to participating in and contributing to the UN High Level Political Forum, the Global Sustainable Development Action Day and the Global Festival of Action, the EEAC Network has increased its global focus with the endorsement of the Global Forum of National Councils for Sustainable Development and similar multi-stakeholder bodies. This Forum – established in 2019 with its inaugural meeting scheduled for February 2020 - will help national councils and similar multi-stakeholder bodies to be better positioned to deliver SDGs through shared knowledge on national sustainable development policy making, peer-exchange, shortcuts to understanding policy cycles, and institutional capacity building. In addition, the Forum should elevate and enrich access to communities of practitioners and their collective knowledge on national and sub-national SDG implementation, as well as to other SDG-relevant networks.

Proposed liaison activities: Through its working group, the EEAC Network wishes to inform its members about relevant developments at global level with regard to implementing the 2030 Agenda. To do so, the EEAC will liaise with relevant institutions and non-governmental partners.

Proposed knowledge exchange: The EEAC Working Group on Sustainable Development is committed to engage in knowledge exchange with global partners as brought together under the umbrella of the Global Forum. To this end, representatives of the working group will actively participate and contribute to events of the Forum, both online and offline.

4.3.3. Fiscal instruments to enhance sustainable development.

Following the recognition and acknowledgement of environmental and other sustainability crises, an increasing number of international, national or regional fiscal commitments (agreements, resolutions, frameworks, strategies, programmes) were made in order to promote sustainability and to protect our natural assets and ecosystem services. These commitments, however, mostly fail to be fulfilled. Either unsustainable trends continue unaltered or the progress made remains below the required extent.

In recent discussions the role of fiscal instruments to enhance sustainable development was brought to the attention of advisory bodies. In this context, the EEAC Working Group on Sustainable Development underlined in its annual meeting 2019 that fiscal and economic policies to enhance the sustainability transition are important instruments that require attention.

Proposed knowledge exchange: Within the framework of the EEAC Working Group on Sustainable Development, advisory bodies will be invited to share insights on existing fiscal and economic policies that are applied to enhance sustainability in their respected countries and regions. Based on these insights, a consortium of stakeholders - under the auspices of the Hungarian Council for Sustainable Development – will draft a concise overview document in order to supply advisory bodies with an synopsis of existing policies. Such overview should be supportive to further work on the issue.

4.3.4. Sustainable Finance

Substantial volumes of monetary means are required to reach the targets of the 2030 Agenda. Estimations differs, but often investment gaps of 180 and even 270 billion € p.a. in Europe are tabled. This is both a challenge, but also an opportunity for investors and businesses. Through the EU Action Plan for Sustainable Finance - with its diverse set of regulations and regulatory proposals - European policy makers aim to empower these investments and draft a – partly – new economic playing field. The ambitions of the EU Action Plan, the continuous push by stakeholders for an enhanced sustainable market economy model and the headlines of the drafted Green Deal nourishes the hope for a new dynamic. To some extent, market actors are already taking action, as they see the urgency of raising capacities for dealing with these issues.

Proposed liaison activities: The twofold attitude by market actors requires transparency and a truly inclusive stakeholder dialogue. It is therefore that several advisory bodies – as gathered in the EEAC Working Group on Sustainable Development - wish to organize a European Stakeholder Dialogue on SDG policies, bringing together the discussions on sustainable finance, sustainable economy and reporting. This dialogue could built upon the experiences of the Athens Sustainability Outlook. Furthermore, this dialogue could enable a mixture of information, experience sharing and discussion on a European vision for a sustainable market economy. Further details are to be shared in due course of January 2020.

Proposed knowledge exchange: Following conducts of the previous year, advisory bodies will continue to exchange knowledge on the issue of sustainable finance. This will be done through both online and offline means. Advisory bodies strive to mutually contribute to different national and European events and initiatives organised by fellow advisory bodies on the issue of sustainable finance. Working group members also wish to continue mutual knowledge exchange online. Insights from national, subnational and European levels are therefore to be shared and updated. Further interested advisory bodies can get involved at any time.

Annex I

Advisory Bodies and Thematic Areas of Interest (Most of the listed issues have yet to be approved as official part of the 2020 Agenda of the councils)
Federal Council for Sustainable Development, FRDO-CFDD (Belgium)
Biodiversity: Advising on the Belgian positions towards the CBD-COP in China in October 2020 Circular Economy: innovative and new economic models: in the building materials sector and the circular economy Energy and climate change: to be defined Fair transition: this concept will be horizontally integrated in the councils work theme and special attention will be paid to financing the (fair) transtion Natural resources: The impact of transitions in the EU on developing countries outside the Union Sustainable Transport: International rail transport
Danish Council on Climate Change (Denmark)
Carbon price floor and a border tax at the EU level Agriculture and agricultural policies in relation to climate change policies Mobility: especially heavy transport and possible bilateral agreements on aviation taxation among EU member states
Advisory Council for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia, CADS (Catalonia)
2030 Agenda: Implementation of the 2030 Strategy in Catalonia + monitoring and accountability mechanisms and stakeholder inclusion Energy and Climate change: Key elements for a successful and in-time energy transition + 4th report on Climate Change in Catalonia Food policies: governance approaches towards an integrated food policy approach Fresh water: RBMP and the issue of water scarcity and redistribution and how governance can help to overcome these challenges
Expert Panel on Sustainable Development (Finland)
Application of GSDR - framework for analysing the sustainability transformation in a country context (Finland) including the six entry points and four levers (governance, economy and market, social learning, science and technology) Analysing the pathways in Finland related to the six entry points of the GSDR: Well-being and capabilities, Sustainable and Just Economy, Sustainable food system and healthy nutrition, Urban and peri-urban development and Global environmental commons Discussing Science/Policy/Media interface in sustainability issues Supporting the Committees of the Parliament and Government (Committee for Sustainable Development and Future Committee)
Environment and Nature Council of Flanders, Minaraad (Flanders)
Air quality Biodiversity: evaluation of natura2000 policy and CBD-COP in China in October 2020 Circular Economy: in relation to trade policies Energy and Climate Change: Regional governance to enhance the energy transition and consequences of European policies (NESC + Green Deal) Fresh Water: The issue of water supplies Land-use: The relationship between agriculture and the status of the environment Sustainable mobility: Green infrastructure
Council for Ecological Transition, CNTE (France)
Decarbonization by 2050 of the French policies Greening public finance with a new tool in the annual finance law Circular economy
German Council for Sustainable Development, RNE (Germany)
Advise on goals/targets where Germany is off-track: in particular biodiversity, organic farming, health and food systems, circular economy, and energy transition Advise on German multilateral engagement in the 2030 Agenda Advise on topical issues with relevance on SDS governance, such as procurement, innovation / environmental precaution, education and science-policy-interfaces and linkages of climate protection and sustainable development
German Advisory Council on the Environment, SRU (Germany)
Circular economy: as part of the Environmental Report which SRU will publish in 2020 Energy and Climate Change: achieving the climate goals with the carbon budget Environmental policies: Environmental Report 2020: with a strong link to the future of the European Environmental Policies Fresh Water: Ecologically status of fresh water bodies in Germany Sustainable Mobility: less traffic noise for better quality of life and better health + Environmentally friendly urban mobility
German Advisory Council on Global Change, WBGU (Germany)
Digitalization: Towards Our Common Digital Future Land-use: in relation to the climate land nexus, biodiversity and food-safety
Council for Sustainable Development, NFFT (Hungary)
Agriculture: The future of the Common Agricultural Policy, with special attention paid to agricultural subsidies Circular Economy: Circular Economy and material use with special attention to the construction and infra sector Roma policies: Enhanced inclusion of the Roma population
National Environmental Council (Hungary)
Agriculture: Discussion & Opinion of the Hungarian intentions - contribution with / onto the EU CAP-reform - laying stress on the Biodiversity Environmental policies: Discussion & Opinion of the next (5.) National Environmental Programme Environmental policies: Reflecting on the work-plan of the Government with regard to Env. Protection and Nature Conservation Fresh Water: Programme of the Irrigation-development in connection with the Climate Change
National Economic and Social Council, NES (Ireland)
Fair Transition to a Low Carbon, Digital Future: A Framework for Action with special attention paid to economic and employment implications of the transition Welfare and Employment: the alleviation of poverty, especially child poverty; tackling deep-seated disadvantage; and supporting greater participation in the workforce
Council for Sustainable Development, CSDD (Luxembourg)
Biodiversity: the Council intends to propose a co-working process on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework with existing and new youth organizations in Luxembourg Ecological Footprint: the Council has commissioned IBLA, an independent research institute to calculate the current ecological footprint of Luxembourg Education and social cohesion: Council intends continuing to work on education as highly important instrument and path for a social cohesion in Luxembourg Food policies: Food production and resource soil, the Council intends to do mapping of the soils and their quality in link with food production in Luxembourg Smart taxation: collaboration with Ex'tax a dutch foundation
National Council for Sustainable Development and Climate Change, NCSDDC (Montenegro)
Energy and Climate Change: Alignment of the national policies with EU Acquis requirements; Preparation of the National Law Carbon Development Strategy Marine Affairs: Integrated Coastal Zone Management policy in line with the ICZM Protocol of Barcelona Convention and EU Acquis Sustainable Development: Further SDGs implementation and establishment of the information system for monitoring and reporting
Council for the Environment and Infrastructure, RI (The Netherlands)
Circular Economy: Safe handling of hazardous substances in the physical environment Digitalization: How can digitization be designed and organized in such a way that it contributes as much as possible to the transition to a sustainable living environment? Energy and Climate Change: Hydrogen as an energy carrier for a sustainable economy (what role should the government play in this) Fair Transition: An inclusive transition as part of an equitable transition Land-use: Vital soils Urbanization: The social city: accessibility of housing, in terms of mobility and facilities in the public space
National Council on Environment and for Sustainable Development, CNADS (Portugal)
Biodiversity: with a focus on national protected areas Maritime Spatial Planning and Marine Protected Areas Mobility: Sustainable transportation Stakeholder Inclusion: access to information and public participation to enhance environmental policies and sustainable development in general



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