

EU action for sustainability

In response to the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015, the European Commission published a communication in November 2016 aimed at fully integrating the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for sustainable development into European Union policy. The European Parliament is expected to adopt an own-initiative resolution on the topic at its July plenary session.

Background

Building on the Millennium Development Goals (agreed in 2000), world leaders adopted the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' at the September 2015 United Nations General Assembly. The 2030 Agenda, largely based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) and their 169 targets, seeks to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Creating responsibilities for all countries in the world, the SDGs have a broad scope, including the fight against poverty and hunger, health and well-being, equality, education, energy, employment, industry, climate action and environmental protection.

The promotion of sustainable development is enshrined in the Treaty on European Union. After successive sustainable development strategies in the 2000s, the European Commission mainstreamed the topic in European Union (EU) policy in 2010, with the 'Europe 2020' strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

European Commission communication

In response to the 2030 Agenda, in November 2016 the Commission published a [communication](#) 'Next steps for a sustainable European future – European action for sustainability', with the aim to 'fully integrate the SDGs in the European policy framework and current Commission priorities'. The Commission notes that current EU policies address all 17 goals and that EU funds, allocated for instance through the cohesion policy or the framework-programme for research and innovation (Horizon 2020), contribute to the SDGs. It also highlights synergies between the SDGs and Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's '[ten priorities](#)'.

In its communication, the Commission also pledges, among other things, to mainstream the SDGs into EU policies, to report regularly on the EU's progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to continue working with external partners to promote sustainable development around the world, to set up a multi-stakeholder platform tasked with exchanging best practices on implementation at various levels, and to start reflecting on further developing a longer-term vision for a post-2020 perspective.

European Parliament position

On 22 June 2017, the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Food Safety and Public Health (ENVI) adopted an own-initiative report on EU action for sustainability. Among other things, it calls on the Commission to carry out a comprehensive assessment of all existing EU policies in relation to the 2030 Agenda and to present a detailed strategy, monitoring tools and review mechanisms for implementing the SDGs. It also highlights the need for active multi-stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the SDGs; calls for EU external policies and public budgets to be in line with the SDGs; calls for reflecting the SDGs in the European Semester and for the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework to focus on implementing the 2030 Agenda. The report also issues recommendations on specific aspects, including climate change and the transition to a low-carbon economy; sustainable production and consumption; protection of biodiversity, water and soils; air quality; health; mobility; agriculture; cities; culture; youth; migration and poverty.

The report is scheduled to be debated in plenary during the July session.

Own-initiative report: [2017/2009\(INI\)](#). Committee responsible: ENVI; Rapporteur: Seb Dance, S&D, UK.

