



WWF

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# Towards a Sustainable European Future

## EU IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In September 2015, the world's governments adopted *Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals present a unique opportunity to put the world on a sustainable development path. Now that this universal Agenda is adopted, attention must shift to the translation of the goals and targets into ambitious regional and national implementation strategies.

In Europe, WWF is calling for an EU overarching and high profile strategy for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It should complement the efforts of Member States and demonstrate the added value of joint action at the EU level.

### WWF main asks:

- An overarching and high-profile EU strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda
- Ensure that no EU policies undermine the delivery of sustainable development and align all forthcoming policies and revisions of existing policies with the 2030 Agenda
- Ensure national and EU budgets support the delivery of the 2030 Agenda
- Put in place participatory and transparent mechanisms to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and monitor and review progress

# A TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA

*“The EU and its Member States recognise that universality will require commitment from all. In this context, the post-2015 agenda should be reflected in the internal and external policies of the Member States and of the EU”<sup>1</sup>*

Our planet faces great economic, social and environmental challenges. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out an action plan for addressing these challenges globally and delivering a future in which people prosper in harmony with nature. The EU and its Member States demanded an ambitious, integrated and transformative outcome at the UN intergovernmental negotiations. **It is now time for our decision-makers to walk the talk and make this agenda a reality.**

**The goals and targets are universal and indivisible, meaning that all governments are responsible for the achievement of all the goals in their domestic context and abroad.** Countries are expected to set national targets according to their national context, capacity and level of development.

# TIME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

*“It’s also our turn now to step out of our comfort zone. It’s about very concrete questions. How we have to turn around our economies to make them circular – leaving behind our ‘take-make-consume and dispose’ growth pattern. Sustainable development is not just an economic or social challenge, or an environmental problem: it’s all three – and our efforts on each need to reinforce rather than undermine one another”<sup>2</sup>*

The 2030 Agenda provides a unique opportunity to reinvigorate Europe’s commitment to sustainable development. The implementation cannot be reduced to a ‘ticking boxes’ exercise of goals and targets. Countries must embrace the whole of the 2030 Agenda – including the principles of leaving no one behind, intergenerational equity and respecting planetary boundaries, and the means of implementation and the monitoring, accountability and review.

**The Agenda 2030 does not imply a whole new suite of policies and legislation. Rather, sustainable development is an approach – it is doing things in a more coherent way and a more effective way that brings about long-term human development without degrading the planet on which that development depends.**

While some Member States have begun to plan for the delivery of the SDGs, there is not yet a clear strategy on how the EU will take responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is crucial for Europe’s credibility and leadership on sustainable development matters to announce its plans for implementation ahead of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2016, where all governments will report progress.

Reaching the SDGs in Europe will require EU countries to achieve full employment, end all forms of discrimination, increase the share of renewable energy and resource efficiency across sectors, conserve and restore ecosystems, retrofit industries and infrastructures to make them sustainable and halve food waste among other things. Externally, the EU will need to address its ecological footprint and the impact of its policies globally (for example, policies in the areas of trade, security or agriculture) to support the delivery of sustainable development in other countries.

In its 2016 Work Programme, the European Commission committed to presenting *“a new approach to ensuring economic growth and social and environmental sustainability beyond the 2020 timeframe, taking into account the Europe 2020 review and the internal and external implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals”*. In the 2030 Agenda, governments agreed that *“cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies, supported by integrated national financing frameworks”* should be at the heart of implementation efforts.

<sup>1</sup> Council conclusions on a transformative post-2015 agenda, General Affairs Council, 16 December 2014, Brussels

<sup>2</sup> First Vice-President Frans Timmermans’ speech at the UN General Assembly, 27 September 2015, New York

# WWF RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overarching Strategy



The EU must put forward a strategy and an action plan on how to translate the globally-agreed goals and targets into meaningful context-specific policies. WWF is calling on the EU for an overarching and high-profile strategy with a 2030 timeline for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This strategy should set a roadmap for implementation, monitoring, and reporting in the EU. **The spirit of the 2030 Agenda is one of a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development, which requires a ‘whole-of-government’ approach to implementation, through strengthened institutional coordination** between different ministries at national level and Directorate Generals of the European Commission and European External Action Service at EU level.

The strategy should and be underpinned by an analysis of how far the EU and its Member States are from achieving the SDGs. While some targets should be handled at the national level, others refer to shared competences and should be addressed at the EU level. **The efforts of all EU Member States will be needed for effective impact. The European Commission could support Member States’ implementation efforts through issuing recommendations, sharing best practices and promoting peer review.** The strategy should be the primary vehicle for setting Europe on the path to sustainable development by 2030 and encompass the big picture of all integrated efforts.

## Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development



Policy coherence for sustainable development means ensuring that policies across sectors (trade, agriculture, energy and others) are not undermining but rather strengthen the delivery of sustainable development globally. Indeed, both the impacts of EU policies on sustainable development in Europe and in other countries must be addressed.

**All opportunities should be taken to ensure that forthcoming policies and revisions of existing policies are aligned with the 2030 Agenda**, such as the Circular Economy Package, Europe 2020 strategy and the European Consensus for Development which will be in place for the next 5 to 10 years. Where gaps in EU policies or funding frameworks are identified, the frameworks should be amended to support the implementation of the SDGs.

The EU and its Member States need to set up mechanisms and tools from the early consultation stage to the policy evaluation phase to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development. These should include impact assessments, policy arbitration mechanisms and sustainable development compatibility checks. The Better Regulation agenda is an important instrument which should be used to reinforce horizontal policy coherence for sustainable development across the European Commission.

## Financing



**National and EU budgets must be organised to support the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and to implement forthcoming national and EU sustainable development strategies.** Budgetary spending should be evaluated against sustainable development criteria. For example, the 2016-2017 mid-term review of the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020 provides an important occasion to ensure such alignment with the 2030 Agenda. The EU stressed the importance of mainstreaming sustainable development in domestic and international public finance in its Council Conclusions in May 2015.

With regards to external implementation, Official Development Assistance (ODA) is a critical source of funding for supporting developing countries’ efforts towards sustainable development. The commitment to provide the 0.7% of GNI for ODA must be fulfilled by EU countries. ODA should comply with the principles of development effectiveness while being climate-sensitive, environmentally sound and respect human rights.

## Participation & Citizens Engagement



Dialogue with external stakeholders is essential for pooling knowledge and ensuring that the impact of policies on well-being and the natural environment is taken into account. **Stakeholders' input must be included through consultations at all stages, from policy preparation to monitoring.** While existing sectoral stakeholder dialogues are crucial for specific conversations, there is a need for a structured cross-cutting dialogue on the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Policy Forum for Development is a good example of multistakeholder dialogue that includes representation from many sectors and geographic regions (but of course only covers the external actions of the EU).

The EU and Member States also need to invest in raising awareness and enhancing the commitment of citizens to sustainable development. **Communication strategies at the local, national and EU levels are essential to encourage citizens to get involved and play their part in both achieving and monitoring implementation of the 2030 Agenda.**

## Monitoring, Accountability & Review



WWF is calling on the EU and its Member States to monitor progress and **put in place participatory and transparent monitoring and review mechanisms** to guide implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Accountability mechanisms need to be in place so the EU and governments can be held accountable to their citizens. EU countries have committed to develop broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product (GDP) in the 2030 Agenda agreement. More investment is needed at the EU level in developing and implementing composite indicators of progress encompassing the three dimensions of sustainable development.

**The legislative, budgetary control and scrutiny roles of national Parliaments and the European Parliament will be important for the preparation and development of sustainable development strategies and for monitoring progress.** We encourage Parliamentarians to promote policy coherence for sustainable development through inter-committee dialogues on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Parliamentarians also have a role to play in raising awareness about the SDGs within their constituencies.

# PROPOSALS TO STRENGTHEN SUSTAINABILITY IN EU POLICIES

The EU should ensure that all policies are aligned with the SDGs and that they deliver on the three dimensions of sustainable development. **The examples of EU policies and strategies listed below (in column 1) present opportunities to implement the SDGs in EU policy-making. For most of them, more work will be required for them to be fit to deliver on the SDGs. Therefore, recommendations in column 2 focus on how to better integrate the sustainability and environmental aspects of the 2030 Agenda into these EU policies.** The recommendations are based on WWF expertise and of course we expect to work with others to integrate the social dimension, human rights and equality in equal measure. The list is by no means comprehensive and in some areas we expect that new EU policies will be needed to deliver on the SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda provides a strong rationale for reinforcing implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme. However, this does not replace the need for an overarching strategy for EU implementation.

## EU Renewable Energy Directive

### EU Energy Efficiency Directive

### Post-2020 Renewable Energy Directive

The EU must show leadership on the SDGs related to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport, housing, production and waste management by ensuring that they are fully reflected in the 2030 EU climate and energy framework. The EU must not hinder the development or implementation of policies and measures at Member State level which go beyond those put in place at EU level. President Juncker included the goal of making the EU the world number one in renewable energy in his successful election bid, winning the praise of many. The EU took a leading role in securing the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change. To embed this leadership into the EU climate and energy acquis, the EU must secure the energy markets and infrastructure needed to meet and exceed the 2030 targets currently agreed by EU Member States on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and greenhouse gas reductions (through the Emissions Trading System and the Effort Sharing Directive). As a whole, the EU's 2030 climate and energy framework must be underpinned by a transparent, robust, biodiversity proofed, coherent and enforceable governance structure.

**Goal 7, Goal 11 and Target 12.c**

## Common Fisheries Policy and its External Dimension

### Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing regulation

Marine biological resources must be exploited sustainably, above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield including allowing for the regeneration of populations of harvested stocks and ensuring the protection of the marine environment. As the largest market for seafood products in the world, the EU has a pivotal role to play in ensuring that SDG 14 and related targets in other SDGs such as food, water, sustainable consumption and production and jobs are achieved. Consequently, the EU should ensure demands for legality, traceability and sustainability in the sourcing of seafood all along the value chain at national and EU levels. The effective implementation of key EU fisheries regulations – including the Common Fisheries Policy and its External Dimension, as well the Regulation addressing Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing, will contribute to improving global ocean health and the social and economic situation of coastal and island people. The Commission must guide Member States to guarantee that these regulations are fully implemented and respected, establish and nurture a political dialogue with partners in developing countries and harmonise the approaches of DG Mare, DG Home and DG Devco.

**Goal 14 and Targets 2.3, 12.2, 12.7, 12.a**

**EU Water Framework Directive**

The adoption of the Water Framework Directive in 2000, which provided the EU Member States with a framework for integrated water resources management, has led to improvement in management and protection of European water ecosystems. However, the Water Framework Directive objective of achieving Good Status of waters by 2015 is still far from being achieved. The second cycle of the River Basin Management Plans covering the 2016-2021 period represents a great opportunity to increase the ambition of the EU in water management. Member States must assume their responsibility for preventing further deterioration of water ecosystems and achieving Good Status of EU waters by 2021 through the adoption of stringent, statutory measures to deal with pressures, effective policy integration and public participation. In particular, diffuse pollution, over-abstraction, changes to flow and the physical shape of water bodies caused by hydropower, flood control or navigation, need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Better use of Water Framework Directive economic instruments, ensuring full recovery of costs, and promotion of nature based solutions will also improve implementation and enforcement of the EU water law.

**Goal 6 and Targets 3.9,12.4, 15.1**

**Fitness check of the Birds & Habitats Directives**

At both EU and Member State level more effort is needed to effectively conserve biodiversity and meet SDG 15 and other targets. The political commitments made by the EU and its Member States with the adoption of the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 will need to be fully fulfilled if EU is to halt biodiversity loss and to achieve recovery of species, habitats and ecosystems by 2020. The Birds and Habitats Directives, the backbone of EU nature conservation, which until now have led to a creation of a network of protected areas covering 18% of Europe's land and 6% of its seas, will need to be fully and effectively implemented and enforced across all EU Member States. For preventing further deterioration of nature and ensuring that degraded ecosystems are restored, the Commission and Member States will also need to improve significantly the coherence between biodiversity and relevant sectoral policies (most notably agriculture, energy and transport) and put in place more biodiversity friendly financial and fiscal policies. Lastly, effective transparency and public participation to allow people and nature to work together will also need to be ensured.

**Goal 14 Goal 15 and Target 6.6**

**Mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity strategy to 2020**

**EU Timber Regulation Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)**

Illegal logging poses a significant threat to global forest resources and meeting SDG 15. It contributes to deforestation, causes loss of biodiversity and erodes the rule of law. The FLEGT Action Plan and the EU Timber Regulation play an important role in fighting illegal logging and preventing the unsustainable exploitation of timber species. Yet their implementation should be strengthened. EU member States need to enforce policies and laws consistently and apply sanctions against companies that break them. Producer countries need financial and technical assistance to improve governance and protect and sustainably manage their forest ecosystems. The ongoing review of the EU Timber Regulation should ensure the regulation applies to all wood products that could contain illegally-sourced timber.

**Goal 15 and Target 6.6**

**EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy**

The new Global Strategy is the opportunity to embrace the 2030 Agenda and its ambitions for people, planet, peace, prosperity and partnership. It should avoid a short term view and consider the long term global challenges that are at the root of some of the problems we face in an interdependent world such as climate change, environmental degradation, competition and conflict over scarce resources, poverty and inequality.

**Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17**

<b>Europe 2020 Strategy</b>	EU long term's growth strategy – that is, the Europe 2020 strategy or the strategy that will replace it – should be aligned with the SDGs. Country-specific recommendations should contain analysis of Member States' progress towards the SDGs and individual tailor-made recommendations. Measurement and delivery should be improved.	<b>Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17</b>
<b>Circular Economy</b>	The EU has committed to decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation in the 2030 Agenda. The Circular Economy package is an important avenue for the implementation of this commitment and to address Europe's footprint on the rest of the world. Some SDG targets are incorporated in the revised Circular Economy package draft (such as target 12.3 on food waste, target 12.4 on chemicals and waste and target 12.7 on public procurement). But relevant targets are missing, such as target 6.3 on untreated wastewater or target 2.4 on agricultural practices. The revised Circular Economy package draft needs to be strengthened with regards to sustainable sourcing, production and consumption.	<b>Goal 12 and Targets 8.4, 3.9, 4.7, 6.4, 9.4, 11.b</b>
<b>EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking</b>	Law enforcement against wildlife trafficking needs to be strengthened by EU Member States with appropriate financial and human resources dedicated to enforcement including appropriate sanctions for the trafficking of wildlife products in all member states. The upcoming EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking provides an opportunity to do this. It should also encourage more cooperation between Member States and the European Commission as well as a strong international response to wildlife crime.	<b>Target 15.7</b>
<b>Sustainable Food &amp; Agriculture</b>	The EU needs a more coherent approach towards our food system's sustainability. It should address challenges in production, consumption and waste if it is to meet the SDGs. The EU's 2015 State of the Environment Report shows that European agriculture is still a key driver for the loss of biodiversity and continues to cause soil degradation, water contamination as well as declines in pollinators. Our consumption patterns are incentivising the depletion of natural resources outside of Europe, often contributing to environmental damage and loss of local livelihoods. Harmful agricultural subsidies (notably through the Common Agricultural Policy) contributing to unsustainable agricultural practices must be phased out, and policy makers must ensure sustainable food consumption forms part of a future European policy agenda. An all-encompassing vision is needed at the EU level if the EU is to meet target 2.4 on sustainable food systems.	<b>Goal 2, Goal 12, Goal 14, and Target 3.4</b>
<b>Capital Markets Union</b>	The SDGs are mentioned only briefly in the Action Plan on building a Capital Markets Union (CMU). Sustainable Development should feature prominently in the CMU so that private capital markets will adequately embrace this agenda. Disclosure of Environment, Social and Governance investment and engagement policies by investors should be required in EU private finance regulations, and fiduciary duty should explicitly include ESG issues. Furthermore, EU regulations should mandate climate stress tests for investors and review capital requirements for low carbon projects that reduce climate risks and the related financial value at risk.	<b>Target 7.a</b>
<b>EU Trade strategy</b>	Sustainable development considerations – such as the rights of local communities and conservation of the natural environment – should be taken into account in all relevant areas of Free Trade Agreements and investment agreements. This is in line with the commitments made in the Trade Strategy adopted by the European Commission in October 2015, <i>Trade for all – towards a more sustainable trade strategy</i> . The EU Timber Regulation and the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing regulation could form the basis of a new approach towards commodities to	<b>Goal 8 and Targets 2.a, 2.b, 2.c, 17.10, 17.11,</b>

ensure that those imported in to the EU market are produced or extracted in a sustainable manner and are complying with legality and traceability criteria all along the value chain. **17.12**

### **European Structural and Investment Funds**

European Structural and Investment Funds should focus far more on low-carbon, energy- and resource-efficient projects. The transport sector should be refocused on low carbon solutions. EU cities need to shift from high-carbon infrastructure to infrastructure that improves citizens' quality of life if the EU is to meet SDG 11. Nature-based projects like green infrastructure, restoration of degraded ecosystems like floodplains or peatlands should be fostered and scaled up as innovative ways to increase resilience and cut costs. Finally, the partnership principle should be better implemented to ensure that the recommendations and expertise of civil society organisations are better integrated in processes, leading to maximised benefits and less controversy about the Funds.

**Goals 3, 9, 11 and 13**

### **Juncker Investment Plan**

A central part of the Juncker Investment Plan is the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), aiming to leverage 315 bn€ by the end of 2017 through the European Investment Bank. This guarantee fund is supposed to target projects with a higher risk profile and so-called "European added-value" projects which will significantly contribute to achieving European common policy objectives. The European Commission has three seats out of four in the Steering Board governing the EFSI. Far more emphasis should be given to energy and resource efficiency projects, as too few have been supported so far. It is also quite worrying that the EFSI is supporting several business-as-usual motorways instead of focusing on low carbon transport. Finally, a higher level of transparency and accountability must be achieved to demonstrate how the EFSI-supported projects contribute to the achievement of EU long-term objectives.

**Goals 3, 6, 9, 11 and 13**

### **European Consensus for Development**

EU development policy should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development and the principles of the 2030 Agenda, such as respect for planetary boundaries and leaving no-one behind. It should respond to the SDG plans and needs of developing countries. Strict social and environmental criteria should be in place in all development cooperation projects, not least when relying on partnerships for delivery with the private sector and other actors.

**Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17**

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#### **Why we are here**

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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