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- Council conclusions (20 June 2017)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as adopted by the Council at its 3552nd meeting held on 20 June 2017.

**A sustainable European future:
The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

- Council conclusions -

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Sustainable development as an overarching EU objective

1. UNDERLINES that sustainable development lies at the core of European values and constitutes an overarching objective of the European Union as set out in the Treaties;¹
2. RECOGNISES the responsibility of the EU and its Member States, within their respective competences, to promote a transformative agenda for sustainable development domestically, regionally and globally in a coherent way as well as addressing the domestic, regional and global impact of their actions on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;
3. RECALLS the leading role of the EU and its Member States in the process that led to the adoption of "Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"² (2030 Agenda) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015;
4. RECOGNISES that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and commits to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions, in a balanced and integrated manner while building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and addressing their unfinished business, at the same time RECOGNISES that the SDGs are universal in nature and represent an important paradigm shift;

¹ Articles 3(3) TEU and 21(2) TFEU.

² [A/RES/70/1](#)

The EU response to the 2030 Agenda

5. REITERATES the EU and its Member States' full commitment to this transformative and ambitious 2030 Agenda, and the importance that the EU and its Member States attach to driving forward its implementation as a plan of action for People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership;
6. STRESSES that the sustainability challenges are interdependent and can only be tackled effectively by addressing the interlinkages of the SDGs in a holistic and coherent approach factoring in the three dimensions of sustainable development at all levels;
7. STRESSES the commitment of the EU and its Member States to achieve the 17 SDGs by 2030, ensuring that no-one is left behind and seeking to reach the furthest behind first; UNDERLINES that greater effort is needed by all actors to promote social inclusion with special attention to those who are in disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised situations, including children, older persons, persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons and indigenous peoples; RECOGNISES that particular attention should be given to youth, women and girls as actors of change; UNDERLINES that comprehensive and sustained internal and external measures are needed to address the multidimensional nature of poverty and growing inequalities between and within countries and to provide opportunities for all to fulfil their potential, now and in future generations;
8. RECOGNISES that social and economic development depends on the sustainable management of our planet's natural resources and that biodiversity is a critical foundation of the earth's life support system on which our present and future welfare depends; STRESSES that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and REMAINS COMMITTED to address it holistically at all levels; REAFFIRMS its determination to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources, including by making fundamental changes in the way that our societies produce and consume goods and services;

9. UNDERLINES that good governance, the rule of law, democracy, and effective and accountable institutions are prerequisites for peaceful and inclusive societies; REAFFIRMS that the EU and its Member States will implement a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights, while promoting inclusion and participation, non-discrimination, equality, equity, transparency and accountability;
10. UNDERLINES that gender equality is at the core of EU values and is enshrined in its legal and political framework. The empowerment of women and girls and the full realisation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms are vital for achieving all the SDGs and cut across the whole 2030 Agenda. STRESSES that gender equality is essential for achieving peace and security, equitable economic progress and sustainable development. REITERATES that the EU and its Member States should ensure development and implementation of gender responsive and transformative policies as a key contribution to the successful achievement of the SDGs;
11. RECALLS that the 2030 Agenda is global in nature, universally applicable and based on global partnership, national ownership and shared responsibility; it is supported by a comprehensive approach to the mobilisation of all means of implementation as spelled out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda³ on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda. STRESSES that all UN Member States will need to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to realise its transformative potential, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities and respecting national policies and priorities;

³ <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/press-release/countries-reach-historic-agreement.html>.

12. CALLS for an integrated, comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda that builds synergies with the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and other international commitments; NOTES that these multilateral commitments demonstrated the necessity and the capacity of all UN Member States to work in partnership to address global issues; UNDERLINES the crucial importance of a rules-based global order, with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core for a peaceful and sustainable world;
13. RECOGNISES that the ambitious implementation of the 2030 Agenda is an opportunity and positive prospect for the European Union. UNDERLINES the need for ambitious EU policies that contain responses to the challenges, which the EU and the world face today and the opportunity the SDGs present in achieving a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable society by 2030. EMPHASISES the need for the EU to complement the implementation efforts by the Member States and to focus on policies where it has added value;
14. WELCOMES the Commission Communication on "Next steps for a sustainable European future" of 22 November 2016⁴ as a first step in mainstreaming the SDGs and applying sustainable development as an essential guiding principle for all EU policies, including through its financing instruments, procurement, partnerships with business, and the use of better regulation tools and to launch a reflection work for a post-2020 perspective;
15. WELCOMES the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy which sets out the strategic vision for the EU's external action and identifies clear links with the 2030 Agenda; RECOGNISES that a prosperous Union also hinges on an open and fair international economic, financial and trade system and sustainable and equitable access to the global public goods; STRESSES that the SDGs are a cross-cutting dimension of the Global Strategy;

⁴ 14774/16 - COM(2016) 739 final + ADD 1.

16. WELCOMES the adoption of the Joint Statement on a new European Consensus on Development⁵ – Our World, our Dignity, our Future and UNDERLINES that the said Consensus reflects the new development paradigm of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and a transformative shift in development cooperation; COMMENDS that the Consensus provides for the first time, a shared vision, and provides the framework for a common approach to development policy that will be applied by the EU institutions and the Member States in their relations with all developing countries with the aim of leaving no-one behind;

Next steps towards achieving the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at EU level

17. CONFIRMS that the EU and the Member States are strongly committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda in a full, coherent, comprehensive, integrated and effective manner and in close cooperation with partners and other stakeholders, including sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, social partners and academia; UNDERLINES that the EU and its Member States will act as frontrunners in this respect;
18. REQUESTS the Commission while respecting the principle of subsidiarity to continue steering the EU policy framework to ensure that existing and new EU policies are in line with the SDGs and their targets; and by that contributing to equality for all, human rights and dignity, healthy and resilient planet, fair, inclusive, peaceful and resilient societies and sustainable economies;

⁵ 10108/17

19. URGES the Commission to elaborate, by mid-2018, an implementation strategy outlining timelines, objectives and concrete measures to reflect the 2030 Agenda in all relevant EU internal and external policies, taking into account the global impacts of the EU's domestic actions. This strategy should be based on a clear vision of how all relevant EU policies will contribute to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda; CALLS ON the Commission to identify existing gaps by mid-2018 in all relevant policy areas in order to assess what more needs to be done until 2030 in terms of EU policy, legislation, governance structure for horizontal coherence and means of implementation;
20. INVITES the Commission to conduct impact assessments as regards the mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs as guiding principles in upcoming reviews of major and horizontal policy instruments, tools and strategies, and define a clear process for consideration of the SDGs and their integration in post-2020 policies, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders along the process. ENCOURAGES the Commission and the Member States to take into account the 2030 Agenda and to fully integrate the SDGs in the discussions on the future of Europe.
21. UNDERLINES the fundamental importance of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) to achieve the integrated 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda provides new impetus for the EU and its Member States to formulate and implement mutually reinforcing policies; RECOGNISES that Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which requires taking into account the objectives of development cooperation in policies, which are likely to effect developing countries, is fundamental for achieving the SDGs and an important contribution to the broader objective of PCSD and REAFFIRMS the EU and Member States' commitment to ensure inter-linkages, coherence and consistency between the different policy sectors by making use of existing mechanisms, such as the regulatory scrutiny board, and adjusting them where required to address the challenges of sustainability and transformation;

Partnerships and stakeholder involvement for the 2030 Agenda implementation

22. REAFFIRMS the EU's support to effective multilateralism particularly in the framework of the United Nations (UN); CONFIRMS that the EU and its Member States will continue working with all relevant multilateral stakeholders including International Financial Institutions in order to maximise coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; UNDERLINES that the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda requires that its implementation, follow up and review are supported by a UN System that works in a more integrated fashion, and is fit to deliver flexible and efficient solutions to the global challenges of our time; WELCOMES the reform steps already taken in the UN in this direction and STRESSES the EU and its Member States' support thereto; LOOKS FORWARD TO and SUPPORTS effective implementation of further and comprehensive UN reforms, including, but not confined to, those outlined in the 2016 Resolution on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review⁶, working across agencies and ensuring complementarity of effort in the UN system;
23. WELCOMES the G-20 commitment to take forward the implementation of the Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda and make its concrete actions more visible;
24. RECALLS the shared responsibility and interest of all stakeholders in implementing the 2030 Agenda, including national and sub national governments and public administrations at all levels, the private sector and investors, social partners, scientific community and civil society organisations (CSOs);

⁶ [A/RES/71/243](#)

25. WELCOMES the engagement of European businesses and academia including the scientific community, UNDERLINES their key role in providing solutions for sustainable development in promoting science-policy interface in implementation, follow-up and review, and communication and information; HIGHLIGHTS the need for the private sector to adopt sustainable approaches and commit to responsible business conduct (RBC) in particular the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights including through multi stakeholder partnerships, and for the promotion of and engagement in social dialogue; Developing sustainable global value chains is a key factor for realising the global sustainable development goals; RECALLS its Conclusions on Responsible Global Value Chains⁷, on Sustainable Garment Value Chains⁸ and on Business and Human Rights⁹ and UNDERLINES the importance of enhancing EU coordination on those matters;
26. UNDERLINES the need to raise awareness of EU citizens, especially its youth, and the private sector on the transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda and to raise levels of public engagement and responsibility and political leadership in addressing the SDGs at all levels, thus contributing to global citizenship and to raise awareness of the SDGs' positive transformative potential; CALLS UPON the Commission to carry out ambitious communication and awareness raising activities in this regard, building inter alia on the European Sustainable Development Week;
27. STRESSES the potential of a bottom-up approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and UNDERLINES the role of EU policy for the emergence of exemplary projects and for their replication and up-scaling through multi-stakeholder involvement. WELCOMES in this regard, for instance, the successful example provided by the Global Climate Action Agenda.

⁷ 8833/16
⁸ 9381/17
⁹ 10254/16

28. WELCOMES the establishment by the Commission of an inclusive multi-stakeholder platform underpinned by a balanced composition including the involvement of Member States; ENCOURAGES the Commission to build on existing processes and networks for this purpose; STRESSES that the platform should enable all stakeholders to contribute with their best practices, policy recommendations, ideas and innovative potential to the EU's SDG implementation approach and builds inter alia on the expertise of existing sustainable development networks and peer learning mechanisms, such as the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN), to foster and disseminate the exchange of views and best practices and to contribute to the vertical coherence of implementation efforts at EU and Member States level;

Means of implementation

29. UNDERLINES that an effective combination of the full range of resources (financial and non-financial, domestic and international, public and private) will be needed for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda in all relevant policy areas; CALLS ON the Commission to assess how the programmes and instruments within the next Multiannual-Financial Framework (MFF) can support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

30. In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, the EU and its Member States will MOBILISE and MAKE effective use of all means of implementation to support the implementation of the SDGs in developing countries in line with their commitments, including the financial commitments, mentioned in the new European Consensus on Development; including by mobilising domestic and international public finance and the private sector, effective use of Official Development Assistance (ODA), promoting enabling policy environments at all levels, helping partners to strengthen debt and public expenditure management, delivering change by stimulating trade and investment for development, and fostering science, technology, innovation and capacity building; STRESSES that although ODA is quantitatively small for developing countries as a whole it remains a major source of finance for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and countries in situations of fragility or conflict and continues to play an important role in complementing the efforts of all developing countries to mobilise other resources.
31. RECALLS that several EU policies and financial instruments contribute in a horizontal way to SDGs implementation, including the cohesion policy which aims at reducing disparities between the various regions in the EU;
32. Trade is one of the key factors for inclusive growth and sustainable development, and it is an essential means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The EU has been a frontrunner in the efforts to make trade work for inclusive growth and sustainable development - our market is the most open to developing countries; The EU actively promotes regional development and integration which can help countries improve competitiveness in the global market, stimulate trade, investment and mobility, and contribute to fostering peace and stability; STRESSES that the EU's Trade for All Strategy, adopted right after the UN 2030 Agenda, commits the EU to a sustainable trade and investment policy which integrates sustainable development in all its dimensions

33. WELCOMES the proposed extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI 2.0), which lies at the heart of the Investment Plan for Europe with a target to mobilise at least half a trillion euro of investments by 2020; NOTES that the Commission proposal for extending EFSI 2.0 includes the aim to make at least 40% of EFSI financing under the infrastructure and innovation window contribute to climate action;
34. WELCOMES the proposed initiative for the External Investment Plan (EIP), including the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) that will encourage the mobilization of investments, particularly from the private sector, for sustainable development thus addressing the root causes of irregular migration; NOTES that the EIP should also step up technical assistance and support reforms to scale up substantially investments in developing countries; STRESSES that supported sustainable investments must be in line with the desired transition towards a sustainable, environmentally sound and inclusive economy, and not come at the expense of our climate, the environment or human rights; RECALLS its ambition to make the EIP operational during 2017;

Follow-up, monitoring and review

35. RECOGNISES the primary responsibility of Member States in the follow-up and review at national, regional and global levels of progress towards the SDGs and REITERATES Member States' commitment to conduct regular and inclusive progress reviews at the national and subnational levels, where relevant, in a participatory manner;
36. UNDERLINES the importance of a robust, systematic, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review of the SDG implementation to track progress, assess achievements and ensure accountability; WELCOMES the Commission's intention to contribute to monitoring, reporting and reviewing progress towards SDGs in the EU context and EMPHASISES that such review should complement and not duplicate existing review mechanisms;

37. UNDERLINES the central role of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level as an important forum for stock-taking, review, dialogue, mutual learning and reinforcing the science-policy interface. UNDERLINES the need to ensure that EU and individual Member State progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is reported in the context of the HLPF at regular intervals, including through Voluntary National Reviews. This will contribute to ensuring accountability to citizens; WELCOMES that many EU Member States have so far volunteered to give national presentations to the HLPF; and INVITES the Commission to prepare for the first EU report on the internal and external implementation of the 2030 Agenda by the EU at the High Level Political Forum by 2019;
38. RECALLS that the 2030 Agenda requires quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data to measure equitable progress covering the three dimensions of sustainable development so as to ensure that no-one is left behind; NOTES the work undertaken at UN level to complete the global indicator framework; CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to use data and information from existing reporting mechanisms where possible and to ensure alignment where appropriate with the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators and to actively support the measurability and further development of the SDGs indicators; UNDERLINES the need to avoid duplication of efforts while developing the respective monitoring frameworks; CALLS ON the Commission and the Member States to support partner countries in data collection and reporting;
39. CALLS UPON the Commission to carry out detailed regular monitoring of the SDGs at EU level, including where relevant in the context of the European Semester, and to develop a reference indicator framework for this purpose drawing on existing indicators and data provided by the Member States, institutions and international organisations, and accompanied by a qualitative assessment of the progress made; and CALLS on the Commission and where appropriate Member States to use this indicator framework to assess progress and trends and to inform evidence-based decision-making;

40. COMMITS to regularly assess the impact, starting as soon as possible, of the 2030 Agenda in the respective policy areas and identify any implementation gaps and actions to be taken to ensure full, coherent and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda in all relevant EU policy sectors and to regularly take stock at Council level of the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the EU level, and to give strategic orientation, as appropriate.
