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Issue 030

Update 2030 Agenda



Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO-CFDD)

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Belgium is not achieving the SDGs

It cannot be said that our country is performing well with the SDGs. Without new measures we will not meet these targets. So says the 2019 Federal Report on Sustainable Development.

The Federal Planning Bureau's Sustainable Development Task Force published the new [Federal Report](#) at the end of June. The report considered whether Belgium is on track to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs). For each of these 17 SDGs, three indicators were selected. In summary, it appears that - on current trends - only four of the 51 indicators will achieve their targets by 2030: research and development, exposure to particulates, oil pollution and marine sites under the Natura 2000 strategy.

In the absence of fresh policy, we will not achieve the targets for 17 other indicators in 2030. These include car transport: the proportion of cars used in passenger transport will remain stable at around 80% until 2030, whereas it should fall to 67%.

For the remaining indicators there is no official quantified target for 2030, but the desired direction of travel is clear. For the period 2000-2018 11 indicators moved in the right direction. Whether that is sufficient we do not know.

The report investigates a number of alternatives for company cars and the CO₂ tax.

The FRDO-CFDD will soon prepare an opinion on the Federal Report.

Tabel 1 Vooruitgang van België naar de SDG's - balans 2019 - 51 indicatoren

SDG	Indicator	Component	Doelstelling	Evaluatie
1 – Geen armoede – Beëindig armoede overal en in al haar vormen				
1	1. Risico op armoede of sociale uitsluiting*	Sociaal	10,55%	⬇️
	2. Zeer lage werkintensiteit*	Sociaal	⬇️	⬆️
	3. Overmatige schuldenlast van de gezinnen	Sociaal	⬇️	⬇️
2 – Geen honger – Beëindig honger, bereik voedselzekerheid en verbeterde voeding en bevorder duurzame landbouw				
2	4. Obesitas bij volwassenen	Sociaal	⬇️	⬆️
	5. Vleesconsumptie	Milieu	⬇️	⬆️
	6. Oppervlakte biologische landbouw	Milieu	⬆️	⬆️
3 – Goede gezondheid en welzijn – Verzeker een goede gezondheid en bevorder welzijn voor iedereen op alle leeftijden				
3	7. Levensverwachting in goede gezondheid	Sociaal	⬆️	⬆️
	8. Voortijdige sterfgevallen door chronische aandoeningen	Sociaal	68,6 per 100 000 <65	⬇️
	9. Dagelijkse rokers	Sociaal	13,1%	⬇️
4 – Kwaliteitsonderwijs – Verzeker inclusief en billijk kwaliteitsvol onderwijs en bevorder levenslang leren voor iedereen				
4	10. Vroegtijdige schoolverlaters	Sociaal	0% (18-24)	⬆️
	11. Levenslang leren	Sociaal	⬆️	⬆️
	12. Onvoldoende leesvaardigheid	Sociaal	⬇️	⬆️
5 – Gendergelijkheid – Bereik gendergelijkheid en empowerment voor alle vrouwen en meisjes				
5	13. Inactief tussen mannen en vrouwen	Sociaal	NSC	⬆️

EU still not really on track for SDGs

Eurostat recently published a third [report](#) monitoring the EU's progress towards implementing the SDGs. A number of indicators were used for each SDG to assess whether the EU was on track to achieve the goals. The picture is mixed. In general, there has been progress in terms of health and quality of

life in cities. In recent years an increase in economic growth has been reported. But this goes hand in hand with adverse environmental impacts, meaning that the EU appears to be going backwards for a number of SDGs.

See also [SDGs & Me](#) for a comparison between Member States.

Busy days in New York

This is a special year for the [HLPF](#). The HLPF is a United Nations forum in which member countries monitor the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#), of which the SDGs are part. This year sees the end of the first cycle of meetings, meaning that there will be two meetings of the HLPF. One is the ordinary [annual meeting](#) in July (9-18 July). This year sees a special focus on SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. A large number of countries will present a Voluntary National Review explaining how they are approaching the SDGs in their country. Belgium did so in 2017. Finally, there will be space for



discussion of the HLPF's future operation.

dent from the UN Secretary General's [progress report](#). The [Global Sustainable Development Report](#) will also be ready by September. Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele (UCL), who is also active in the FRDO-CFDD, is collaborating on this report.

A second meeting will be held in September, under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. This [SDG Summit](#) is the first major summit for heads of states and governments on the SDGs since their approval in 2015. During the meeting, an official political declaration on the further implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be approved.

How are things going with the SDGs? Not too well. That is evi-

“The UN Secretary-General’s progress report on the SDGs shows that many will be left behind by 2030, but omits any mention to the responsibilities of the rich.”

(Roberto Bissio)

Flash

SDG Watch published [a report on inequality](#) in the EU. The report contains a number of national profiles, along with thematic sections on various aspects of inequality. | [Millennials](#) seem to have a number of characteristics that are favourable to the SDGs. | The European Commission has published [a report](#) on the water, energy, food and ecosystems nexus and the SDGs. | What is the state of [gender equality](#) in the different countries? | The JRC has conducted an [evaluation of the SDG Index](#) (SDSN) as a tool for

the assessment of how well countries are implementing the SDGs. | The recent [Sustainable Development Report 2019](#) containing the SDG Index has now been published. The report finds that there is still insufficient political will to achieve the SDGs. The trends for climate and biodiversity are alarming. Six major changes are necessary for the implementation of the SDGs, says the report. | What links human rights, responsible business conduct and the SDGs? A [discussion paper](#).

The Court of Auditors gets to work

The European Court of Auditors has conducted [a review](#) of the way the EU reports on sustainable development and the implementation of the SDGs. This analysis is fairly critical of the EU. Although the EU is committed to putting the SDGs into effect, there is no proper reporting on the contribution of the EU budget or EU policy to achieving the SDGs. The EU expects major businesses to report what they do to promote sustainable development, but fails to do so properly itself. The Court of Audit makes a number of recommendations. One is that a

credible SDG implementation strategy should be developed without delay.

Meanwhile, the [Belgian Court of Auditors](#) is also conducting a similar review of the way our country's government is implementing the SDGs.



National Energy and Climate Plan

Under EU agreements, all Member States are required to develop a national energy and climate plan (NECP). These plans had to be ready at the end of 2018. The Belgian plan was ready just in time. The FRDO-CFDD issued two opinions on this plan. One was the FRDO-CFDD's [own opinion](#) and the other a [joint opinion](#) on which the FRDO-CFDD collaborated with six other federal and regional advisory councils. In these opinions, the various organisations of civil society expressed their concerns about the quality of the draft NECP. They found, for example, that the plan was insufficiently integrated and seemed instead to be a hotchpotch of separate plans drawn up at different policy levels. However,

an integrated, systematic vision was required, certainly in areas such as environmental taxation, mobility and infrastructure. The fact that Belgium's institutional structure is very complex was no excuse, the councils said. It was definitely possible to do better. The final version of the NECP should remove these structural shortcomings.

Under the EU's procedure, the Commission responds to the draft plans submitted. The [Commission's reaction](#) largely confirms the criticisms contained in the FRDO-CFDD opinions. A definitive version of the NECP must be submitted by the end of 2019. At the moment, it is not clear how this plan will be developed.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 18.6.2019

on the draft integrated National Energy and Climate Plan of Belgium covering the period 2021-2030

{SWD(2019) 211 final}

Flash

30 CEOs call for more focus on [human rights](#) in businesses. | [#TimeFor8](#), more attention to SDG8, is the ITUC's message to the HLPF this summer. | UNCTAD has published a [report](#) analysing a number of SDGs. | Fourteen "[SDG Leadership Cities](#)" are pooling their experiences. | A special [SDG Index](#) looks at how 45 European cities are addressing the SDGs. | The OECD is working on a new approach to [policy coherence](#), adapted to the SDGs. | Work is in progress on a [health action plan](#) in the SDGs. | Accord-

ing to the [IEEP](#) the EU urgently needs to step up its efforts for the SDGs. | The [Global Civil Society Report on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs](#) was recently published. | An EU expert group has recently published a series of [reports on sustainable finance](#). On 11 October the FRDO will hold a [major conference](#) on financial aspects of the transition.

"The SDGs must be put at the very heart of the EU Strategic Agenda and the next EU budget, and guide all of the EU's actions in the coming legislative term."

([WWF Europe](#))

Second SDG Forum

On Tuesday 24 September the [second SDG Forum](#) will take place, this time in Square Brussels.

be found [here](#).

As for the previous such event, the programme will be very varied, with a number of international speakers, a panel discussion with representatives of civil society and numerous interactive sessions. Attendees can choose from more than 30 sessions spread over the morning and afternoon.

Information about the programme and how to register can





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*This newsletter is produced under the responsibility of the administrative office of the **Federal Council for Sustainable Development** (FRDO/CFDD). The FRDO/CFDD advises the Belgian government on the federal policy on sustainable development. The council moreover organises activities to enhance the base for sustainable development.*

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What place for the SDGs in EU policy?

On 30 January the Commission published the long-awaited [Reflection Paper](#) on the place of sustainable development in the EU's future policy. This document was eagerly anticipated, with the hope that it would finally present a clear implementation strategy for the EU. However, once again the text is only a discussion paper, proposing three potential scenarios. The most ambitious of these calls for an overarching EU strategy for the SDGs. The second scenario proposes to incorporate the SDGs in EU policy, without obligations for Member States. The third scenario is limited to improving the implementation of SDGs in other countries.

Many observers reacted with disappointment to the Reflection Paper. See the responses from [SDG Watch](#), [ETUC](#), [CONCORD](#), [IIEP](#), [IDDRI](#), [Youth Forum](#), and

[EEB](#).

The [European Parliament](#) debated this issue ([13/02](#)), and in a [resolution](#) on the SDGs (14/03) expressed a preference for the first scenario. (See also this [background study](#)) The European Council held a [first discussion](#) of the Reflection Paper on 19/02 and took a [position](#) on 09/04, continuing to insist on an ambitious SDG implementation strategy.

Whether such a strategy is likely to emerge with any speed is the question. During the [European Council of 20 June](#) the new [Strategic Agenda](#) was approved. (See responses from the [ETUC](#), [Solidar](#), [Business Europe](#), [Greenpeace](#).) That text gives little indication that the EU has any desire to make an ambitious project for sustainable development a high priority.

