



Dear Vice President Timmermans,

Thank you for attending the formal launch of SDG Watch Europe that took place in the North Rhein Westphalia Representation in Brussels on Thursday October 13th. We were honoured that you were able to attend and welcomed your intervention that evening. SDG Watch Europe agrees with you that the Sustainable Development Goals are a unique opportunity for Europe to take the lead in shaping our global future – a future where relations between nations, the nature of our economic structures, the relationship between human beings and our natural resources and relations between continents will all change.

Trying to shape momentous, fundamental change, however, takes courage, leadership and vision. If Europe wants to ensure that these changes move us in the right direction then this is the time for the EU to develop an **overarching EU Sustainable Development Strategy that includes both internal and external action, including a plan of implementation, with concrete targets and timelines.** This strategy should **coordinate the EU's overall achievement of the 2030 Agenda, its 17 SDGs, 169 targets and the use of agreed indicators,** to help the EU and its member states focus clearly on what needs to be achieved, and how, and needs to go beyond 2020.

From the outset SDG Watch Europe has been calling for **civil society to be included as active partners in the entire SDG process, from planning to implementation and monitoring.** Civil society can play a vital role, bringing relevant experience, expertise and a necessary diversity to the table. We noted with interest your suggestion of creating a dynamic platform of different stakeholders linked to SDG implementation. As an independent and self-organising not-for-profit civil society alliance, SDG Watch Europe would welcome an opportunity to discuss this proposal further with your office.

In order to support the work of civil society, the EU and EC should take full advantage of the ongoing mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and discussions on a post 2020 MFF. **There is a need to ensure that the next MFF is “sustainability-proofed” and that funding mechanisms and budget lines for civil society organisation and other stakeholder actions are aligned with new needs and ambitions linked to global and European challenges.** New windows should be created for more process work and holistic approaches to tackling these challenges.

As you highlighted in your speech at our launch, creating synergies between internal and external policies, and between (and even within) DGs is a challenge. That is why we urge the Commission to **fully incorporate and operationalise its own a Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development process.** This process could include, for example, the establishment of a structure involving several DGs for joint policy making, and the further development of the impact assessment system and tools to be used for vetting existing and new directives and strategies. Where the Council of the EU is concerned, Jumbo-meetings involving relevant councils should be used, (i.e. with social affairs, environment, agriculture, trade, development etc.) to guarantee greater policy coherence, at EU and member state levels.

Finally, in a “*post paternalistic*” society where open data and transparency are critical we welcome your suggestion to create an online platform where EU citizens can monitor progress and become aware of how the EU and its member states are succeeding or failing in the implementation of their SDG commitments. However for this online platform to be successful, there is a need to **develop strong monitoring, review and accountability mechanisms** and for there to be a **consultative process of indicator selection** by Eurostat. **We are also calling on the EU to ensure that this platform includes citizen-generated data** that can help track progress towards the achievement of the Goals.

Thank you again for your participation in our launch. We look forward to working with you and the entire Commission in achieving this ambitious agenda and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards,

Leida Rijnhout, Friends of the Earth Europe: leida.rijnhout@foeeurope.org

Barbara Caracciolo, Solidar: Barbara.caracciolo@solidar.org

Ingo Ritz, GCAP: ingo.ritz@whiteband.org

Deirdre de Burca, World Vision: Deirdre_deBurca@wvi.org

Alison Coleman, Transparency International: acoleman@transparency.org

SDG Watch Europe

Website:<http://www.sdqwatcheurope.org/>

Twitter:<https://twitter.com/sdqwatcheurope>

Email:sdqwatcheurope@gmail.com

Brussels, Belgium

SDG WATCH EUROPE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS:

11.11.11

Act Alliance

ActionAid

AICEM Italy

ALDA-European Association for Local Democracy

Alianza por la Solidaridad

Beyond 2015

Brot Fuer Die Welt

CARE

CBM

CEEweb for Biodiversity

CEV European Volunteer Center

Child Fund

Child Helpline International

Child Pact

CIDSE

CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Civil Society Europe

Climate Action Network Europe

Compassion in World Farming

CONCORD

CONCORD Sweden

Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU (COFACE)

Cooperatives Europe

Coordinadora

Coordination SUD
Culture Action Europe
Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung
DOCHAS
Ecocity
Education International
ENAR
ESN
EU-CORD
Eurochild
Eurodiacona
EuroNGOs
European Anti-Poverty Network
European Association for the Education of Adults
European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning
European Environmental Bureau
European Network of National Civil Society Associations
European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
European Public Health Alliance
European Trade Union Confederation
European Volunteer Centre
European Women's Lobby
European Youth Forum
Fair Trade Advocacy Office
Fair Trials
FIDH International Federation for Human Rights
Friends of the Earth Europe
GAIA Education
Global Call to Action Against Poverty
Global Forum on Migration and Development
Habitat
Handicap International
Hellenic Platform for Development
Help Age
Housing Europe
IBON International
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Group
International Institute for Sustainable Development
International Trade Union Confederation
IPPF European Network
Kehys/Finnish platform
Lifelong Learning Platform
Light for the World
MADE Network
Open Knowledge Foundation Germany
Plan International
Save the Children
Search for Common Ground
SKOP
Social Platform
SoleTerre
Solidar
SOS Children's Villages International
Terre des Hommes
The Danish 92 Group
Transparency International
VSO International
Women in Europe for a Common Future
World Vision
World Wild Life Fund