

## NEXT STEPS FOR A SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN FUTURE: EU PRIORITIES FOR THE UN 2030 AGENDA



### CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:

On November 22, 2016, Vice- President Frans Timmermans presented the [Communication on the next steps for a sustainable European future](#), which explains the Commission's strategic approach for achieving sustainable development in Europe and around the world, encompassing all dimensions (economic, social and environmental), as well as governance. The EU was instrumental in shaping the 2030 Agenda, and it has now fully committed to be a frontrunner in implementing the SDGs, identifying '**Sustainability as a European brand**'.

The Communication is part of a full package adopted by the Commission to respond to the 2030 Agenda (Sustainable Development Package) which is also composed by two other initiatives:

1. [Communication on a new European Consensus on Development](#)
2. [Communication on a renewed partnership with African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\) countries](#)

CSR Europe has been at the forefront to support the Commission in the adoption of this new Communication. Several of its proposals have been embedded in the EC Communication.



### WHAT IS THE INITIATIVE ABOUT:

- The Communication is a point of departure for the EU's long term vision and the focus on sectoral policies after 2020.
- Through this document the Commission identifies the most recent and relevant initiatives contributing to the achievement of the SDGs (For a full mapping see [Staff Working Document](#)).
- Among the mentioned EU actions, a strong emphasis is given to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which is defined as "*important for the sustainability, competitiveness, and innovation of EU enterprises and the EU economy and as such supports businesses to be and to become socially responsible*". The Commission is also connecting CSR to six SDGs (gender equality – n.5, Access to energy - n.7, Decent work – n.8, Sustainable production and consumption – n.12, Climate change - n.13, Global partnership - n.17) to which the contribution of CSR/sustainability solutions of companies are most relevant.



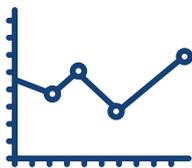
**ANY QUESTIONS,  
SUGGESTIONS,  
REMARKS?**

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Other important EU actions highlighted in the Communication are:

- EU skills Agenda (which embraces the [European Pact for Youth](#)) to contribute to the SDGs on Quality Education (n.4) and reduce inequalities (n.10);
  - Non-financial reporting of businesses disclosing according to the EU directive on non-financial information;
  - Sustainable finance;
  - Circular economy
- In **terms of governance**, First-Vice President Timmermans will play a coordinating role in taking forward the Commission's work and ensure policy coherence, especially in breaking the internal silos for active implementation of the 2030 Agenda from all parts of the Commission.
  - From 2017 the Commission will provide **regular reporting** of the EU's progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and will launch reflection work on developing a long-term vision with a post-2020 perspective. In the meantime, the [EUROSTAT publication](#) gives a first overview of where the EU and its Member States stand in view of the SDGs.
  - **The EU will explore and use new EU budgets** and future financial programmes will be explored and used, also to support Member States' actions.



## WHAT'S IN FOR COMPANIES?

The Commission is positioning the SDGs as a shared responsibility and a joint agenda of citizens, civil society, organisations and businesses. To create a dynamic space bringing together the different stakeholders of the public and private sphere, the Commission will:

- **Launch a Multi-Stakeholder Platform** with a role in the follow-up and exchange of best practices on SDG implementation across sectors, at Member State and EU level. This Platform could act as a peer-learning hub where stakeholders can engage in debates about sustainability activities and inform others about ongoing successful initiatives.
- **Award yearly a European Sustainability Prize** to recognise initiatives with a transformative contribution to the global 2030 Agenda implementation.
- **Intensify its work on Responsible Business Conduct**, focusing on concrete actions to meet current and future social, environmental and governance challenges, building upon the main principles and policy approach identified in the Commission's 2011 EU Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy.

# EU ISSUE INSIGHT

No. 2016/09 For CSR members only



## NEXT STEPS:

- In support of this new strategy and in close interaction with VP Timmermans, CSR Europe is positioning its members as the European Business Platform on the SDGs and will have practical activities on this through its [Sustainable Business Exchange](#) project;
- In Q1 2017, CSR Europe will be able to explain to members how they will be able to participate directly and/or indirectly to the European Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the SDGs as well as in the annual European sustainable Prize;
- CSR Europe is in discussion with the UNGC regarding potential synergies to consolidate the SDGs movement and business contribution to the EU and UN 2030 Agenda;
- In December 2016 VP Timmermans will meet with CSR Europe members (December 6) to to present his new strategy to the business community, and will co-host a European Conference in Brussels on: "Europe's Response to Sustainability Challenges. Delivering on the UN 2030 Agenda." (December 20)



**Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission**

*"To build a future for our children and our planet to the benefit of everyone we are making the SDGs and sustainability a guiding principle in all our work. Implementing the UN 2030 Agenda is a shared commitment and needs everyone's contribution and cooperation, including Member States and civil society at large."*



## KEY ACTORS



Frans Timmermans  
Vice President,  
European Commission



Commissioner  
Mogherini (DG EEAS)



Commissioner Mimica  
(DG DEVCO)