

ETUC answer to the Reflection Paper Towards a Sustainable Europe 2030

Adopted at the Executive Committee Meeting of 26-27 March 2019

Starting with Scenario 2, swiftly moving toward Scenario 1

On 30 January 2019, the European Commission issued a Reflection Paper Towards a Sustainable Europe 2030. It includes three scenarios which the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 of the EU will be built upon¹.

The ETUC remains convinced that the EU should be given the opportunity to develop and implement an overarching strategy for development in implementing the Agenda 2030 as envisaged in Scenario 1. However, the ETUC considers that in current situation scenario 2 is the one that fits best as without the engagement of Member States and without sufficient levels of convergence, it is not possible to move progressively to scenario 1.

National governments hold the main responsibility for progress toward the SDGs. The bulk of policy competences under the UN2030 Agenda remains in the exclusive or shared competence of Member States. Scenario 1 today carries the risk that national governments could feel relieved of their responsibilities. Once an advanced level of convergence is achieved, thanks to strong coordination of policies at EU level, firm progress can be made towards ultimate attainment of all SDGs. To strengthen the scenario 2, the EU should be clear and concrete on how the "mainstreaming of the SDG's in all relevant EU policies" will take place and how such mainstreaming will be monitored.

Putting Goal 16 at the centre of the EU's integration process will strengthen the European development model. The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples. There are many common objectives in Goal 16 and in the Treaty on European Union. Member States join the Union sharing the same attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and for the rule of law. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

The ETUC is convinced that the main condition to make a success of the SDG's in the context of protecting human and labour rights, is that they are being carried out with proper due diligence. Guidance can be found in the voluntary OECD Guidelines for MNE's and in the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights. Identifying beforehand the main, salient risks that concern human and labour rights guarantee that no harm is being done while doing good.

The ETUC priorities are those set out in the ETUC Resolution for a Sustainable Europe by 2030 which is an integral part of this document (attached herewith).

ETUC Comments on the Reflection Paper

This document provides some comments on the views the European Commission puts forward in the Reflection Paper Towards a Sustainable Europe 2030. It adds some views on the role of private and public actors in financing SDGs as discussed in the Ad Hoc

¹ The three scenarios are: 1. An overarching EU SDG strategy to guide all the actions of the EU and its Member States; 2. Continued mainstreaming of the SDGs in all relevant EU policies by the Commission, but not enforcing Member States' action; 3. Putting enhanced focus on external action while consolidating current sustainability ambition at EU level.

Group of the ETUC in January 2019. The ETUC analysis covers the Report on the Reflection Paper Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030 issued in September 2030 by the SDG Multi-Stakeholder Platform (attached to the Reflection Paper of the European Commission).

The Reflection Paper focuses on what the EU has achieved during the legislative period 2014-2019. The 3 scenarios are sketchily described making it difficult to understand what the actual implications of the three are. The overall analysis seems over-optimistic and maintains a biased approach to structural reforms. It is disappointing when it downgrades SDGs to a map to follow for future policy and do not consider it as an overarching visionary and transformative Sustainable Europe 2030 strategy, guiding all policies and programmes.

In particular, the Reflection Paper does not contain all the elements needed to put workers and Goal 8 at the centre of the EU development model. Placing the issue of “right social transition” at the end of the document doesn’t give to people and workers the primacy they should have. Full employment, quality jobs and well-protected workers are the balance around which the different dimensions of sustainable Europe can be built upon. Social protection does not appear to be the priority of the Commission in its approach to a sustainable Europe. It is regrettable that the Paper only constitutes a broad roadmap with no specifics or real strength.

The ETUC recalls that sustainability starts from more quality, right-based employment in undertakings of all sizes. Welfare, collective bargaining and employee participation are three components of a development model able to stop pollution, preserve biodiversity and open new opportunities for companies and investors in sustainable products and markets. It is therefore crucial that due diligence will be added to the EU policy while working on the SDG’s.

The Reflection Paper does not explain that the levels of poverty and inequalities in the EU have been driven by wrong policy decisions made during and after the crisis. It does not refer to the fact that austerity measures and weakening of collective bargaining are the root of poor performances in real wages are at the origin of poverty, exclusion and people’s unmet needs. It does not correctly identify shortages in labour markets and conditions for specific groups like young workers, women or migrants, whose working and living conditions remain below pre-crisis levels in most EU countries. It does not explain that weakening collective bargaining has inhibited, for an entire decade, the achievement of new rights that, for instance, technological progress may require.

The ETUC was expecting more focus on the Skills Agenda, especially on the access to vocational training and lifelong learning to prepare the workforce for the future of work. It is not clearly stated how the European Pillar of Social Rights will impact on the implementation of SDG Goal 4 by focusing on providing people with the right to high quality and inclusive education. Access to quality education and vocational training is a pillar of the “just transition” concept. The Reflection Paper does not address all aspects needed for just transitions to ensure that workers are fully protected in rapidly changing labour markets.

In some regards, the approach to the future of work is biased. The Reflection Paper highlights the opportunities but does not point out the risks. Frictions in the labour market induced by digitalisation and new technologies are described as temporary but the Reflection Paper overlooks risks of entrenching discrimination and exclusion. Technological progress and Artificial Intelligence (AI) will have positive effects on people’s work and living standards but new ethical frameworks and enforceable rules are still needed. Building new ethics may not be enough. AI may heavily impact on democracy and societal patterns and new legislative frameworks with enforceable rules and laws cannot be replaced by unenforceable ethical codes, guidelines, self-regulation or voluntary self-commitments.

Transitions to green and decarbonised production are already affecting large parts of the workforce and lack of adequate protection for workers is creating inequalities both among workers (protections and opportunities) and in the pace with which countries are modernising their productive fabric. If workers' opinions and need for secure jobs are not heard when planning the EU strategy for sustainable development, the UN Paris Agreement will not be seriously taken on board.

The Commission document mentions public services as an important stakeholder in SDG implementation. However, it does not mention how many public services and the whole public sector were badly affected by governmental fiscal constraints (frozen salaries, mass dismissals etc.). Europe needs more public spending. The EU and Member States must invest more in education, science, healthcare, social and cultural sectors. The lack of labour is recurrent in these sectors, while young workers do not find opportunities. The ETUC and the national confederations demand effective social dialogue in the public sector because SDG implementation needs strong public services.

It should be specified that it is up to Member States to make an evidence-based analysis of labour market. On this basis, they should build a strategy for active labour market and integration policies including decisions on infrastructure, housing, schools and a satisfactory solution on budgetary issues as well as sustainable migration policies with legal channels for migrants, fair and common conditions for access and employment in Europe. Swift integration of people with international protection into the labour market as demanded by the EU Partnership for Integration and following the lessons of the Labour-Int project actions are good guides to follow. The ETUC calls for a holistic approach to minimise the adverse drivers and structural factors of migration through fair and more effective cooperation with the countries of origin.

Wage and social dumping are widespread across most of Europe, showing even a dramatic increase in some regions. The principle of equal pay for equal work in the same place as a fundamental right of workers still has not been enforced in practice. The implementation of SDG8 will be seriously jeopardised if these issues are not addressed when mapping out the EU strategy.

On Financing of SDGs: Role of Private and Public Sector

First of all, SDGs pursue objectives that promote the direct interests of people. As recent studies have shown, public resources are key to leading the world toward the SDGs. In particular, there are economically important areas that guarantee quality of democracy and dignity of life, such as access to healthcare, access to justice, access to public water, access to education, universal coverage of fundamental social protection floors or safety nets for people in need, security and defence. Freedom of association and collective bargaining are also fundamental rights that are neglected in many parts of the world and should be addressed in all EU SDG activities.

Health, education and schooling, and infrastructures such as water supply need public resources to be available. In certain areas, private and blending financing present high risks that people may not be ready to accept. Excessive confidence is placed in guarantees and combining, even though these modalities (e.g. largely used in the European Fund for Sustainable Development) have not yet been fully evaluated. Moreover, the budget allocation for blending financing lacks clarity, as well as strong accountability mechanisms to ensure effectiveness and coherence with SDGs. We should be careful to ensure that private capital does not replace public resources for public services or services of general interest.

Public finances should be organised in such a way that both tax income and public expenditure are SDGs-driven. It means that politicians have the arduous task of managing the complexity of sustainable development for which the SDGs offer a unique matrix to read, construe and harness world evolutions. In this era of populism and oversimplification of the political narrative, it may appear an overwhelming challenge.

But it is the only way ahead. Only open, transparent and inclusive decision-making processes can create national budgets that finance SDGs at national level.

The EU budget can still become a way to finance SDGs including a system of governance and a map to permanently prioritise SDGs-driven expenditure, support a permanent dialogue with civil society and social partners, and use a reporting strategy that, year-by-year, records advances and announces upcoming progress and, if any, strategic updates.

The EU Multi-stakeholder Platform on SDGs provided some clear criteria that can be included in EU legislation to ensure that the MFF is fully adapted to SDG implementation in Europe: a. Embedding a “think sustainability first” principle by inter alia adjusting the Better Regulation Guidelines to have an improved assessment already in the next MFF. b. Adjusting “ex ante conditionalities” to sustainability and to other funding lines of the MFF post-2020. c. Introducing a definition of “EU added value” that refers to SDGs linking up with the Treaty. d. Reinforcing the “rule of law” in Member States by relating regular assessment and conditionalities to the suspension of EU funds. e. “Benchmarking” or earmarking funds to achieve specific sustainability objectives by setting binding expenditure targets for climate, biodiversity or social inclusion and ensuring that the money is administered by the competent authorities. f. Adding “SDG indicators” to allocation criteria of EU structural and investment funds. g. Because the EU Semester will be used to ensure policy coherence between the MFF and country specific recommendations, the EU Semester should be bound to respect for SDGs and adopting grids of analysis and policy recommendations that are SDG-based.

SDGs need a full engagement of the private sector. Business serves an essential role as a source of finance, as a driver of innovation and technological development and as a key engine of economic growth and employment. The private sector should endorse the SDGs together with OECD Guidelines and UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as a matrix that applies directly to the vision and strategy for doing business. In such a matrix, respect for human rights and rights at work should be prominent, and in synergy with environmental constraints. Businesses must think sustainable. They should (re)design and produce goods and services that are fully consistent with the sustainability patterns.

Investors have huge responsibilities as they influence the way companies operate or are operated. Today, more than ever, those who manage people’s savings should be genuinely and transparently driven by sustainability factors. Embodying SDGs in strategies is a way to ensure solidity of saving plans and create conditions for sustainable investments. Money managed by pension funds is workers’ money. Pensions are not financial assets like all others, pensions are a guarantee of dignity for older people. SDGs must be fully mainstreamed in their investment strategies to ensure suitable returns and long-term vision. In this regard, affordable tools and guidance should be provided to all pension funds, regardless of their size, to offer them the same opportunities to align investment strategies to SDGs.

Employees participate in the financial market through other forms of saving, especially aimed at financing occupational welfare schemes (like health insurance, long-term care schemes, unemployment benefits) and through participating in company equities, participating in occupational or company-based saving schemes and directing thereto money earned through performance-related compensation, awards or bonuses, which would normally top up wages. Employees’ voices do not always have the same weight in proportion to the stake they have in the economy. This leads to a democratic gap in the economy. Investors and companies should be ready for dialogue and adopt open governance patterns. In particular, corporations should reinforce their employee involvement structures. Social dialogue, collective bargaining and participation are instruments to bind companies and investors to SDG-based strategies.

International instruments help business with standards they should apply such as the Global Compact, the OECD Guidelines, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the ILO Standards, and climate agreements. Standards also include reporting, such as the Global Report Initiative (GRI). In particular, GRI standards and indexes are largely used by multinational companies. These instruments within the SDG architecture introduce rules to be respected, checks and balance procedures, countermeasures to discourage free riders, actions to persuade stakeholders to comply, remedies against infringers. Practices like the TUDCN matrix aimed at forcing donors, investors and multinational companies to adopt standards when they want to gain credentials as development operators, should be multiplied. Soft law, standards, and guidelines should not replace actual enforceable legislation but reinforce the rule of law.

Companies should be bound to design and evaluate the results of development interventions, related to business conduct, records of social dialogue, transparency and disclosure, risk distribution and mitigation and SDGs engagement. In particular, the private sector must adhere to the SDGs and to key responsible business conduct instruments and must have a policy on disclosure of data in place.

The ETUC proposals for a sustainable Europe by 2030 are in its Resolution adopted in June 2018. The text below is an integral part of the ETUC answer to the European Commission Reflection Paper Toward a Sustainable Europe 2030.

ANNEX

ETUC Resolution: Trade Unions for A Sustainable Europe by 2030

Adopted by the Executive Committee of the ETUC in 25-26 June 2018

Context and key demands

Europe has to do better and faster than any other region of the world in implementing SDGs. It is a shared responsibility of the EU and the Member States to enact policies for every single goal, showing that it is possible to combine economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. As we live in interconnected societies and integrated economies, Europe should be a global leader of nations which strive together to build sustainable economic-socio-environmental development. Europe has to do better than others to serve as a good example to the world.

On 25 September 2015, the countries of the UN family adopted a set of 17 goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all, as part of a [new sustainable development agenda](#). The EU and its Member States are called upon to implement these goals and achieve the targets by 2030.

The European Commission has set up a Multi-Stakeholder Platform to contribute to the preparation of the reflection paper for long-term implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. The ETUC is a member of the Platform and its work in the Platform is supported by an Ad Hoc Group on the implementation of SDGs and the UN2030 Agenda in Europe.

The 2015 ITUC General Council resolution, 'Trade Union Priorities for Development' confirms the holistic approach to SDGs and concentrates TU efforts on SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17. As chair of the European region of the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network the ETUC is committed to strengthening the global leadership of the trade union movement in the implementation of the SDGs.

The ETUC supports the Global Deal (www.theglobaldeal.com) as a global platform for promoting social dialogue for sustainable development worldwide. It also provides a concrete input to several of the other goals, not least Goal 8 on decent work and inclusive growth and Goal 10 on inequalities.

The UN 2030 Agenda is a global programme for promoting democracy, rule of law, environmental sustainability, effective use of public resources for the prime benefit of people and for eradicating discrimination. All economic and social entities, in particular enterprises, trade unions, local authorities and the whole of civil society should play a role in the implementation of sustainable development goals. The Quadripartite Declaration on a New Start for Social Dialogue in Europe recognises social partners as key players in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies in the EU. Decent work is at the core of the trade union agenda.

The implementation of SDGs needs a cultural change that involves citizens and radically reverses the neo-liberal patterns that have dominated economic development for too long. Such change must be reflected within institutions that feel bound by social, economic and environmental sustainability obligations. The governance needed to manage such a complex model of development, like the one proposed in the UN2030 Agenda, can be best (or only) achieved by democratic institutions.

A sustainable Europe must improve its means of reporting, monitoring and being accountable. It is necessary to win people's support for the internal and external dimensions of SDGs' implementation. Raising awareness and investing in education and research on SDGs is a responsibility of public authorities and of mainstream organisations, such as trade unions.

The ETUC organises its strategy for implementation of SDGs around three large programmatic pillars: i. Decent work and social progress agenda; ii. Climate change, circular economy and environmental sustainability; iii. Democracy, justice and participative societies (including social dialogue).

Decent work agenda for Europe

Trade unions in Europe can make a difference in eradicating poverty (Goal 1), tackling inequalities (Goal 10), ensuring access to education and skills (Goal 4), ending discrimination (Goal 5), promoting quality jobs (Goal 8) within well performing industries supported by solid infrastructure (Goal 9). SDGs are an opportunity to reverse political decisions that are condemning the EU and MS to socio-economic decline. As a thriving internal economy is vital to competing on the global market, improved working conditions will benefit all, including the European business community competing in the global arena.

SDGs imply a change of narrative in the development model of Europe. The EU and all European countries have to seek economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high value-added and labour-intensive sectors. The improved economic outlook should open a window of opportunity for the EU and European countries to reignite sustained economic and social convergence, starting with investment and wages.

SDGs mean fair wages. A lowest wage of 60% of the median or mean wages would help end in-work poverty. More efficient wage-setting, based on free and balanced collective bargaining, will reduce inequalities. The Alliance for Upward Wage Convergence proposed by the ETUC would reinforce implementation of SDGs in Europe.

Europe has the means to defeat poverty and reduce wealth, income and educational inequalities. Implementing SDGs has to make the EU the best performer for quality and sustainable jobs and help to build solid labour market institutions for more jobs of better quality. The EPSR goes in this direction.

Gender equality is an enabler and accelerator for achieving the targets of all SDG's. The gender sensitive implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development offers an opportunity to achieve not only SDG5 but to contribute to progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainable public services level out inequality and are by far the most valuable assets of our society and our economy. The UN2030 Agenda should lead to universal and quality public services designed to support people throughout their entire lives. In particular, equitable and inclusive quality education for all is a key driver of sustainable development. It nurtures human talent, critical knowledge and creativity, thereby contributing to the personal and professional development of the individual person as well as to the social, economic and environmental needs of society at large. SDGs will contribute to development of comprehensive social protection systems, deliver adequate outcomes and trigger solidarity among people and between generations. The tool for financing public services should be more progressive tax systems, which at the same time create opportunities for reducing social inequalities.

Decent work in the UN2030 Agenda also implies safe workplaces where health is protected. SDGs should support a European strategy based on further harmonisation of laws with the aim of achieving the highest protection standards, making available to workers the best technologies to prevent any sort of accident or professional disease. European countries must enforce the EU acquis to guarantee access to trade union rights and participation of workers' representatives.

SDGs mean addressing the future of work. By implementing SDGs, we will increase our control over the impact of technological progress on our lives – in particular, the potential effects of artificial intelligence on jobs and dignity of work. Transparency and predictability of working conditions should imply a common strategy to fight the fragmentation of the labour market. Collective bargaining already offers examples of negotiated agreements where no jobs will be lost and no pay cut as a result of digital technology. We need a Just Transition Fund with sufficient resources to guarantee real solidarity in society and among Member States.

SDGs are an opportunity to remove gender gaps in society. It is time to adopt a common legal and policy framework for work-life balance, enforce equal pay regardless of gender, eliminate discrimination in all spheres of social and economic life, and increase women's participation in top positions.

The European path to decent work is shaped by the European Pillar of Social Rights which remains our compass and our political commitment. A decent work agenda in Europe needs a new impetus for the enforcement of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Social Charter signed in Turin on 18 October 1961 and the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers of 1989, as well as all ILO Conventions.

Environment and climate change

The trade union movement has refused to place the social agenda against environmental protection. There are no jobs on a dead planet and both objectives are key prerequisites to building a just society for all. Through the holistic paradigm they frame, SDGs provide

an opportunity for trade unions to assess what the EU and its Member States have been doing and to formulate demands for more socially fair and environment-friendly EU policies. Trade unions can make a real difference for clean and accessible energy (SDG7), responsible consumption and production (SDG12), and the fight against climate change (SDG 13). Moving to a really sustainable economy will entail major changes for the labour market.

Implementation of SDGs is complex, and synergies need to be found between different SDGs, as well as trade-offs. New jobs in green technology could help to replace at least some of the jobs displaced in those industries which gradually disappear as we move towards low carbon economy. Trade unions aim at managing such complexity to ensure a just transition for workers, creating and maintaining quality jobs through investment and innovation. In particular workers' participation and collective bargaining are key instruments to mitigate trade-offs and, instead, supporting labour market transition with re-skilling programmes, providing a safety net with strong social protection systems for those workers impacted, and respecting labour rights should create the bedrock of a just transition towards a sustainable society. The transition towards a sustainable economy must be a desirable prospect for all and no one should be left behind. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change underlines the imperatives of a Just Transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs. A Just Transition is a prerequisite for achieving the SDGs, and in particular the Goal on decent work (SDG 8)."

Reaching SDGs implies better integrated action to protect the environment and social progress. Research and education are key in this regard. Environmental policies must contribute to reducing inequalities and public authorities must monitor their distributive effects and ensure that their implementation will neither impoverish low-income households nor lead to windfall profits for the richest or the biggest multinational companies. In the same way, the EU and its Member States must ensure that all citizens have access to clean water and energy. Here again, public authorities have a role to play to ensure democratic control of these public service activities and to change profit-driven policies into policies that are beneficial to all. A series of international scientific reports show without ambiguity that the current economic model is bringing us towards planetary disaster². Land degradation, the spread of plastic waste, water contamination, declining biodiversity and climate change are among the most obvious "planetary boundaries"³ we are approaching. Crossing these boundaries could generate abrupt or irreversible environmental changes while respecting the boundaries reduces the risks to human society. Fixing those problems requires a complete shift of development pattern. The ecological crisis we are living through needs more than a few end-of-pipe curative patches. We need another compass based on the 'sustainability first' principle.

The SDGs offer a comprehensive framework to guide that shift from a linear to a more circular and resource-efficient economy, from an economy based on fossil fuels to a "net-zero emission economy"⁴ and from an economy using many substances that damage ecosystems and health to an economy free of harmful products.

² See the 2014 IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, <http://ar5-syr.ipcc.ch/>; or the UNCBD, "Global Biodiversity Outlook 4", <https://www.cbd.int/gbo4/>; or the UNEP GEO 5, <http://web.unep.org/geo/assessments/specialized/geo-5-summary-policy-makers>

³ <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/planetary-boundaries/about-the-research/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>

⁴ We hereby refer to the article 4 of the Paris Agreement on climate change by which countries committed "to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century".

Even though the EU has been amongst the pioneers in adopting legislation and implementing policies to protect the environment and public health, the current situation is anything but satisfactory. While not exhaustive, selected figures can underpin this assessment. The current greenhouse gas emissions reduction rate is not compatible with the temperature objectives that the EU committed to in the Paris Agreement.

Reaching the SDGs first requires a coherent, strong and transformative regulatory framework made up of legally binding instruments designed on the best available science and based on the precautionary principle. SDGs also require that the EU and its Member States apply the rule of law and the effective enforcement of existing international, European and national legislation. In this regard, inspections and strong public services have a crucial role to play and must receive the necessary human and financial resources to perform the tasks they have been entrusted with. The SDGs cannot be reached through austerity measures, deregulation and attempts to weaken the rules protecting public health and the environment or efforts to undermine the institutions that are responsible for their enforcement. Public procurement must also be used to protect public health and the environment through strong and specific sustainability requirements.

SDGs must also be mainstreamed within public budgets and first and foremost within the EU budget. Sustainability objectives must be translated into specific quantified objectives for the funds and programmes of the EU Budget. In the same way, eligibility criteria should be used to ensure sustainability and climate-proofing of EU expenditure and lending. EU money must contribute to reaching the SDGs it committed to and should in no circumstances undermine their achievement.

Through new initiatives, such as EU-wide environment taxation, the EU can at the same time generate more resources for environmental action and drive behaviours towards cleaner options. Since its 2015 Paris Congress, the ETUC has been demanding that environmentally harmful subsidies should be phased out. Outside its own budget, the EU can better monitor what Member States are doing to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies and more broadly to fully integrate sustainability within their respective taxation systems. The EU should also force the financial system to contribute to reaching the SDGs through an action plan that will inter alia counter the currently prevailing profit-driven short-termism, increase transparency on sustainability-related risks of investment portfolios, clarify the investors' duties, and develop sound sustainability standards for investments.

A complete set of robust indicators must allow progress to be monitored in a transparent way. For issues where quantitative targets exist, a back-casting approach from mid- and long-term objectives must be used to assess the EU and Member States' performance.

Democratic and participative societies, including social dialogue

The trade union movement is keen to envisage a world in which democracy, good governance and the rule of law are essential for sustainable development. Trade unions can make a difference in building inclusive societies with accountable and open institutions (SDG 16) and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development (Goal17).

The implementation of SDGs needs: open governance to better detect areas of intervention and interconnections among SDGs; institutions designed on the development model of the UN2030 Agenda; and a monitoring system that guides policy-making, checks progress and makes institutions and stakeholders accountable.

SDGs reinforce democracy if people stand together to implement them; and standing together, they can force their representatives within the institutions and political parties to commit themselves. The EU elections in 2019 are a paramount opportunity to mainstream SDGs throughout the programmes of European parties. Trade unions should cooperate with civil society organisations to create synergies and remove trade-offs.

SDGs impose an interdisciplinary approach which should be reflected in the analysis, monitoring and reporting on SDGs. Institutions that hold responsibilities for the implementation of SDGs should be adapted to such an interdisciplinary approach. In this regard, the EU and all European countries should encourage research on the overall effects of the UN2030 Agenda and advance practical solutions that reflect the complexity and interconnections of SDGs.

Strategic partnerships: trade unions should identify strategic partnerships, including education trade unions, with a view to raising awareness, improving monitoring, shaping policies and educating future generations; employers and national, regional and local authorities share responsibility for sustainable development in Europe and worldwide with trade unions. Strategic partnerships should be supported by social dialogue. Trade unions are key stakeholders should promote strategic partnerships

Social dialogue is key for the implementation of all SDGs and Europe should be a model of best practice for the world, embodying the Quadripartite Declaration on a New Start for Social Dialogue in Europe in the UN2030 Agenda. SDGs can reinforce workers' rights, including information and consultation rights, strengthen collective bargaining and support the creation of stronger legal frameworks for balanced, autonomous and free negotiations. Collective bargaining can play a role in its transnational dimension. In particular Transnational Company Agreements, if supported by rules that tie these agreements to the ETUFs and GUFs, can become an important way to bind multinational companies to the implementation of SDGs.

SDGs also need economic democracy. New forms of dialogue with companies and at the workplace have to underpin employee participation, open and transparent corporate governance – thanks to a deeper involvement of employees and their trade unions – due diligence constraints supported by corporate social responsibility practices (such as encouraging pension funds to disinvest in non-sustainable businesses), and development of transnational industrial relations.

Economic democracy also means promoting production patterns that prioritise the common good instead of inflating private profits. We consider that SDGs will give a fresh impetus to investments in public services (e.g. the right to affordable and public drinking water for all, and to adequate sanitary conditions). We also believe that economic democracy should imply specific measures to promote public services, social economy, ethical investors and enterprises that maximise social profits and are more resilient to economic shocks. As a result, financial systems that support the whole SDG agenda should be supported, as well as investigating and promoting best practices.

The EU should develop a single coordination centre for the SDGs which evaluates sector-specific policies in the light of the sustainable development boundaries, sets up ex-ante and ex-post assessment mechanisms for legislative processes and relative budgetary implications (e.g. adapting better regulation criteria to the SDGs), pointing out the distribution of competences of Member States, local governments and all other vertical and horizontal levels of governance. Member states should adopt the same indicators and reporting instruments to achieve policy coherence and greater accountability.

SDGs should be mainstreamed in all EU policies, *in primis* in the deepening of the single market, within the economic governance of the EU, and in the new Multiannual Financial Framework. The EU and Member States should be able to mobilise own resources to shelter people when correcting macroeconomic imbalances resulting from the adverse effects of economic crisis.

National plans submitted in line with the timetable of the European Semester have to pave the way for SDG implementation.

SDGs to harness globalisation

To harness globalisation, the EU and all European countries have to reinforce a global governance creating a new equilibrium between global market institutions like the WTO and entities promoting social justice like the ILO. ILO Conventions and Recommendations will be at the core of trade union action to foster global sustainable development.

The UN2030 Agenda should maximise the beneficial effects of globalisation on people, but some issues are most urgent. Looking at the growing role of global value chains, collective bargaining should be a cornerstone of the new European consensus on development, and alignment to the UN 2030 Agenda should be part not only of the internal dimension but of the external EU dimension as well.

To strengthen social justice, more has to be done to fight tax avoidance. In this respect, we request public country-by-country reports for each country where a MNE has an activity, not only for EU Member States. Finally, the ETUC urges a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base to create effective tools to counter tax evasion and control of tax havens, as well as respect for human rights by international corporations in global supply chains.

The EU should design a productive model where sustainability is mainstreamed in all its components. But it is important that all economies, developed, developing and underdeveloped, look forward and do not remain stuck in the past.

Networking in macro-regions and possibly worldwide, in regulated and institutionalised contexts, will create enough confidence to scale up progress in human evolution.

Our demands and our commitments

The ETUC advocates a holistic approach to SDGs, being convinced that each SDG is a gear in the complex machine moving towards the sustainable development of our planet. The ETUC will contribute by focusing its efforts on goals in which trade unions in Europe can make a difference, namely Goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17.

The ETUC calls on the EU and all European countries to draw up national plans for the implementation of SDGs. Targets and indicators for SDGs will reinforce the social dimension of economic governance and prepare the post-EU2020 Agenda. We will mobilise all sectors to include SDGs in the social dialogue agenda at interprofessional level and in full cooperation with ETUFs, sector and national levels.

The ETUC calls for an effective involvement of trade unions in the elaboration of national plans implementing SDGs, thus enhancing social dialogue. The ETUC asks the Member States to undertake the necessary steps to grant material and non-material means to social partners for their timely and meaningful involvement in the design, implementation and monitoring of SDGs. National governments should include social partners in their national delegations at the UN *fora*, providing them with the financial means to take active part in reporting and monitoring activities at global level.

The ETUC will encourage and be committed to thematic and peer reviews to look at and learn from those that traditionally perform better. For that purpose, the ETUC will work together with the TUDCN to harmonise monitoring and reporting methods, agendas and timeframes, in the EU and worldwide. The monitoring and reporting process of the TUDCN will be integrated into and synergised with the ETUC Semester toolkit.

The ETUC encourages its member organisations to participate in the TUDCN monitoring and reporting strategy. This will be used to boost engagement and hold governments to account. The first country reports have already been issued by the trade unions in Italy, Belgium, and Sweden (www.ituc-csi.org/2030agenda-523).

Trade union leaders, officials and members have to increase awareness of SDGs and the UN2030 Agenda and instruments to implement them. They have to be informed about the internal and external dimensions of SDGs and the role that cooperation for development plays to harness the impact of interconnected economies and societies. The European trade union movement is committed to raising awareness among its members at all levels. The ETUC will involve all its permanent committees in promoting a coordinated approach to SDGs and will work with the ETUI to carry out research, collect data and to promote education and training programmes on SDGs.

We will continue to be active in the European platform on SDGs. The Ad Hoc Group on the implementation of SDGs and the UN2020 Agenda will back the ETUC Secretariat in following the work of the Platform until the latter ends its works.