



To the attention of:  
First Vice-President Frans Timmermans  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Brussels  
Belgium

16 July 2018

**High-Level Political Forum:  
call on European Commission to report on SDG performance in 2019**

Dear Vice-President Timmermans,

Today starts the ministerial segment of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York during which governments, civil society and other stakeholders are gathering to review progress and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Governments report every four years at the HLPF through the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in order to put their performance towards achieving sustainability for discussion. The EU has a broad array of policies that have positive influence on sustainable development in Europe and globally, while it also has policies that are in contradiction with sustainable development goals: policy coherence for sustainable development is still a weak point for the European Union. It is crucial to have an assessment report on where we stand with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to present that report at the international level for discussion. Unfortunately, the EU has so far not presented any report at the HLPF. In 2019, the EU has the last opportunity to provide a report at international level and not to miss the first reporting cycle.

SDG Watch Europe, a cross-sectoral coalition of more than 100 civil society organisations together with the campaign *Make Europe Sustainable For All*, which 25 partner organisations run across the EU reaching out to policy makers and citizens alike, advocate for the ambitious implementation of the SDGs across the EU and for the EU to become a true leader of sustainable development.

We call on you to make sure that:

- the Commission's Reflection Paper "Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030" will clarify how the EU will monitor and report about its progress and the gaps in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs both within the EU and through its external dimension and how the EC will ensure a strong, comprehensive, transparent and participatory monitoring and assessment framework and review and accountability mechanism.
- the EU develops a means to differentiate between the parts of the 2030 Agenda for which Member States are primarily responsible and those for which an EU lead is necessary and for which the EU is to be held to account;
- the 2019 Commission Work Programme will commit to delivering a European Voluntary Review at the 2019 HLPF;

- the EU at the 2019 HLPF will report both on its internal and external policies and how these contribute or hinder the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the EU and globally; policy coherence for sustainable development is key in this report, where "both social and environmental externalities of the domestic policies should be included;
- the EU's report will come in the form of an honest stock-taking concerning all SDGs and targets rather than only showcasing best practices or focusing on preferred policy areas; and that
- the drafting of the Voluntary Review will be based on broad consultation and a participatory process (through the Multi-Stakeholder Platform and beyond it) and that civil society representatives will be part of the EU's delegation to the 2019 HLPF.

As European civil society we want to make the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda a reality, and our common ambition is to ensure that the EU achieves all of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and strongly supports low and middle income countries around the world in equally achieving it. We also believe that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs should be the guiding framework for our vision of the Future of Europe.

We would like to remind you of our earlier call on the EU to decide and develop an overarching Sustainable Development Strategy as successor of the EU2020 strategy. This new strategy should include a timeline for 2030 and a concrete implementation plan which coordinates the achievement of the 17 goals, 169 targets and their indicators. The EU must ensure that it does not cherry-pick the easiest or preferred goals and must go beyond policy-as-usual by aiming for the highest level of ambition in all the targets, guaranteeing that no-one is left behind and that planetary boundaries are fully respected. The strategy needs to ensure Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.

The overarching strategy should also ensure that the design and implementation of all funding programmes post-2020 fully respect the principle of sustainability. The next MFF should become a key tool for the EU to achieve the SDGs and implement the 2030 Agenda and all EU spending should undergo a sustainability check. It should also contribute to building a sustainable finance system which supports the re-orientation of private capital towards sustainable investments.

The Strategy and its implementation policies should be subject to broad consultation with all stakeholders through an institutionalised and inclusive process.

Yours sincerely,  
on behalf of SDG Watch Europe & Make Europe Sustainable for All



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**SDG Watch Europe** is an EU-wide, cross-sectoral CSO alliance of NGOs from development, environment, social, human rights and other sectors. Its goal is to hold governments to account for the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development ([SDGs](#)).

**Make Europe Sustainable For All** is a 3-year cross-sectoral project run by 25 partners from 14 EU countries. Its aim is to promote ambitious implementation of the world's crisis plan – the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – by and in the EU. The project aims to strengthen civil society networks working on SDG implementation across the EU and to highlight to the public and political leaders at the local, national, and European level that SDG implementation is crucial for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for all people and planet.

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