

Discussion Paper

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Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the European Union:

Constructing an EU approach to Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

by Cecilia Gregersen, James Mackie and Carmen Torres

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Key messages

The EU has followed an integrated approach towards the negotiations and planning the implementation of the key UN processes on sustainable development, financing for development and climate change.

Halfway through 2016, the EU is still grappling with how to translate the 2030 Agenda into actions, commitments, responsibilities and accountability that respect the priorities and circumstances in Europe.

The EU Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) experience offers many insights into the international impacts of EU policy-making but remains largely unrelated to broader work on ensuring internal coherence. This is part of the complex transition to working with Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.

Policy silos will need to be rethought within a universal paradigm of development. The single most important lesson from the EU PCD experience is that improving policy coherence is a long-term process that requires strong political leadership.

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About this paper

As part of a joint research initiative led by the World Resources Institute, this paper aims to contribute to the reflection on the early experiences of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a focus on 'Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development' (PCSD). The paper is one of a collection of case studies covering:

1. A number of OECD country experiences including the Netherlands (by World Resources Institute), Sweden (by Stockholm Environment Institute), South Korea (By Korea Economic Institute) and Germany (by the German Development Institute)
2. Three cross-cutting studies looking into extending the boundaries of policy coherence for sustainable development (by the European Environment Agency), the transition from Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) to PCSD and lessons learnt (by the OECD) and this present reflection on the European Union's approach to policy coherence.

A draft version of this paper was presented at the OECD's PCD network meeting in May 2016.

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The views expressed and any errors in this paper are those of the authors and should not be attributed to any other person or institution.

Acronyms

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACP | Africa, Caribbean and Pacific |
| CAP | Common Agricultural Policy |
| CDG | Civil Dialogue Group |
| CFP | Common Fisheries Policy |
| COREPER | Committee of Permanent Representations in the European Union |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DG | Directorate General |
| DG CLIMA | Directorate General for Climate Action |
| DG DEVCO | Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development |
| DG Environment | Directorate General for Environment |
| EC | European Commission |
| ECDPM | European Centre for Development Policy Management |
| EEAS | European External Action Service |
| EESC | European Economic and Social Committee |
| EP | European Parliament |
| EPA | Economic Partnership Agreements |
| ERD | European Report on Development |
| EU | European Union |
| EUGS | European Union Global Strategy |
| EU SDS | European Union Sustainable Development Strategy |
| FAC | Foreign Affairs Council |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNI | Gross National Income |
| HLPF | High-Level Political Forum |
| HR/VP | High Representative/Vice President |
| IAEG-SDGs | Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MFF | Multi-Annual Financial Framework |
| MS | Member States |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PCSD | Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development |
| PCD | Policy Coherence for Development |
| SD | Sustainable Development |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SG | Secretary General |
| STI | Science, Technology and Innovation |
| TEU | Treaty of the European Union |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |

Executive Summary

This Discussion Paper provides an independent analysis of the steps taken towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the European Union (EU) within the first year of reaching agreement on the UN 2030 Agenda. The SDGs imply a significant challenge in terms of both domestic European action and responsibilities at a global level. Taking a Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) lens, one of the officially recognised means of implementation in the SDGs, this paper provides an analysis of:

1. **The steps taken by the EU, and specifically the European Commission (EC), in the SDG negotiations, as well as an outline of the internal and external policy areas where EU commitments to implementation will be key.** While recognising that the process of SDG implementation is dynamic and evolving each day, three policy processes are identified as crucial. These include; the drafting of the new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy led by the High-Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini, the review of the existing Europe 2020 Strategy, Europe's 10-year jobs and growth strategy, led by the First Vice President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, and the review of the European Consensus on Development led by the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica.
2. **The potential lessons and experience from the EU's relatively long history of pursuing policy coherence, and in particular Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) can be useful for PCSD.** There is a considerable track record, including of legal and institutional arrangements, to promote coherence, from which it will be important to draw lessons. While the Commission still has to communicate its official stance on PCSD in Europe's approach to SDG implementation, there are indications that PCD work will continue, particularly regarding coherence of policies in terms of their external impacts.

This paper concludes that the EU has followed an integrated approach towards the negotiations and planning the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as other key UN processes on financing for development and climate change. It is hoped that this will continue in the implementation phase. Strong EU leadership will be necessary to ensure credibility, both in the EU's internal as well as external policy frameworks. While we await the EU institutions' official plan of action for implementation at the regional level in the EU, European policy makers already recognise that coherent and integrated policy is an essential feature of the 2030 Agenda.

The EU's experience on promoting PCD offers many insights into the international impacts of EU policy-making, but remains largely unrelated to broader work on ensuring internal coherence, for example in the environmental and climate change domains. Yet the mechanisms to promote PCD have a wider relevance. Collecting and reflecting on this experience will be part of the complex transition to working with PCSD. The links between policy silos will need to be rethought within the new universal paradigm of development. Perhaps the single most important lesson from the EU PCD experience is that improving policy coherence is a long-term process that requires on-going strong political leadership. The same can be expected to be true for PCSD.

1. Introduction

The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda represents an integrated approach to sustainable development where the three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – must be balanced and the interconnections between each goal and target must be reinforced. Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) has been formally recognised and agreed as a Means of Implementation in Target 17.14 of the 2030 Agenda and underlines the integrated policy making and thinking that the Agenda advocates. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines PCSD as a new “*approach and policy tool to integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making. It aims to increase governments’ capacities to: i) foster synergies across economic, social and environmental policy areas; ii) identify trade-offs and reconcile domestic policy objectives with internationally agreed objectives; and iii) address the spillovers of domestic policies*”.¹

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) imply a significant challenge in terms of domestic European action and in taking responsibility in a planetary context. Strong EU leadership will be necessary to ensure credibility, both in the EU’s internal as well as external policy frameworks. However, implementation is starting during a time when Europe is in crisis mode and the current political context may likely affect SDG implementation and its prioritization. Will there be a renewed political commitment, and a re-affirmation of a common vision towards sustainable development leading to an overarching EU strategy and plan for SDG implementation based on the European context? How realistic is the hope to see the EU “*as a region firmly, actively and proactively engaged in setting the agenda*”² and what will its stance be on PCSD?

This paper will first outline the EU’s role and priorities in the 2030 Agenda negotiations and discuss some of the drivers and constraints for SDG implementation of the current context (**Section 2**). This is followed in **Section 3** by a brief introduction to existing sustainable development strategies for the EU as well as a closer look at the three main policy processes in which references and commitments to SDG implementation will be key; the new EU Global Strategy, the revision of the European Consensus on Development and the integration of sustainable development into the Europe 2020 strategy. Thereafter, the EU’s experience of working towards policy coherence for development is introduced (**Section 4**) and discussed in terms of legal and institutional arrangements to foster integration, coordination and coherence (**Section 5**) as well as enhancing transparency and accountability through effective and robust monitoring and review process (**Section 6**). Finally, in **Section 7** lessons are distilled from the EU’s experience and role in SDG implementation as well as specifically relating to integrated and coherent policy making.

1.1. Methodology and limitations

This study is based on desk research and information gathered during a select number of interviews with European Commission officials during January - March 2016. However, the process that it intends to map out is a dynamic one that is evolving each day. Therefore, this note presents a state of play at the time of writing but should be updated as a number policy processes move forward. Specifically, these include the formulation of a new EU Global Strategy (published in June 2016), the review of the Europe 2020 strategy and the on-going review of the European Consensus on Development. More details on each of these processes will be outlined in the following sections.

¹ OECD (2015).

² Achim Steiner as quoted in European Environmental Bureau (2015) p. 11.

In particular the European Commission is to publish a mapping communication on SDG implementation in October 2016, a year after the SDGs were agreed. The European Commission has indicated in its work plan for 2016 that *“We need to start work now to secure Europe's future sustainability. We will present a new approach to ensuring economic growth and social and environmental sustainability beyond the 2020 timeframe, taking into account the Europe 2020 review and the internal and external implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.”*³

Initially, members of the European Parliament Committee on Development pushed for an early communication *“for the EU's credibility and leadership on the global development scene to present a common position on the implementation of the Agenda 2030 ahead of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2016,”*⁴ However, internal negotiations in the Commission have drawn out and the publication of the communication is now expected in the second half of 2016.

³ European Commission (2015c).

⁴ European Parliament (2016b) p. 5.

2. The European Union's role in the 2030 Agenda negotiations

The European Union (EU) has often played an important leadership role in UN processes where the 28 EU member states make up one of the largest groups of countries which regularly and consistently vote as a block, particularly on global development issues. In 2015 a number of UN processes culminated in a set of ambitious agreements on sustainable development, development finance and climate change, including the global goals of the 2030 Agenda. As of 1 January 2016, European leaders are confronted with “turning these grand words into deeds”⁵.

In the run-up to the agreements, preparing ‘Team EU’ positions is time-consuming as a large amount of upstream work is needed to ensure that the EU ‘speaks with one voice’ and consistently votes together.⁶ However, there is a recognition that despite the complexity of such internal discussions the EU achieves a stronger negotiating position in each policy area as a bloc; “*member states of the EU no longer have a decisive influence on the world when acting alone, together the members can potentially be more than the sum of their individual parts.*”⁷ In terms of representation during the negotiations the European Commission delegated its Development Commissioner to the SG High Level Panel on post-2015 which besides the Commission included five other European members including the British Prime Minister as co-chair.⁸

Ensuring an integrated approach to the various UN negotiations taking place in 2015, the European Commission was faced with the challenge of bringing together different processes, sectors and discussions which had previously run their course rather separately. In its preparations the Commission acknowledged this challenge and aimed to “*put forward coherent EU positions bringing together the MDGs, the post-2015 development agenda and Rio+20*”⁹ and similarly the EU ministers of the Foreign Affairs Council called for common EU position for both agendas. The concept of PCSD, embodies exactly the challenge of the SDGs to ensure integrated policy making.

2.1. EU priorities for the SDG agenda

The EU position in the build-up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was set out in a number of policy papers including Commission communications and Council conclusions. These policy documents were informed by public consultations in 2012.¹⁰

A consultation on post-2015 was organised by the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) in 2012. A separate public consultation by DG Environment was launched in October 2012 to inform a proposal for an EU position on the follow-up to the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20). However, in 2013 the EU laid out a common approach to bring together these two international processes calling for a single overarching framework integrating poverty eradication and sustainable development in a balanced way.¹¹ Although some common elements between the two processes had already been recognised, much of the work had previously been carried out in separate strands.

⁵ Mackie and Deneckere (2016).

⁶ Moe Fejerskov and Keijzer (2013).

⁷ Moe Fejerskov and Keijzer (2013) p. 25.

⁸ Moe Fejerskov and Keijzer (2013).

⁹ European Commission (2012) p. 11.

¹⁰ See https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/consultation-towards-post-2015-development-framework_en

¹¹ Council of the European Union (2015a).

The European Commission also commissioned two successive European Reports on Development (ERDs) on the post-2015 debate in order to mobilise research material for the discussions. The 2013 ERD focused on the post-2015 framework itself, whereas the 2015 ERD focused on how to finance the agenda. Both reports were used in order “*to contribute to the global reflection on the post-2015 development agenda by providing independent research-based analysis, stimulating debate and building common ground among key stakeholders*”.¹²

In 2014, the European Commission published a new communication on post-2015, titled ‘A Decent Life for All: from vision to collective action’ affirming the existing position of the EU that a framework for development beyond 2015 should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced way while taking into account the different starting points and capacities of countries.¹³ Council Conclusions also followed this communication in December 2014 helping to inform the position of the EU during the final stages of negotiations.¹⁴

Finally in 2015, the Commission issued another communication setting out its views on a new global partnership including the underlying principles and main components and also putting forward proposals on how the EU and its Member States could contribute to the partnership.¹⁵ The communication outlined the following key components:

- **An enabling and conducive policy environment at all levels:** focusing in particular on good governance and policy coherence. Specifically, the EU outlined a number of international agreements on global public goods where it would be prepared to take a leading role (multilateral health agreements, multilateral environmental agreements and international ocean governance).
- **Develop capacity to deliver the agenda:** focusing on capacity and skills development through multi-stakeholder partnerships in particular through the EU’s international cooperation.
- **Mobilisation and effective use of domestic public finance:** focusing on international cooperation to ensure a transparent, cooperative and fair tax environment.
- **Mobilisation and effective use of international public finance:** reaffirming the support to all developed countries meeting the UN target of 0.7% ODA/GNI.
- **Stimulate trade to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development:** focusing on enhanced integration of sustainable development into trade policy. The EU outlined a number of ways in which it addresses trade as a means of implementation for the post-2015 agenda.
- **Drive transformative change through science, technology and innovation:** focusing on increased bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation to promote implementation of the SDGs. The EU reaffirmed its commitment to fostering science, technology and innovating both within the Union and in cooperation with international partners.
- **Mobilising the domestic and international private sector:** focusing on facilitation of private sector engagement in development countries and encouraging business to invest more responsibly in

¹² See DEVCO website: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/research-development/research/post-2015-erd-2013_en

¹³ European Commission (2014).

¹⁴ Council of the European Union (2014).

¹⁵ European Commission (2015a).

developing countries. Particularly the EU also outlined steps taken to enhance market reward for corporate social and environmental responsibility and disseminate good practice, improve self and co-regulation processes; and improve company disclosure of social and environmental information.

- **Harnessing the positive effects of migration:** focusing on how migration can be managed in a way that contributes positively to achievement of the SDGs and fostering a more collaborative approach to increase the benefits of international migration.

This communication was adopted in Council conclusions and informed EU positions in preparation for the Third Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa as well as the post-2015 Summit in New York. The Council conclusions furthermore affirmed the principles of ‘universality, shared responsibility, mutual accountability, consideration of respective capabilities and multi-shareholder approach’.¹⁶

2.2. An integrated approach towards the relationship between the SDGs and the climate change agreement

The European Commission has throughout the preparations and negotiations for the SDG framework and the COP21 process acknowledged the emerging consensus that an integrated approach is needed on climate change and development.¹⁷ Over the years, the European Commission has managed to raise its profile in international climate negotiations, ultimately assuming a de facto coordination role and adopting a system of informally chosen “lead negotiators” which allows the EU to pool expertise, know-how and negotiations skills bringing together a mix of experts from the Commission and EU Member States.¹⁸ This resulted in e.g. DG DEVCO being present at the COP21 negotiations - although the reverse was not true for the SDG negotiations with regard DG CLIMA presence.¹⁹

It is clear that the respective line DGs in the European Commission see that the Sustainable Development and Climate Change agendas go hand in hand and achieving coherence between these agendas for example in terms of language adopted in the final versions was important. However, for implementation of the agendas there may be less clarity on what coherence may mean. DG CLIMA may respond “Climate is our main goal”, while DG DEVCO argues that PCD will remain valid and will be a stepping stone to the more general pursuit of PCSD. This begs the question who then will be responsible for monitoring PCSD in Commission-wide SDG implementation? Some actors believe that PCD will remain in the domain of DEVCO and the development sector and this feeds into PCSD as “part of thinking on how this has an impact on other countries”. Yet many experienced PCD practitioners from the development sector wonder how others are thinking about PCSD. Integration of the new SDG and climate commitments into the review of the Europe 2020 strategy is clearly seen as a boost for DG CLIMA and internal implementation in terms of involving the entire range of DGs, and similarly DG DEVCO find that the “*Agenda 2030 is a great opportunity as the whole Commission needs to be involved and PCD becomes more important for all*”.²⁰

2.3. Drivers and difficulties of embedding the SDG agenda in EU policy

Most of the EU heads of state and government, as well as Vice-Presidents of the European Commission Frans Timmermans and Federica Mogherini (HR/VP), confirmed the 2030 Agenda’s relevance for member

¹⁶ Council of the European Union (2015b).

¹⁷ Herrero and Knaepen (2014).

¹⁸ Herrero and Knaepen (2014).

¹⁹ Based on information gathered during interviews.

²⁰ Based on information gathered during interviews.

states and EU institutions at the Summit in New York in 2015. The current EU Commissioner for Development, Neven Mimica, has also clearly stated that the post-2015 development agenda is a major priority for the EU (ERD, 2015) and the current and upcoming Presidencies of the Council of the EU (the current trio is made up of the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta) have identified a number of activities and policies which will need to be reviewed in light of the 2015 agreement.²¹

The EU has consistently been engaged in the negotiations for a global development framework and believes that it has “*played an important and constructive role in these processes*”²² - there is an expectation therefore that the EU should play a leading role in SDG implementation. It will be important for the EU to have a strong implementation response to the SDGs. While integrated approaches are clearly needed, what this means in concrete policy terms for EU institutions will be complex.²³ In practice, to respect the universality principle, the EEAS and all the relevant Directorates-General will have to commit to the implementation of the SDGs in a holistic manner - yet not all seem ready for such a level of integrated long-term thinking.²⁴ Studies have revealed that while the SDG framework may resonate in high-income countries a key challenge in regions such as Europe will be to get domestic stakeholders engaged.²⁵ This applies to the European Commission as well in terms of getting the different line DGs involved in the conversation about implementation at EU level. It will be key to build on the EU’s history of work on related issues across all levels, including the regional, national, and local initiatives by governments and non-governmental stakeholders.

At the same time there are a number of challenges to confront during these crucial months when an SDG implementation response is being designed. Europe is under pressure from multiple sides and issues such as migration and Europe’s security are the major concern for many actors in EU institutions and Member States. However, many argue that there are also recent success stories, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change which was adopted as a result of very intensive diplomatic efforts and which was strongly guided and steered by the EU and its members, should also be built upon to ensure a comprehensive discussion of long-term policy measures. Ultimately, focus on the current crises and short-term measures should not hinder the discussion on the EU’s sustainable future.

²¹ For example, chapters of their work programme mention the following; 1) A priority area will be a “new approach to Europe’s growth and sustainability taking into account the Europe 2020 Strategy Review and the implementation of the UN SDGs” (p. 11) in the chapter on ‘A Union of Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness’, and 2) that “The EU’s policies will need to be looked upon in line with the SDGs, through a multi-stakeholder approach. Equally, fostering Policy Coherence for Development remains important to the implementation of the EU’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ambitions.”(p. 24) in the chapter ‘The Union as a Strong Global Actor’. See Council of the European Union (2015c).

²² European Commission (2015a).

²³ ETTG (2016).

²⁴ ETTG (2016).

²⁵ Kindornay (2015).

3. Integration of the SDGs into EU policy frameworks

SDG implementation in the EU will need to take into account both the internal and external dimensions of working towards sustainable development. Internally, the SDGs will need to be linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy, a ten-year strategy for growth and jobs, as well as the EU Sustainable Development Strategy from 2001. Externally, the two key processes are the drafting of the new EU Global Foreign and Security Policy and the review of the European Consensus on Development from 2005. The convergence of these processes provide significant opportunities for the EU to firmly embed the SDG agenda into EU policies and strategies.

3.1. Sustainable development in internal EU policy

An EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) was launched in 2001, and revised in 2006 and 2009.²⁶ While recognised as a comprehensive sustainability strategy, it has been criticised for lacking ownership and a governance mechanism for implementation. As a result it has not been actively pursued since its last revision.²⁷

Rather, the Europe 2020 Strategy, a ten-year strategy for growth and jobs, has been identified as the main avenue for SDG implementation within Europe. The strategy envisages a transition to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe. This should be achieved through 1) the development of an economy based on knowledge, research and innovation, 2) the promotion of more resource efficient, greener and competitive markets, and 3) by fostering job creation and poverty reduction. For each of these three priorities the strategy foresees one or more targets in five areas: employment, research and development and innovation, climate change and energy, education, and poverty and social exclusion. Eurostat has been charged with monitoring the Europe 2020 headline targets.

A comparison of the Europe 2020 strategy and the EU SDS by Eurostat suggests that almost all EU SDS key challenges are somehow included in the Europe 2020 initiatives. However, the manner in which they are included may be questioned as some objectives are poorly addressed and some operational objectives are not addressed at all.²⁸ Therefore apart from the obvious links and synergies in the indicators set between the EU SDS and Europe 2020 strategy, Eurostat considers that the EU SDS provides a more comprehensive picture of sustainable development to reflect the social and environmental aspects of development.²⁹ Although the Europe 2020 builds on the integrated approach of the EU SDS, it focuses largely on the growth related aspects of a smart, sustainable and inclusive society.

The internal dimension of implementation will be dependent on First Vice-President Timmermans in charge of the Better Regulation package and inter-institutional relations. During 2016 the Vice-President will specifically need to consider SDG implementation in relation to the review of the Europe 2020 strategy. Timmermans has repeatedly made references to the internal dimensions of SDG implementation in Europe and expressed an understanding of sustainable development in a broad sense “*to create coherence in our policies*”.³⁰ He has also particularly outlined the importance of policy coherence for sustainable development in the EU: “*As long as we are not able to create coherence between these dimensions [the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development], our approach won't be successful*”.

²⁶ For more details see: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/>

²⁷ Hackenesh et al (2015).

²⁸ ESDN (2011).

²⁹ Eurostat (2015a).

³⁰ Timmermans (2015a).

enough. If it continues to be contradictory, it also leads to a waste of financial resources, human resources and political resources.”³¹

While the Europe 2020 Strategy is labelled as a ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth strategy’ which urges for action on climate change, there have been critical voices regarding linking internal implementation of the SDGs to the Europe 2020 strategy, stating for example that the strategy itself “*is not a sustainable development strategy*”.³² The Europe 2020 strategy may be seen to be the process with political traction in the coming years but is it a suitable replacement for a comprehensive, long-term EU strategy for sustainable development which is able to consider the physical limits of ecosystems? Some actors also ask to what extent the SDGs will be brought into exercises such as the European Semester - a yearly exercise of reviewing and making recommendations on Member States’ economic policies - and whether the review of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) setting out the ‘ceilings’ of the different political headings of the EU budget towards 2020 will be aligned towards the 2030 Agenda. While Timmermans seems to have put his responsibilities towards sustainable development in the EU’s internal policy coordination high on the agenda, there is still a lack of clarity on the remit of an SDG implementation team under the direction of Timmermans to ensure the SDGs are taken into consideration in the full range of EU policy processes and tools.

In June 2015, Karl Falkenberg previous Director General of DG Environment was appointed as “Hors Classe Adviser “Senior Adviser for Sustainable Development” in the European Political Strategy Centre” (EPSC)³³ and was mandated to produce a report on the EU Sustainable Development Strategy which is to be presented in June 2016. This report is expected to be another important contribution but it is still unclear how it will link to VP Timmermans’ implementation of the SDGs through the Europe 2020 strategy.

3.2. Sustainable development in external EU policy

For the external implementation of the SDGs, the drafting of the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) has been an important opportunity for defining the priority and focus on the SDGs in the EU’s wider foreign and security policy beyond development cooperation. There are ambitions for the EUGS and SDG implementation to go hand-in-hand as the “*transformative ambition of the SDGs requires a ‘whole of government’ approach from the EU and an implementation strategy that coordinates domestic and external policies. Linking the Global Strategy to the SDGs is therefore a strategic opportunity to enable coherent policy-making and to reduce the frictions and barriers between EU institutions. For this to happen, the implementation of the agenda will have to be driven not only by environment and development policy makers, but also by a coherent overarching policy framework.*”³⁴

However, against the backdrop of crises within and outside the EU, the way in which synergies between the EUGS and the SDG ambitions have taken shape are the result of a careful balance of security threats with global development challenges. The potential of the Global Strategy as an overarching policy that can push for greater coherence and improved collective EU external action is seen as a unique opportunity for all policy fields dealing with interdependent global challenges - including development, trade, humanitarian aid and climate action - to be set out in a new foreign policy with sustainable solutions as a main objective.³⁵ This is also outlined as something individual policy area strategies (e.g. the *European Consensus on Development*) could not achieve alone. The final draft text was presented to the European

³¹ Timmermans (2015a).

³² Berger (2015).

³³ European Commission (2015b).

³⁴ Gavás et al (2016) p. 2.

³⁵ Gavás et al (2016).

Council on 28 June 2016. The SDGs are mentioned early on in the text as a requirement for shared prosperity worldwide, including in Europe. Throughout the text, the SDGs are also referred to in relation to resilience, investment, trade and development as well as peace and security and human rights. Furthermore, implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change are mentioned as key elements of the EU's commitment to 'Global Governance in the 21st Century'.³⁶ Finally and importantly, the SDGs are also mentioned as an opportunity to catalyse coherence between the EU and Member States, the European Investment Bank and the private sector.

The SDGs also require the EU's international cooperation to be adjusted to the new global agenda. The current EU development policy framework rests upon the European Consensus on Development from 2005 and the more recent Agenda for Change from 2011³⁷. The European Consensus on Development defines the common principles within which the EU and its Member states implement their development policies in a spirit of complementarity and sets a general framework for EU development policy which was updated with the Agenda for Change. However, there is broad agreement that the 2030 Agenda requires a review of EU development policy, and therefore the European Commission has set forth a proposal for a revised European Consensus on Development.

The European Parliament DEVE committee has called for this revision as an important contribution to:

“an updated, coherent global EU strategy [...] to strengthen the complementarity between all development actors in order to exploit the full potential of European development policy and thus accelerate the implementation of the development agenda for 2030.”³⁸

The roadmap which has been published for the review³⁹ also points to some of the new elements of the 2030 Agenda that are not adequately reflected in the current EU development policy documents, including:

- The stronger integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development
- The need to preserve, promote and protect global public goods
- Migration
- A new focus on inequality within and among countries
- Renewed impetus to ensuring gender equality
- Creating decent jobs and strengthening social protection systems
- Greater emphasis on peaceful, just and inclusive societies, good governance, human rights and the security-development nexus
- Fragility and crisis situations
- The need to mobilise a much broader range of means of implementation.

While the roadmap also states that the review will address the development-related aspects of implementing 2030 Agenda, the statements by Mogherini and Mimica after the review was launched on 12 May indicate that the process will be linked to both the recently published EU Global Strategy, as well as the on-going post-Cotonou discussions⁴⁰, and in particular that migration and security will likely be high on the agenda.⁴¹

³⁶ EEAS, 24 June 2016.

³⁷ European Commission, 2011.

³⁸ European Parliament (2016a) p. 3.

³⁹ European Commission (2016).

⁴⁰ The ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement expires in 2020 and a new framework of cooperation is currently under discussion.

⁴¹ Mogherini and Mimica (2016).

3.3. Mapping the SDGs against EU priorities and objectives

The EU has not yet published any kind of mapping matching the SDGs with EU priorities and objectives. However, Eurostat has indicated that it has undertaken a thorough mapping of the goals and targets of the SDGs against the EU sustainable development indicators used for monitoring the EU SDS and that it intends to produce a first (pre-)report on the EU situation concerning SDGs by the end of 2016.⁴²

The 2015 monitoring report of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy concluded that the overall picture of whether the EU was moving towards sustainable development was rather mixed.⁴³ The report monitored progress in economic development, social development, environmental development and global partnership. While real GDP per capita and resource productivity have improved in the EU over the long term, the report notes that poverty has sharply increased in the EU since the start of the economic crisis. Therefore while improvements in public health and demographic change are evident, progress towards the social dimension of sustainable development has been uneven. On environmental development, the report notes that the short term weakened economic activity has reduced some of the pressure on the environment, however, overall progress on this dimension remains mixed. Finally, the report notes that in terms of global partnership, the EU has not been able to reach its official target on development assistance but has shown some progress in other areas. While the EU remains the largest donor in the world and its share of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to low-income countries has increased over the long term, the share of gross national income spent on ODA has only increased marginally since 2004. Interestingly, the report notes the difficulty in monitoring the theme 'good governance' as no indicator is considered to be sufficiently robust and policy-relevant to provide an overview.

In other areas, thematic reports have been prepared by expert actors for example in a report of the Expert Group "Follow-up to Rio+20, notably the SDGs" on the role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies to foster the Implementation of the SDGs published by DG Research and Innovation.⁴⁴ The Expert Group was established by the EC with the purpose of providing advice to the Commission on the role of STI for implementing the sustainability agenda at the Rio+20 Summit on SD in 2012 and in particular the SDGs, including the potential of research and innovation cooperation in this context. The report recommended three key avenues for change including to:

- **Switch the focus, reorient mind-sets and behaviour towards sustainable development**, reframe the EU's STI challenges, and refocus from technology transfer to building innovation capacity.
- **Strengthen partnerships, enhance engagement with developing countries** in existing EU instruments, engage all stakeholders (especially the private sector), develop tailor-made international STI initiatives.
- **Walk the talk**, address causes of implementation gaps, ensure domestic integration of the SDGs in/with STI, improve policy coherence, build up opportunities to benefit from the 'data revolution' and setting up monitoring, evaluation and assessment of STI4SD.

In December 2015, First Vice-President Timmermans also presented the adoption of a new package on the circular economy as one of the "major political initiatives" of the present Commission and referred to its links to SDG implementation. He noted that it was a "real team effort of the whole Commission" and that the circular economy package is intended to fight a 'take, make, use and throw away' approach and to

⁴² Eurostat (2015b).

⁴³ Eurostat (2015b).

⁴⁴ European Commission (2015f).

attempt to decouple economic growth from resource consumption.⁴⁵ Timmermans presented food waste as a priority area where rapid change is needed and outlined how EU targets in this areas can contribute to meeting the SDGs: “*Food waste is a priority area where we want rapid change. It is economically, socially and quite simply morally unacceptable that one third of the food worldwide is wasted. We want to halve food waste by 2030 – in full line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - and will facilitate food donation and look at date marking, in particular the ‘best before label’.*”⁴⁶ As such, two of the key actions adopted in the circular economy package directly address two of the SDGs:⁴⁷ 1) Actions to reduce food waste including a common measurement methodology, improved date marking, and tools to meet the Global Goal to halve food waste by 2030; and 2) A strategy on plastics in the circular economy, addressing issues of recyclability, biodegradability, the presence of hazardous substances in plastics, and the SDG target for significantly reducing marine litter.

⁴⁵ Timmermans (2015b).

⁴⁶ Timmermans (2015b).

⁴⁷ European Commission (2015e).

4. Examining and fostering policy coherence in different dimensions

4.1. A brief history of PCD

The EU has a long history of working on one of the predecessors to PCSD, i.e. Policy Coherence for Development. In the early 1990s, the European Community cemented its belief in the importance of coherence of its policies to ensure that development aid policies could be effective. The Treaty of the European Union, the Maastricht Treaty signed in 1992, imposed a requirement for the EU and its Member States to improve the coherence of all European policies that might have an impact on development.⁴⁸ The *European Consensus on Development* of 2005, agreed at the highest EU political level, also reiterates a clear commitment to PCD and its central role in European development cooperation.

The Lisbon Treaty which entered into force in December 2009 strengthened this into a legal obligation and extended it to the whole Union expressing the idea of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) as follows: “*The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries*”.⁴⁹ The idea also formed an integral part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which committed the OECD countries to examine their policies from the point of view of their impact on developing countries.⁵⁰

Figure 1 Phases in the debate on PCD in the EU

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A Up to 1992 | First reflections | Debates on consistency in European external policies and first thoughts on PCD provides basis for articles in Maastricht Treaty |
| B 1992 -1999 | Making the case | TEU articles prompt highlighting of incoherence cases and debates on concepts and definitions. From mid-90s importance of PCD is increasingly picked up in broader international circles. Concrete progress in Europe is slow |
| C Early 2000s | Wider recognition & search for solutions | OECD/DAC Peer Review system starts to cover PCD. Issue picked up in MDGs. Donors start to establish PCD mechanisms. |
| D Mid 2000s | Experimentation and knowledge sharing | More systematic and widespread attention paid to PCD. EU governments seeking to learn lessons from first experiences of PCD and the <i>European Consensus on Development</i> reiterates high-level political commitment. |
| E 2007 onwards | Consolidation & institutionalisation | Regular publication of the EU PCD Report begins, improvements made to the ex-ante Impact Assessments and the EP instituted a Standing Rapporteur for PCD. |

Source: Updated based on Mackie et al (2007)

A 2007 evaluation of EU mechanisms to promote PCD noted that while there were growing efforts being made across the EU to establish mechanisms to promote PCD, there was still limited attention paid to monitoring, evaluation and long-term planning of PCD systems.⁵¹ As a result (as indicated in Figure 1), from 2007 onwards a number of efforts to systematically monitor Europe’s progress were launched including a biennial EU PCD Report. Drafted by the Commission, it reviews the EU’s performance in a number of thematic areas identified by the *European Consensus*.⁵² The original 12 areas were: Trade;

⁴⁸ Keijzer (2010).

⁴⁹ Article 188D, Treaty of Lisbon (2009).

⁵⁰ ECDPM and ICEI (2005).

⁵¹ Mackie et al (2007).

⁵² Keijzer (2010).

Environment; Climate Change; Security; Agriculture; Fisheries; Social Policies; Migration; Research and Innovation; Information Technologies; Transport; and Energy. In 2009 these areas were clustered into five strategic challenges; Trade and Finance; Climate Change; Food Security; Migration and Security. The EU PCD Report has continued to be published regularly with the 5th edition coming out in August 2015.

Latterly further improvements have also been made to the tools the EU uses to promote PCD: for instance ex-ante impact assessments of all new Commission policies that include PCD questions have become standard practice and the European Parliament (EP) has instituted a Standing Rapporteur on PCD and has its own biennial reporting exercise since 2010.⁵³ Within the DEVE committee, the MEPs themselves have previously been seen to be the main change agents with regard to PCD. The EP is also seen to play a positive role as a forum for exchanges with civil society and in promoting international dialogue on PCD issues with partner countries and stakeholders.⁵⁴ Within the Commission in using the inter-service consultation process as a PCD promotion tool DG DEVCO has played the role of change agent.⁵⁵

The 2015 EU PCD Report noted that attention to PCD has increased in the Council over the last years and that this has been an important aspect of keeping PCD on the political agenda.⁵⁶ While the basic political commitment has never been in doubt, dedicated discussions and debates have recently increased through the introduction of policy coherence-related issues as a regular agenda item in the Working Party on Development Cooperation (CODEV), the Committee of Permanent Representative (COREPER), and the Foreign Affairs Council in Development Formation. The PCD Report further notes that such discussions have covered a wide range of areas including migration, fisheries, food security and conflict minerals.

Some of the mechanisms which are now used to foster PCD are continuations of existing mechanisms that had previously had a wider policy coherence role. These mechanisms subsequently were recognised as potentially good methods for promoting PCD, i.e. the impact assessments and inter-service consultation process. This resulted in a period where awareness needed to be strengthened in terms of using them to perform a PCD promotion function.⁵⁷ In general each of these individual mechanisms has limitations alone and benefit from being part of a wider system of mutually supportive complementary mechanisms. Together they can be seen as a 'PCD system' as suggested by the 2007 evaluation of PCD mechanisms as illustrated in Figure 2. This systems view highlights the importance of situating the PCD mechanisms in their operating context, in terms of different approaches to government and political contexts and with inputs from non-state actors and knowledge communities.

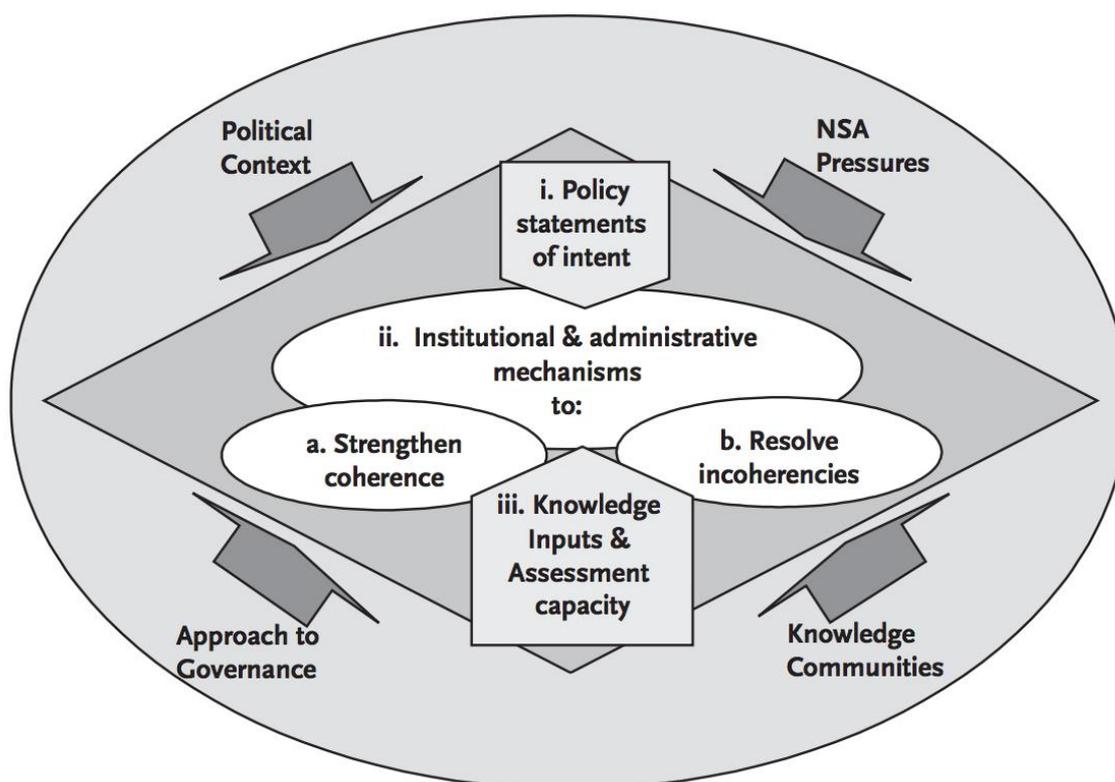
⁵³ Fairpolitics (2015).

⁵⁴ European Commission (2015d).

⁵⁵ Mackie et al (2007).

⁵⁶ European Commission (2015d).

⁵⁷ Mackie et al (2007).

Figure 2 A PCD system: PCD mechanisms in their operating context

Source: Mackie et al (2007)

The 2007 evaluation of the EU institutions' and member states' mechanisms for promoting PCD noted that in the period from 1992-2000, most organisations and researchers working on PCD assumed that the commitment made in the Maastricht Treaty was sufficient, and focussed on assessing the scope for enhancing PCD, evaluating what was done to promote PCD, and registering cases of incoherencies that could be dealt with.⁵⁸ However, after 2000, in the face of limited progress, attention turned towards how a strong national or European statement could be built on and complemented with further action to promote intra-governmental PCD. A number of 'mechanisms' to promote PCD emerged (c.f. section 4.2) some of which required specialised PCD units to implement, others involved existing tools that could be adapted to take on board a more specific PCD role. Generally, the role of promoting PCD using these tools was seen as closely related to the responsibility of development cooperation officials. On the other hand some governments moved towards more 'whole of government' approaches which aim to promote policy coherence across all sectors. However, an absence of strong political sponsorship for PCD and an overly technocratic approach has more recently been seen by some as leading to lacklustre progress and achievements⁵⁹.

Looking forward, many believe that stronger political leadership and the recognition of the political value of implementing the 2030 Agenda coherently present an opportunity for making progress on strengthening policy coherence for *sustainable* development (PCSD) as a new and more extensive version of PCD stemming directly from the SDGs. In particular, the shift of mind-set required by the SDGs has led to renewed conceptual discussions on PCD.

⁵⁸ Mackie et al (2007).

⁵⁹ Carbone and Keijzer (2016).

Traditionally, PCD has been about considering how beyond-aid policies in individual areas may affect poverty reduction in developing countries. The concept was elaborated by OECD donor countries and was primarily focused on the impact of non-development policies on developing countries, while the PCSD of the SDG framework tries to break open silo thinking across all policy areas and is no longer underpinned by such a donor-recipient logic. It is also applicable universally. Therefore the new approach needs to go much further than focusing on just ‘beyond aid’ policies of donor countries, even though there remains a place for PCD within the wider approach.⁶⁰ Thus in the European context all EU policy, including internal EU policies, will need to take account of PCSD so as to fit with the new ‘universal’ logic of the SDGs.

4.2. The European Commission’s approach to Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

In the 2015 EU PCD Report, the Commission notes that PCD was underlined as a key element for the post-2015 Agenda in the three Commission Communications and corresponding Council conclusions.⁶¹ Yet, the EU also emphasized the universal application of policy coherence for sustainable development in the SDG framework. The resulting discussions have prompted renewed conceptual discussions on PCD and whether or not it is transitioning to PCSD or whether it should remain as a sub-component of a larger and more encompassing PCSD agenda.

While the OECD clearly argues that the universality principle of the 2030 Agenda has expanded policy coherence “*in many ways and concerns all countries regardless of their development level*”⁶² and presents PCSD as an evolution of the PCD concept, the European Commission still has to take a clear stance on this transition.⁶³

Indications point towards the European Commission arguing for PCD to retain its place within a wider PCSD agenda. A European Parliament report on PCD reflects this path indicating that PCD work must be taken forward “*to understand better how the concept might fit with the more universal concept of PCSD*”.⁶⁴

An important aspect to consider is also how to deal with the complexity of PCSD as a tool to implement the 2030 Agenda. The PCSD agenda in the understanding of the OECD indicates that coherence is important on five levels: i) coherence between global goals and national contexts; ii) coherence between international agendas; iii) coherence between economic, social and environmental policy; iv) coherence between different sources of finance and v) coherence between diverse actions implemented by different actors.⁶⁵ This approach to PCSD brings vertical coherence across national, regional and international levels more strongly into focus whereas the classical PCD approach emphasised horizontal coherence.

With such a range of different layers to take into account in the design and review of policies, delivering and assessing actual progress on PCSD would appear difficult. Lessons from the PCD experience in particular point to the lack of guidance for assessing or taking into account the political choices that must be made when trade-offs cannot be easily reconciled or when policies affect the sustainable development prospects of countries or groups in different ways.⁶⁶ A large part of the challenge is to bring policy makers

⁶⁰ Knoll (2014).

⁶¹ COM (2013) 92 final “A decent life for all: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future”, COM (2014) 335 final “A decent life for all: From vision to collective action” and COM (2015) 44 final “A Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015”.

⁶² OECD (2015) p.9. This approach originally stems from the OECD Strategy for Development (2011).

⁶³ See also Soria Morales (2016) p. 6.

⁶⁴ European Parliament (2016c) p. 4.

⁶⁵ OECD (2015).

⁶⁶ ECDPM (2016).

and stakeholders with different worldviews, mind-sets and objectives together and progress on this is not easily measured or achieved.

Communication and coordination structures may be important to raise awareness about the joint goals and objectives of PCSD in the post-2015 context yet focusing on institutional coordination structures and institutional mechanisms has proven not to be sufficient in the experience of PCD.⁶⁷ In fact, the strong emphasis on the institutionalisation of PCD and framing it as a technical undertaking has in the past tended to downplay its inherently political nature. The SDGs overall and PCSD specifically will also require entail trade-offs and conflicts between the different dimensions of the Agenda.

4.3. Tools to analyse potential economic, social and environmental synergies and trade-offs across policy objectives?

Before the Commission proposes a new policy initiative, it assesses the need for EU action and the potential economic, social and environmental impacts of alternative policy options in an impact assessment. This represents a possibility to take into account developing country concerns and promoting PCD across EU policies. Yet impact assessments still tend to pay little attention to impacts on non-EU countries, in some cases regarding the impact as being irrelevant or of limited magnitude to warrant in-depth analysis.⁶⁸ Therefore only a small number of impact assessments have included an analysis on potential impacts on developing countries. Vice-President Timmermans' Better Regulations Agenda included an update to the guidelines for EU impact assessments and while the toolbox included an expanded section on developing country impact, it identified only basic methodological guidance for development concerns per impact area. Precisely how the EU intends to further integrate the 2030 Agenda and PCSD into existing tools (the Better Regulations Agenda, future Impact Assessments, etc.) remains to be seen in the Commission's expected communication on SDG implementation.

4.4. Indicators to measure policy coherence for sustainable development?

Interviews with the Commission reveal that there is a sense that the 2030 Agenda document itself lacks detail on the concept of PCSD. A clear indication of this is to be seen in the discussion on indicators at the global level (through the work of the expert group on global indicators). An early version of the 17.14.1 indicator read: "*17.14.1: Number of countries that have ratified and implemented relevant international instruments under the International Maritime Organization (safety, security, environmental protection, civil liability, and compensation and insurance) and the fundamental conventions and recommendations of ILO, and that have adopted carbon pricing mechanisms*"⁶⁹ while the latest report presents an updated indicator as the "*number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development*". The earlier proposal was unsatisfactory to the point of being 'random', however, the latest indicator focuses solely on mechanisms, which the EU's experience with PCD has shown may well be needed but are not a guarantee of meaningful progress on PCD by themselves.

There is however a recognition that finding suitable indicators is challenging and not easily done.⁷⁰ A review of the existing PCD monitoring system reveals some of the difficulties that have come up, including that distinctions between indicators and targets was already blurred in for example the EU PCD work

⁶⁷ Keijzer and Carbone (2016).

⁶⁸ Keijzer (2010).

⁶⁹ United Nations Economic and Social Council (2015).

⁷⁰ Interview with European Commission officials, January 2016.

programme.⁷¹ The policy recommendation of the post-2015 Data Test in Canada also concluded that while it is possible to make use of shared 'global' indicators, to make the SDG framework relevant across countries with different income contexts it will require a high degree of flexibility to allow for national priorities and for the most relevant way to measure progress locally.⁷²

Eurostat is specifically engaged in examining potential SDG indicators in Europe. Some actors report that discussions have touched upon whether the same indicators can be used for several targets as it would be useful to try to limit the number.⁷³ Eurostat has been producing monitoring reports on the EU Sustainable Development Strategy since 2007 and the latest report was published in September 2015 and made the link between monitoring sustainable development in Europe and the SDGs and acknowledged that future versions of the report may be affected by the Global Goals.⁷⁴

In a note on "Eurostat's role in the development and implementation of a comprehensive monitoring framework for SDGs",⁷⁵ the agency outlines the various ways in which it has contributed to the post-2015 agenda including by cooperating with the UN and participating in the Friends of the Chair Group on broader measures of progress. The note further states that Eurostat is fully committed to contributing to the process of establishing a new monitoring framework for the SDGs and wishes to actively contribute to the work of the IAEG-SDGs in cooperation with DGs of the European Commission and in cooperation with its partners in the European Statistical System. Eurostat has also been involved in a joint UNECE-Eurostat-OECD Task Force⁷⁶, which proposes a framework for harmonising diverse approaches and indicators used by countries and international organisations to measure sustainable development.

The work on monitoring the EU Sustainable Development Strategy has been done on a basis of an indicator framework which included 125 indicators covering 10 themes and structured in 3 levels. Most of the data used come from Eurostat/the European Statistical System. Other sources such as from the European Environmental Agency and OECD are also used. Comparatively, the work on monitoring Europe 2020 Strategy is based on 5 headline targets, two of which are split in several components. The strategy includes 8 quantified targets. Targets are set for the EU as a whole and separately MS set national targets. Eurostat monitors progress through a set of 9 headline and 4 sub-indicators.

Eurostat has proposed that the development of an SDG indicator framework should not only entail the selection of appropriate indicators, but also a deeper analysis of inter-linkages and overlaps between goals and targets of the current OWG proposal. During the discussion on indicators for the Agenda 2030, Eurostat has called for 1) a limited number of indicators (approximately 100) as a larger set would be seen to be difficult to manage and communicate, and 2) a hierarchy of indicators (core or headline indicators and supplementary indicators). Overall, Eurostat supports the idea of establishing a robust and high-quality indicator framework which serves to monitor SDGs at different levels and is kept open to innovation.

4.5. Examples of addressing cross-border impacts of EU policies

The EU's history of working on PCD has resulted in a large body of literature and examples presented by various actors and fora. Some of these may provide useful lessons to be drawn on in developing tools for promoting PCSD in the future. These examples provide specific insights on how cross-border impacts of

⁷¹ Van Seters et al (2015).

⁷² Post-2015 Data Test (2014).

⁷³ Based on insights gathered during interviews.

⁷⁴ Eurostat (2015b).

⁷⁵ Eurostat (2015a).

⁷⁶ <http://www.unece.org/?id=33019>

EU policies have been addressed but do not necessarily represent the universal and broader policy coherence of PCSD in particular with regards addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development. The following sections, covering examples from food security, arms exports, illicit financial flows and migration, outline a number of examples where incoherencies have been debated with a particular focus of the impact of EU level policies on developing country partners.

While the EU is the world's major development actor on **food security**, some of its other policies are still criticised as harmful to global food security and agricultural development. One of the most debated and documented EU policy incoherence cases, dating back at least 20 years, relates to how the EU has supported countries with EU aid for agricultural development while at the same time exporting heavily subsidised agricultural produce from the EU to these same countries. After 20 years of successive reforms, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is now delivering support to EU farmers and rural communities in a manner that is less distorting to markets and trade, according to the PCD 2015 EU PCD Report. In particular, it argues the 2013 reform abolished all remaining production constraints and stopped the systematic use of exports refunds to subsidise EU farm prices on the global market.⁷⁷ However, an analysis of the CAP reforms conducted at the time of the 2013 reform by ECDPM highlighted that although development concerns and interests were present at the technical preparatory stage of the policy reform process, they disappeared early on in the political decision-making procedure, since stakeholder involvement and advisory structures are biased toward participants with a direct interest.⁷⁸

Another area in which NGOs continue to point out the incoherence between European humanitarian aid in conflict zones and **European arms exports**. Regardless of the EU Common Position on arms, export controls contains different criteria for licensing decisions on the export of conventional arms, including respect for human rights in the country of final destination and respect by that country of international humanitarian law. However, the EU is reproached for not applying these criteria consistently. In 1998, the EU adopted a politically binding Code of Conduct on Arms Exports which was applied to a Common Military List of arms and equipment, and in 2008 the EU Code was transformed into a legally binding Common Position Defining Common Rules Governing Control of Exports of Military Technology and Equipment. Member states submit annual reports to the EU on their arms exports which are then published in a consolidated format, and also have agreed a Common Position on Arms Brokering and a User's Guide to assist implementation of the Common Position on Arms Exports at the national level. According to Saferworld, despite these developments, further progress is needed across a range of issues, including ensuring that the relationship between the EU defence sector and emerging arms producers in other parts of the world is effectively regulated and consistent with the objectives of the Common Position. *"In addition, there is a continuing need for arms transfer control outreach to neighbouring states, for harmonisation of the member states' interpretation of the existing EU transfer control criteria, for sustained action to combat corruption in the arms trade, and for more effective controls on the re-export of EU-sourced defence items by recipients."*⁷⁹

It has also been widely stressed that the EU needs to take more seriously its role in fighting **illicit financial flows** from developing countries through holding its transnational companies to account or strengthening transparency and reporting. After the "Luxleaks revelations" in 2014, that revealed how hundreds of global companies had secured secret tax deals with Luxembourg, allowing them to save billions of euros in taxes, Commissioner Margrethe Vestager has shown strong political support to public country by country reporting (CBCR), obliging large corporations to reveal their profits and the tax they pay in every country in

⁷⁷ European Commission (2015d).

⁷⁸ ECDPM (2013).

⁷⁹ Saferworld (nd).

which they operate within the EU. According to EURODAD, public country by country reporting would have many benefits, ranging from more economic development in the world's poorest countries to positive impacts on gender equality.⁸⁰ *“UNCTAD has estimated that developing countries lose at least €100 billion per year due to corporate tax avoidance. Until this problem is solved, their sustainable development will be an uphill battle. Public country by country reporting is a vital tool for developing countries to fight the problem and mobilise domestic resources to fund their economic development.”*⁸¹

A timely and heavily debated issue for policy coherence is **migration**. Evidence suggests that the movement of people from the poorest countries into Europe has become increasingly restricted while, at the same time, EU countries sent a total of €56.1 billion in aid in 2014 to address global poverty. According to ODI (2015), international migration is the most effective method of poverty reduction we know of; far more transformational for the migrants and their family than aid could ever hope to be (ODI, 2015). The EU Report on Development 2013 estimates that the facilitation of international labour mobility could bring about substantial economic gains, estimated at between 50% and 150% of global GDP. According to CONCORD, the development goals, amongst which poverty eradication and the respect of human rights, are undermined by the emphasis on border controls and security concerns, both in terms of political priorities and financial and technical assistance. *“The EU and its members have signed up to the SDGs, acknowledging the positive contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development. Its policies however shift towards reducing migration, preventing migrants from coming to Europe and encouraging their return”*.⁸² Other issues relate to the rights situation of migrants in EU countries, the limited space for circular migration and the persistent high remittance sending costs, regardless of EU targets to reduce those. According to EU ERD 2013, mechanisms adopted by EU Member States are often inflexible and fail to reflect labour-market needs. As the process of admission of labour migrants is time-consuming, complex and costly, employers and migrants alike are pushed towards irregular channels. According to the World Migration Report 2010, certain sectors in Europe already rely on cheap, unprotected migrant labour, to which governments may turn a blind eye.⁸³ Europe regards itself as adhering to rights. A reason frequently cited for not signing the UN Convention on Migrant Workers is that existing European legislation goes beyond its provisions, but low-skilled migrants rarely enjoy the protection of even minimum labour standards and are prone to exploitation.⁸⁴

4.6. Examples of policy areas where synergies should be addressed across the dimensions of sustainable development and between domestic and international policy objectives

While already having been extensively discussed in PCD debates, EU's agricultural and trade policies could and should potentially be discussed further in terms of the scope for coherence and synergies also with EU environmental policies.

As the 2015 EU PCD report states, from the Commission perspective the CAP and the agricultural trade policy have been becoming increasingly development friendly during the last 20 years. The report states that the EU is *“committed to helping developing countries integrate their agricultural sectors into the world's trading system and share in the benefits of the global economy”*. For instance, in the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of states, ACP

⁸⁰ EURODAD (2016).

⁸¹ EURODAD (2016)

⁸² Bob Van Dillen, Chair of the CONCORD Migration and Development Task Force. See: <http://concordeurope.org/2016/01/18/migration-development-spotlight-report-launch/>

⁸³ IOM (2010).

⁸⁴ EU ERD (2013).

countries have policy space to exclude agricultural products that are strategic for the partner states from liberalisation. Nevertheless, according to some African stakeholder groups, this space is too limited, since EU is insisting on liberalising 75%-80 of products.

EU agriculture policy is reviewed regularly at multilateral level in the WTO Committee on Agriculture, as well as in the context of its biannual Trade Policy Review. Within this process, the EU takes into account concerns raised by developing countries or Least Developed Countries. The European Commission also maintains regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society via the Civil Dialogue Group (CDG) “International Aspects of Agriculture Policy” that replaced the former Advisory Group on international aspects of agriculture from spring 2014.

However, the differing perceptions of stakeholders and the complex and diversified impact of trade measures requires further monitoring and evaluation efforts. Moreover, the EU is often criticised for not been upfront about the balance of commercial interests and development objectives in the case of the EPAs ⁸⁵

Concerning environmental sustainability in Europe, according to EU PCD Report (2015) the reformed CAP strengthened instruments address environmental concerns by linking 30% of direct payments to European farmers to environmentally-friendly agricultural methods: crop diversification, ecological focus areas, and maintaining permanent pastures. These methods play an important role in the management of water, fighting soil erosion and biodiversity loss, and preserving natural landscapes. In addition, at least 30% of rural development financing is allocated to measures and projects that are beneficial to the environment and address climate change.

A wide ranging reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) came into force in 2014 to secure fish stocks and the future livelihood of fishing communities by ending overfishing and ensuring that all fish stocks are brought to sustainable levels. To this end, the CFP reform enhances partnerships between the EU and developing coastal states including a legal requirement that bilateral fisheries agreements must be sustainable and act as a tool to help promote long-term resource conservation and good governance.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, civil society organisations have questioned the sustainability of the agreed levels.

⁸⁵ ECDPM (2013).

⁸⁶ European Commission (2015) EU PCD report.

5. Legal and institutional arrangements to foster integration, coordination and coherence

5.1. Embedding the PCSD principle across EU policies

In anticipation of the communication to come, the way in which PCSD can be embedded across EU policies can benefit from an overview of existing arrangements to foster PCD. All principal EU institutional actors (the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council) have a shared commitment to PCD and are equally responsible for promoting it. This legal and political commitment is reflected in the decision-making process, from the preparation and adoption of a Commission proposal through the legislative process in the Council and the Parliament, implementation at the appropriate level and all the way through to monitoring, evaluation and review.

A number of actors in the EU institutions have been important for PCD to be taken into account in policy making and could be used in a similar fashion for PCSD. These include the DG in the Commission which assumes the lead in drafting proposals, Council working parties, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) and Council formations in charge, and the extent to which the European Council, the EU presidency and the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) actively promote the consideration of development implications in the decision making process.⁸⁷ The role of the European Parliament is also important if well handled, the PCSD principle therefore also needs to be well embedded there.

5.2. Institutional structures to foster PCSD

It is apparent from recent interviews that it is still not clear who will coordinate the overall EU implementation of the Agenda 2030 - and therefore where the responsibility for PCSD will be placed is also unclear. Some respondents suggested that discussions have covered both a group of actors responsible for coordination (e.g. EEAS, DG DEVCO and DG Environment) and more loose arrangements for coordination across the board of EU institutions. There is however a general expectation that there will be a certain level of focus from each and every DG.

In general the experience with PCD has been that it seems most effective to strengthen coherence in the policy-formulation processes in the Commission itself - the challenge being to ensure that non-development DGs in the lead understand and take into account the development implications of the policy proposals in question. The prime tools for this are the now mandatory ex-ante impact assessments and the inter-service consultation system on new policy initiatives managed by the Commission's Secretariat General. Both of these tools need to be used proactively by the officials responsible for the new policy. It would seem similar processes could be used for promoting PCSD.

5.3. EU practices for involving non-state actors in policy making

Involving non-state actors in policy making in the EU is generally well developed and a number of different channels exist and have been used extensively in the past for promoting PCD. The European Commission regularly organises public consultations on new policy proposals and this practice is becoming more common with the Better Regulation initiative of the Juncker Commission. Most NGO sectors have European level platforms that they use for engaging with the institutions. CONCORD the umbrella platform for international development NGOs has been very active on PCD. There is a similar platform for poverty

⁸⁷ Van Schaik et al (2006).

and social exclusion NGOs (The Social Platform) and the larger human rights and environmental NGOs also have policy offices in Brussels (Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, World Wildlife Fund, the European Environmental Bureau, etc.). There are also institutional mechanisms in place that provide openings for non-state actors to engage with the policy process: the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

The EESC originates from the founding treaties of the European Union as a committee to involve economic and social interest groups in the Union's decision-making process.⁸⁸ The EESC is a consultative body that gives representatives from trade unions, business and civil society groups a formal platform to share their views on EU issues. Its civil society members are nominated by EU member state governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union for 5 year periods.

In the preparations for the post-2015 negotiations, the EESC was actively promoting an ambitious agenda through several opinions, conferences and workshops organised jointly with the European Commission and various UN bodies.⁸⁹ These intended to provide a platform for civil society to contribute to the preparation process. The EESC has noted that it will closely monitor the follow-up of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that involving civil society will be of particular importance when it comes to the concrete implementation phase.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the EESC intends to organise a European Sustainable Development Forum to *“provide a structured and independent framework for civil society involvement in the implementation, monitoring and review of the SDGs at EU level.”*⁹¹ This forum is envisaged as a complementary initiative to the various communication channels, policy dialogues and forums already established by NGOs in particular policy areas related to sustainable development.

5.4. National governments and other stakeholders' collaboration to advance the 2030 Agenda

As already indicated the EU member states are already fully integrated into the EU institutions through the Council through which they are involved in EU level debate and agreements on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Equally other institutions such as the EP and the EESC exist as formal platforms through which the views of different stakeholders can be involved. There is also the European Committee of the Regions which represents the views of decentralised government structures across the Union: municipalities, cities, regions, etc. All of these bodies have some experience of dealing with policy coherence in the past and have taken an interest in the post-2015 debate. They can therefore all be expected to pick up the debate on PCSD in the context of the 2030 Agenda providing steps are taken to promote this debate in each setting.

Overall the EU institutions and systems can thus provide a very effective regional structure through which the EU member states, local authorities, CSOs and citizens can collaborate to advance the 2030 Agenda. This is also used as a platform to articulate EU views internationally. The question is more whether, at a time when the EU is suffering from a poorer image, they chose to use these institutions for these purposes. The Commission and the Council are very conscious of the important role the High Level Political Forum will play in the management of the 2030 Agenda and are actively preparing themselves for its first meeting in July 2016.

⁸⁸ See more details on the EESC website: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.about-the-committee>

⁸⁹ EESC (2015a).

⁹⁰ EESC (2015b).

⁹¹ EESC (2015b) p. 7.

6. Enhancing transparency and accountability through effective and robust monitoring and review process

6.1. What are leading examples of applying new and broader measures of progress at the European level?

A number of civil society actors have called for the European Semester process to be used as a tool to monitor and review SDG implementation across the EU. It is a yearly cycle of economic policy coordination where the Commission undertakes a detailed analysis of EU Member States' plans of budgetary, macroeconomic and structural reforms and provides them with country-specific recommendations for the next 12-18 months. The process is linked to monitoring of the Europe 2020 strategy as the recommendations are to contribute to the objectives of the EU's long-term strategy for jobs and growth. In October 2015 the Commission decided to further streamline the European Semester in order to for example put a stronger focus on employment and social performance, enhancing democratic dialogue, promoting convergence by benchmarking and pursuing best practices. While this may address parts of the SDG agenda which should be monitored at EU level it does not cover or seek to balance the three dimensions of the Agenda. The scope and willingness for further reform to be able to effectively monitor internal SDG implementation in Europe is less clear.

The experience from PCD reporting has shown that methodologically it can be very complex to measure progress. Methodological difficulties thus remain around building monitoring frameworks and indicators for PCD priorities, including because of problems with data availability, but also because of the varying interests behind PCD priority setting.⁹² Whereas progress has been made in integrating international development concerns across line ministries or DGs, PCD is often perceived to be difficult in terms of operationalisation. Consultations among PCD practitioners and other actors have therefore often emphasised the need for systematic evidence about the impacts of non-development cooperation policies in partner countries.⁹³ In light of the PCSD framework, more research could also usefully be conducted on different elements of monitoring policy coherence such as causality chains, the definition of specific indicators, or more broadly, political economy dimensions of effective and credible PCSD monitoring mechanisms.⁹⁴

What is clear however is that a large amount of narrative reporting on PCD exists in e.g. the biennial EU PCD Report and the biannual bi-annual meetings with an informal group of PCD contact points from EU member states to share information on PCD priorities and good practices at the EU level through the Network for Policy Coherence for Development. From 2000 onwards, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) started to include a separate chapter devoted to PCD in its peer reviews of member development programmes, including those of EU member states and the European Commission itself. While this is not an example of an EU mechanism for monitoring PCD, it is something that has contributed to debates at EU level in terms of an increase of exchanges between actors on the topic and more public communication of both good and bad practices by different members. Cases of policy incoherence (such as arms exports) were brought out and good practices in promoting PCD were commended in the reports.⁹⁵ The reports were also seen to demonstrate the wide range of experience and progress achieved on PCD across the 28 EU member states. A strength of monitoring of implementation of the SDGs at EU level is that at a regional level the EU could provide useful opportunities for peer learning (incl. voluntary

⁹² Van Seters et al (2015).

⁹³ Keijzer (2010).

⁹⁴ Van seters et al (2015).

⁹⁵ Mackie et al (2007).

reviews), sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets including on e.g. PCSD monitoring and mechanisms.⁹⁶

6.2. Good practices for involving a range of stakeholders in European monitoring, review and reporting?

Some lessons must be drawn from the mechanisms and tools that have been developed to track progress towards PCD. Despite the reiterated political commitments and institutional frameworks and mechanisms set up, challenges prevail in clarifying and measuring the real impact of EU policies on developing countries. Especially in policy areas where the EU and EU MS have strong interests it has not always been easy to reconcile policies with international development objectives. PCSD in the 2030 Agenda will necessarily involve complex and difficult negotiations and interactions between a whole range of actors and stakeholders.

This is confounded by the methodological challenges of quantitatively measuring progress on PCD which are also likely to arise in PCSD discussions. The experience has shown that a ‘PC(S)D systems’ approach may be an important way to involve several mechanisms and actors working in a complementary fashion. Particularly in terms of bringing in outside knowledge and assessments, involvement from a range of actors from civil society and academia is helpful to provide in-depth analysis on policy coherence. An example of this has been the biennial EU PCD Report, which presents a detailed narrative update on the EU PCD thematic priority areas. The production of this report has prompted shadow reports from, for example, the CONCORD network of CSOs and an independent EP PCD report and in that way involves a range of actors in the debate to keep the conversation around PCD going.

The discussion around the indicator for the PCSD target 17.4 in the 2030 Agenda has revealed that there seem to be large differences in understanding about what the PCSD principle means in practice and accordingly how to measure progress. As a consequence, some EU policy-makers feel that there is a need to keep a focus on specific PCD challenges that should be identified within the broader 2030 Agenda and where responsibilities and actions can be more clearly established. Several of the targets in the Agenda already capture aspects of the ‘traditional’ EU PCD agenda, e.g. in trade, illicit financial flows, remittances, food security or sustainable consumption and production. Focusing on implementation of these issues within the new agenda could thus help to achieve progress on ‘traditional’ PCD objectives. Yet at the same time, the broader PCSD lens can help to ensure that coherence with other goals and objectives is promoted. In particular, many actors highlight the fact that PCSD is a progressive notion that could be an *“opportunity for PCD to emerge from the growing pains within the EU and OECD, and to play a significant role in marshalling effort toward both global development objectives and enablers of development.”*⁹⁷ Monitoring and reviewing progress on PCSD will however be faced with translating the conceptual complexity of PCSD into (a set of) operational mechanisms which in turn will be operating in a complex policy and decision making context.

⁹⁶ ESDN (2015).

⁹⁷ King (2016) p. 27.

7. Lessons in SDG implementation from the EU level experience

7.1. Experience and progress on implementation of the SDGs at EU level

The role of the European Commission together with the EU member states in the 2030 Agenda implementation will require a substantial amount of coordination and preparation for the EU to 'speak with one voice'. Since the adoption of the Agenda, considerable expectations have been raised for a strong EU leadership to implement the goals and targets of the agreement. The universality of the 2030 Agenda means that it includes issues that are of common concern to all and poses challenges at several levels. It is apparent that the EU is still grappling with how to translate the Global Goals and targets into actions, commitments, responsibilities and accountability that respects the priorities and circumstances in Europe. It will be crucial to promote discussion to make universality in the 2030 Agenda a reality in the EU.⁹⁸ The EU institutions still need to publish their official plan of action for implementation at the regional level in the EU, however it is clear that the European Commission is looking both into the external and internal dimensions of implementation where First Vice-President Timmermans and HR/VP Mogherini will play key roles.

Early on in the post-2015 process, the EU acknowledged the integrated approach needed to achieve sustainable development, and brought preparations for the separate UN processes together under an overarching framework. This early work, and other initiatives such as for example the Commission's own work structure where commissioners in charge of the various DGs come together in different working groups regularly, are examples of how the EU strives to pursue an integrated approach. The question of whether there is a broad EU ownership across the Commission for the implementation of the SDGs will become apparent during the coming months of implementation. Several of the main actors involved in the negotiations, for instance DGs ENVIRONMENT, CLIMA and DEVCO, shared a feeling of ownership for the SDGs and set a valuable example of close collaboration between actors who deal with the external and internal implementation of the Agenda to establish some degree of coherence between those dimensions at least.

A number of targets in the 2030 Agenda specify objectives where action is crucial to achieve the desired benefits for developing or least developed countries. Some of these areas already correspond to existing PCD commitments of the EU, for instance in the area of debt sustainability, reducing transaction costs of migrant remittances or provision of access to affordable and essential medicines to developing countries. In terms of the external aspects of SDG implementation, the EU therefore has a large body of experience to draw from. For an actionable European PCSD agenda, however further specification of how to achieve these objectives through European policies and the indicators to track progress is needed. More effort and research is required to clarify how the EU can track progress towards PC(S)D, to adapt the EU's existing PCD commitments to the new agenda and to integrate learning about the impact of policies on various sustainable development dimensions into the policy-making cycle through engaging with various stakeholders.⁹⁹

It is clear that political commitment across the board will be a vital enabler for the successful implementation - the 2030 Agenda needs to be seen as a 'shared priority' by the EU institutions and member states. A strategic approach endorsed by all institutions would be crucial for this. Visible commitment and guidance from the highest level is also crucial to ensure all EU institutions and member

⁹⁸ ECDPM (2015).

⁹⁹ ECDPM (2016).

states prioritise the Agenda during policy-making, as well as to align various interests and institutions behind the Agenda.

7.2. Lessons in integrated and coherent policy making

As outlined in the sections above and in Figure 1, the EU has a long history of dealing with policy coherence and in particular PCD. The notion goes back to the establishment of the European Union and a more systematic approach to PCD has gained foot in the EU institutions and member states since the early 2000s. There exists a considerable amount of literature and experience that will be important to draw lessons from for dealing with the new concept of PCSD in the 2030 Agenda. While the Commission remains to communicate its official stance on PCSD in Europe's approach to SDG implementation, there are indications that PCD work will continue, particularly regarding coherence of policies in terms of their external impacts. Yet there is also a recognition of the need to change and adapt to the PCSD principle and the broadened agenda that it implies, in particular its universal and more complex nature will be need to explored further.

The EU PCD experience comes with a range of 'PCD mechanisms' which aim to promote PCD and monitor and review EU policy making. For instance formal and informal networking as well as ensuring collaborative work between different but complementary mechanisms are seen as strengths in terms of sustaining an on-going debate and reflection among actors. However, methodologically, PCD impacts are often challenging to measure quantitatively and progress in this area may risk being seen as quite intangible or technocratic. In practice PCD often comes down to political decisions as it involves discussions with a range of actors and stakeholders whose objectives may not easily be reconciled.

These challenges are important considerations for understanding the role of PCSD in SDG implementation. The discussion around indicators at the global level has revealed some confusion around the understanding of PCSD and the resulting agreement on indicator 17.14.1 is not seen as satisfactory (particularly to experienced PCD practitioners). A debate on translating the commitment into regional and national indicators in Europe will be important to ensure a shared agreement and understanding on monitoring of SDG 17 in particular.

While the EU PCD experience provides a useful contribution to the discussion on SDG implementation in Europe, a wide range of other experiences of coherent policy making should also be brought into the debate. The PCD experience presents many insights into the international impacts of EU policy making, but it remains largely unrelated to broader work on ensuring internal coherence. This is part of the complex transition to working with PCSD. The EU also has extensive experience in integrated and coherent policy making for example in the environmental and climate change domains.

Some features such as the current institutional organisation of the Commission are seen to be drivers of a broad notion of policy coherence in existing policy decision making. President Juncker's College of Commissioners is organised according to clusters of competency areas that are headed by Commission Vice-Presidents in order to favour cross-cutting policy making. For example, for external policy a group of Commissioners chaired by the HR/VP is expected to ensure coherence between different policy strands and a common approach for EU action externally.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the Commission's key role in initiating EU policy processes already requires comprehensive internal coordination between DGs and with the EEAS, e.g. through the inter-service consultation process. Nevertheless, silo thinking in the European institutions remains a challenge.

¹⁰⁰ European Commission (2015d).

Policy silos will need to be rethought within a universal paradigm of development. While better and increased communication and coordination structures as well as increased awareness about the joint goals of PCSD in the Agenda 2030 context are important to bridge this gap, focusing on institutional coordination structures and institutional mechanisms alone is not sufficient. Achieving inter-linkages between different actors and stakeholders is important.

The single most important lesson from the EU PCD experience is however that improving policy coherence is a long-term process that requires strong political leadership and efforts that need to be maintained over many years and across successive changes in governments. A 'PCD system' approach that integrates several different complementary mechanisms with sustained political will provides a useful way of visualising the tools and effort required. It would seem that such a system could be adapted to accommodate the shift of mind-set required by the SDGs. In particular it would allow for the multi-stakeholder approach implementation the 2030 Agenda requires and presents a framework through which political will may be sustained and politicians and other actors will be held mutually accountable to achieving progress over the longer term.

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About ECDPM

ECDPM was established in 1986 as an independent foundation to improve European cooperation with the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). Its main goal today is to broker effective partnerships between the European Union and the developing world, especially Africa. ECDPM promotes inclusive forms of development and cooperates with public and private sector organisations to better manage international relations. It also supports the reform of policies and institutions in both Europe and the developing world. One of ECDPM's key strengths is its extensive network of relations in developing countries, including emerging economies. Among its partners are multilateral institutions, international centres of excellence and a broad range of state and non-state organisations.

Thematic priorities

ECDPM organises its work around four themes:

- Reconciling values and interests in the external action of the EU and other international players
- Promoting economic governance and trade for inclusive and sustainable growth
- Supporting societal dynamics of change related to democracy and governance in developing countries, particularly Africa
- Addressing food security as a global public good through information and support to regional integration, markets and agriculture

Approach

ECDPM is a “think and do tank”. It links policies and practice using a mix of roles and methods. ECDPM organises and facilitates policy dialogues, provides tailor-made analysis and advice, participates in South-North networks and does policy-oriented research with partners from the South.

ECDPM also assists with the implementation of policies and has a strong track record in evaluating policy impact. ECDPM's activities are largely designed to support institutions in the developing world to define their own agendas. ECDPM brings a frank and independent perspective to its activities, entering partnerships with an open mind and a clear focus on results.

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ECDPM Discussion Papers

ECDPM Discussion Papers present initial findings of work-in-progress at the Centre to facilitate meaningful and substantive exchange on key policy questions. The aim is to stimulate broader reflection and informed debate on EU external action, with a focus on relations with countries in the South.

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