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The Future of the EU SDS in light of the Rio+20 outcomes

by

Umberto Pisano, Andreas Endl & Gerald Berger

This ESDN Quarterly Report (QR) provides a comprehensive overview on the Rio+20 final outcome text, the EU SDS and the Europe 2020 Strategy and how they relate to each other. In this sense, the comparative analysis presented focuses on objectives, topics and governance mechanisms stressed in these policy documents. The goal of this QR is thus to shed light on similarities and differences between Rio+20 outcomes and important European policy strategies. Moreover, this QR takes into account the discussions and exchanges held among participants at the 9th ESDN Workshop, "The Future of the EU SDS – Expectations and Possible Contributions from the ESDN" that took place in Brussels on 21-22 February 2013 as well as recent policy developments at European level.

The QR is divided into five main chapters: The first chapter presents the Rio+20 process and its implementation on the EU level. The second chapter offers a comparative analysis of Rio+20 outcome document and EU policy strategies, including two subchapters that take into consideration, on the one hand, the SD topics in Rio+20 and how the EU policy strategies relate to these topics; on the other hand, special attention is dedicated to governance mechanisms and structures. In the third chapter, we describe those objectives included in the EU SDS of 2006 that have not been achieved yet; and, therefore, we analyze them also in the light of the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives and targets. In the fourth chapter, we consider recent developments at European level, such as the proposal for a 7th EAP and the EU Commission Communication on Rio+20 that was published in February 2013. Finally, as concluding chapter, we provide some interrogatives and points for reflection that aim to stimulate discussion are considered as important for further debates.

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Introduction

This Quarterly Report (QR) is largely based on the Discussion Paper that was prepared for the 9th ESDN workshop held in Brussels on 21-22 February 2013. The QR offers a first overview on the Rio+20 final outcome text, the EU SDS and the Europe 2020 Strategy on how they relate to each other. In this sense, the comparative analysis focuses on objectives, topics and governance mechanisms stressed in these policy documents. The goal of this report is thus to shed light on similarities and differences between Rio+20 outcomes and important European policy strategies.

In order to allow for a comprehensive analysis of policy documents, while keeping the load of information manageable, we will focus on the following documents:

- Rio+20 final outcome document, "The future we want":
- Europe 2020 Strategy, "A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" (with special consideration of its accompanying 7 Flagship Initiatives and important roadmaps)
- EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) of 2006 (with special consideration of its accompanying 2 reviews)

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1. The Rio+20 process and its implementation on the EU level

The Rio+20 Conference

Commonly known as the **Rio+20 Conference**, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) took place in Rio de Janeiro from 20-22 June 2012, twenty years after the UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), which was also hosted in Rio in 1992[1]. The main three objectives of the Rio+20 Conference were: 1) *to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development; 2) to assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development*; and 3) *to address new and emerging challenges*.

The conference focused mainly on **two themes**: (i) a **green economy** in the context of SD and poverty eradication; and (ii) the **institutional framework** for SD. The conference finally produced an 'Outcome Document', entitled "**The Future We Want**".

The *final outcome document* consists of 53 pages and 283 paragraphs, and it is structured in six main sections: (1) A common vision [para 1-13]; (2) renewing political commitment [para 14-55]; (3) Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication [para 56-74]; (4) institutional framework for sustainable development [para 75-103]; (5) framework for action and follow-up, incl. 26 thematic areas and cross-sectoral issues [para 104-251]; and, (6) means of implementation [para 252-283].

Where Europe stands on Rio+20

With its **Communication, "Rio+20: towards the green economy and better governance"**, (EC, 2011), the European Commission made a first commitment towards contributing to the Rio+20 process prior to the event in June 2012. The European Commission argued in this communication that "[the Rio+20] outcome will inspire the EU's strategy and actions for sustainable development, and in particular help further shape the EU Europe 2020 strategy as an effective tool for delivering on sustainable development (EC, 2011)." More specifically, with regard to the Europe 2020 Strategy, the flagship initiatives are of direct relevance for this Communication by envisaging a range of new policy measures including action on raw materials, energy efficiency, biodiversity, as well roadmaps to decarbonise the economy, energy and transport.

On 25 October 2012, the **Council of the European Union** adopted the **"Conclusions on Rio+20: Outcome and follow-up to the UNCSD 2012 Summit"** that are particularly

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[1] Pisano, Umberto, Endl, Andreas, Berger, Gerald. 2012. **The Rio+20 Conference 2012: Objectives, processes and outcomes**, ESDN Quarterly Report June 2012. http://www.sd-network.eu/quarterly%20reports/report%20files/pdf/2012-June-The_Rio+20_Conference_2012.pdf

important for this analysis. In these Council Conclusions, paragraph 3 clearly reaffirms "the **undiminished resolve of the EU and its Member States to an ambitious follow up to Rio+20** and to set in motion actions and initiatives to **move forward and fully operationalize and implement all the commitments in 'The Future We Want' at EU and Member States level**, in particular **through the European Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS), which therefore should be reviewed as soon as possible, at the latest in 2014**, taking into account the communication to be adopted by the Commission in the first quarter of 2013, as well as through the Europe 2020 Strategy and by building bridges, engaging partners and building stronger alliances at regional and international level". The Conclusions also stress "the need to consider and review (…) all other relevant EU and national policies, strategies and programmes, and to implement through them the Rio+20 outcomes" (para.4). Additionally, it expresses the Council's commitment "to continue addressing issues pertaining to the Rio+20 outcome and its follow-up process in a comprehensive, balanced, coordinated and coherent manner across all related policy areas, including the interlinkages between them" (para.6), and further concludes renewing "its political commitment to move towards sustainable development and the resolve of the EU and its Member States to contribute to the common global challenge, push for the ambitious implementation of what has been agreed at Rio +20, and ensure effective action for sustainable development, inclusive green economy and poverty eradication" (para.37).

At the moment, the **European Commission is planning a Communication that will address follow-up to Rio+20**. For this reason the Commission opened a [public consultation on Rio+20 follow up](#) (in place for 12 weeks between the 16 October 2012 and 15 January 2013) with the objective to provide input to the European Commission for the development of specific actions and measures. This consultation has been organized with the help of a pre-structured form that included 20 questions, plus the chance to add other issues that were not mentioned in the form. These 20 questions were divided into five sections that – in the Commission's view – could best describe the main outcomes of Rio+20: (1) the **inclusive Green economy**, as an important tool to achieve sustainable development; (2) **action in priority areas**, such as poverty eradication, sustainable agriculture, water, sustainable energy, decent work for all, oceans and fisheries, and sustainable consumption and production; (3) agreement to develop **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**; (4) agreement to develop options on an effective **Sustainable Development Financing Strategy**; and (5) strengthening the **institutional framework for sustainable development**.

Reflecting on the content of the consultation form, **three impressions** seem particularly relevant for our discourse: firstly, there is a very **strong focus on the 'Green Economy'** theme which appears to overshadow almost entirely the fact that sustainable development needs to be at center stage as promised by the Rio+20 Outcome Document. Secondly, there is **no mention in this form of the EU Sustainable**

Development Strategy that is planned to be reviewed by the Commission, and still be an important input for a follow-up of Rio+20 since it aims at securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development. Thirdly, all accents are in fact dedicated to the Europe 2020 Strategy, and especially to ***'growth' and 'employment'***, therefore loosing the chance of considering the balanced approach, which is foreseen by SD, where the environment is prominent as well as the economy.

In this light, this QR aims to provide a common ground for examining and reflecting on these statements, on the direction the EU should take and those pertaining issues that seem important for the sustainable development of Europe.

EU policy strategies

The following part of the study highlights whether the most recent and **important EU policy strategies** are in line with the abovementioned commitment towards Rio+20, and to what extent certain issues are still missing and need to be taken into account by future policy recommendations and upcoming reviews to successfully implement the Rio+20 objectives. We, therefore, offer a comparative analysis of the EU policy strategies and related follow-up documents.

2. Comparative analysis of Rio+20 outcome document and EU policy strategies

EU policy strategies included

In this part of the quarterly report, we provide an overview of the documents used for the comparative analysis – the **Rio+20 final outcome document**, the **Europe 2020 Strategy (Europe 2020)**, and the **Renewed European Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS)** – and the rationale for selecting them.

In this regard, the analysis will focus on the documents mentioned below in order to enable a broad perspective on the policy processes and content of the corresponding strategies. We are fully aware of the fact that in the case of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the overall strategy document and related Flagship Initiatives do not cover its whole dimension. However, we will focus on the Flagship Initiatives only, due to (i) the different nature of accompanying documents in each Flagship Initiative (e.g. EU Innovation Partnerships, roadmaps and action plans) among different FI's, (ii) the total number of FIs documents (e.g. 16 key proposals for the FI on a Resource efficient Europe), and (iii) their uneven spread across FIs which could result in an over or underrepresentation of certain topics. Therefore, in order to allow for a comprehensive analysis of policy documents while keeping the load of information manageable, we will focus on the following documents:

Policy processes and strategies	Corresponding documents for analysis	
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)	*Rio+20 final outcome document "The future we want"*	
Europe 2020 Strategy	*EUROPE 2020 "A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"*	
	+ accompanying 7 Flagship Initiatives (FI)	
	FI 1	Digital agenda for Europe
	FI 2	Innovation Union
	FI 3	Youth on the move
	FI 4	Resource efficient Europe
	FI 5	An industrial policy for the globalisation era
	FI 6	An agenda for new skills and jobs
	FI 7	European platform against poverty
Renewed European Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS)	*EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) of 2006*	
	+ accompanying 2 reviews of the EU SDS (R)	
	R 1	2007 First progress report
	R 2	2009 Review of the EU SDS

2.1. SD topics in Rio+20 and EU policy strategies

2.1.1. Addressing emerging topics and challenges in the context of SD

Key topics in the Rio+20 outcome document

In this section, we will give an overview about key topics addressed within the Rio+20 outcome document. Moreover, we contrast topics and challenges mentioned within Rio+20 with issues included in the **Europe 2020 Strategy (Europe 2020)** and accompanying Flagship Initiatives as well as the **Renewed European Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS)**.

Methodology

Our study is a '*qualitative first analysis*' based on a ***keywords search*** within the mentioned documents that we collected in a comprehensive and very large spread-sheet utilising the software Microsoft Excel. What we here refer to as **key topics** have been identified according to chapters and headlines within the respective documents. Further level of detail in the differentiation of topics with regard to the Rio+20 final outcome document was achieved by a key issue search within the respective chapter. Essentially, ***all the headlines and important chapters from the Rio+20 outcome document have been summarized in a way that the reader can more easily grasp their meaning and compare them across EU policy documents***; for example: the Rio+20 heading "*Promoting full and productive employment, decent work for all and social protection*" has been divided into an "employment" and "social protection" key topics, while the heading "*Desertification, land degradation and drought*" has been summarized as "land degradation". The headline "*mountains*" is the only headline which has not been chosen as a separate key topic due to its rather narrow scope and crosscutting nature (i.e. referring to issues of biodiversity, land and ecosystem degradation etc. which are covered by other Rio+20 topics).

Economic and social aspects

On a very general level, both the EU SDS and Europe 2020 taken together cover many topics addressed by the Rio+20 final outcome document. This especially applies to economic and social issues. More specifically, most of the very prominent issues of Rio+20, such as green economy and poverty eradication, are covered by the EU SDS as wells as the Europe 2020: they can be explicitly attributed to particular chapters and sections within those documents. More specific and thematic key topics, such as *technology transfer*, *water and sanitation*, *disaster risk reduction*, and *access to information and intellectual property rights* are addressed within Europe 2020, whereas topics such as e*nhancing financial support for SD*, *international financial institutions for SD*, *demographic changes*, or *gender equality* are dealt with by the EU SDS.

However, by taking a closer look on similarities among Rio+20 topics and topics addressed in the EU policy strategies, substantial differences can be revealed: considering the Rio+20 key topic *Health,* for instance, the EU SDS addresses it in a balanced and comprehensive manner regarding policy measures and objectives. By dedicating a separate chapter on public health, the EU SDS addresses the multidimensionality of the issue through aspects such as impacts of chemicals on human

health, health inequalities or mental health. In this regard, Europe 2020 tackles the issue of health in a far less comprehensive way by focusing on aspects such as work health and safety (within the FI "Innovation Union"). *Demographic change* is another example of an extensively tackled Rio+20 topic through the EU SDS, dealt within the section "Social inclusion, demography and migration" through issues such modernisation of social protection, migration policy and integration of migrants and their families, addressing the challenge of raising employment of older workers and women. The Europe 2020 Strategy addresses "**Demographic changes**" partially taking only in consideration the issues of an ageing population, pension systems and migration.

As Table 2.1 below shows, a more in-depth analysis (indicated by the asterisks "*") displays **the degree by which Rio+20 topics are covered by the respective EU policy strategy** (i.e. we distinguish between the categories "extensively covered" [**] through a separate dedicated section or directly addressed through targets and objectives, and "marginally covered" [*] through a single and related statements within a chapter covering a different thematic topic). The Rio+20 key topics displayed in Table 2.1 below are the result of a qualitative document analysis: In general, they reflect the structure of the Rio+20 document, however, they have been rephrased in a way to make them more easily understandable for the reader. Furthermore, they resemble the sequential structure of the Rio+20 document, in which the Rio+20 key topics with the numbers in the table from 1-7 originate from part I (*A common vision*, *renewing political commitment)*, III (*Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication)*, and IV (*Institutional framework for sustainable development)*. The following Rio+20 key topics (numbers 8-33 in the table) comprise issues from part V (*Thematic areas and cross-sectoral issues)*. Whereas some of the thematic areas and cross-sectoral issues, such as *Food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture*, however, have been further differentiated due to their rather cross-cutting and integrative nature. Others, such as *Small island developing states*, *Least developed countries* and *Africa* have been merged together into one Rio+20 key topic, "Special consideration of SIDS, LDCs, Africa". The Rio+20 key topics (numbers 35-38 in the table) resemble headlines extracted from part VI *(Means of implementation)*.

Table 2.1: Comparison of Rio+20 key topics and their coverage by EU SDS and Europe 2020

	Rio+20 key topic	EU SDS	Europe 2020
1	Stakeholder participation	**	*
2	Green economy	**	**
3	Institutional framework	*	
4	Strengthening intergovernmental arrangements	*	*
5	International environmental governance	**	
6	International financial institutions	*	
7	Accounting for different scales (Regional, national, subnational and local)		*
8	Poverty eradication	**	**

9	Food security and nutrition		
10	Sustainable agriculture	*	*
11	Water and sanitation		*
12	Energy	**	**
13	Sustainable tourism		
14	Sustainable transport	**	**
15	Cities		
16	Health	**	*
17	Demographic changes	**	*
18	Employment	**	**
19	Social protection	*	*
20	Oceans and seas	*	
21	Special consideration of SIDS, LDCs, Africa	**	
22	Disaster risk reduction		*
23	Climate change	**	**
24	Forests	**	
25	Biodiversity	**	*
26	Land degradation	*	
27	Chemicals	**	
28	Waste	**	*
29	Sustainable consumption and production	**	*
30	Mining		
31	Education	**	**
32	Gender equality	*	
33	Monitoring (indicators and targets for Sustainable Development Goals)	**	*
34	Enhancing financial support for SD	*	
35	Enhanced capacity-building	*	
36	Technology transfer		*
37	Access to information and intellectual property rights		*
38	International trade	*	*

Legend: [blank cell] not covered; [*] marginally covered; [**] extensively covered;   © ESDN 2013

Environmental and governance aspects

When taking a view on **environmental and governance issues**, the picture of EU SDS and Europe 2020 coverage gets even more differentiated. There exist just very few specific key topics such as sustainable tourism, cities, and mining, which are not explicitly dealt with by either the EU SDS or Europe 2020. Whereas the EU SDS addresses a large number of key topics of Rio+20, Europe 2020 lacks substantial coverage with regard to, for example, forests or chemicals. Especially with regard to international SD and governance aspects, Europe 2020 misses direct attention to some important topics: institutional framework for SD, international environmental governance, special consideration of SIDS, LDCs, Africa, and enhanced capacity-building for SD.

Both, the EU SDS and Europe 2020 are characterized by some substantial differences in the context of a more focused approach or discussion on specific issues. This especially applies to the more thematic Rio+20 environment key topics such as *chemicals*, *forests*, *biodiversity*, *waste* and *sustainable consumption and production*.

In the area of governance, EU SDS engages in an explicit and extensive coverage of different aspects. In this respect, separate sections are dedicated to key Rio+20 topics, for example, stakeholder participation and monitoring (indicators and targets for Sustainable Development Goals), covering issues such as awareness raising and communication activities on SD, or producing a layman's guide and communication tools to the EU SDS strategy, and developing and monitoring a comprehensive set of sustainable development indicators (SDIs), or establishing working group on SDIs, respectively. Furthermore, special consideration is given to the global perspective on the environment and development perspective through comprehensively addressing respective Rio+20 topics (please see Table 1).

2.1.2. Addressing the way Europe 2020 relates to the Rio+20 topics

When looking at the **table 2.1** (Comparison of Rio+20 key topics and their coverage by EU SDS and Europe 2020), we can see that a number of topics are addressed by both the EUSDS and the Europe 2020 strategy. In this section, we try to understand how these topics were addressed by the Europe 2020 strategy and therefore provide a qualitative analysis on them. For this analysis we chose to limit ourselves to two topics: Health and Education. Our guiding question has been: *How are these "Rio+20" topics treated and covered within the Europe 2020 strategy?*

Health

For the first topic **Health**, the Rio+20 outcome document describes it by using a very forward-looking definition; in fact, paragraph 138 (the first of the dedicated section 'Health and population') defines health as a *"precondition for and an outcome and indicator of all three dimensions of sustainable development"*. A strong focus is also put on physical, mental and social well-being, as well as on the social and environmental determinants of health. Furthermore, health systems should have an equitable universal coverage and, therefore, it is very important to consider the access to prevention, treatment, care and support and at the same to medicines. Another crucial aspect is to reduce maternal and child mortality.

The **Europe 2020 strategy** does not address the health issue in the same way. In Europe 2020, **health seems largely connected to growth, productivity and efficiency.** Health is very much related to working conditions and healthy ageing; for instance in the flagship initiative An Agenda for New Skills and Job, an objective is to ensure *"minimum standards across the EU on working conditions, health and safety at work"*. In the flagship initiative European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, the health issue is treated very much in relation to poverty, access for all to healthcare (including people with mental problems) and to efficiency of health systems. Unfortunately, health is not very well explored in relation with environmental problems not even in the flagship initiative A Resource-Efficient Europe, where a

few remarks are made associating it with air quality or adaptation to climate change. **Therefore, health – as defined in the Rio+20 outcomes document and in relation to sustainable development – is not well covered in Europe 2020.**

In the Rio+20 outcome document, the topic **Educatio**n is very important. Education has its own dedicated section that comprises seven paragraphs (para. 229 to 235). Education is considered as a "right" and the *full access to quality education at all levels is deemed as an essential condition for achieving sustainable development* (para.229). Also crucial is the need for "ensuring equal access to education for persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, local communities, ethnic minorities and people living in rural areas". In paragraph 230, two aspects appear as very important: on the one hand, younger generations are seen as the custodians of the future. On the other hand, 'The future we want' expresses the determination of preparing people to pursue sustainable development, of developing sustainability curricula. Therefore, it is also recognized a resolve to *integrate sustainable development more actively into education* (para.233).

In the **Europe 2020 strategy**, the topic is treated very differently. Education **is addressed with a productivity and efficiency perspective**. The focus is on excellence and on provision of the right skills for the labour market. Education has very much to do with *employment education*. In fact, the focus is on *equipping people with the right skills for employment.* Education, in Europe 2020, is thus not treated as balanced as in Rio+20, nor it is related to sustainable development in any case. However, in the flagship initiative 'European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion', education is related also with social exclusion and poverty issues, social mobility, disadvantage and inequality, but also with migration and discrimination. Strong accent is put on pre-primary and early childhood education and care; at the same time, strengthening research and the role of researchers are considered two important aspects, although always related to the 'growth' perspective. As with health, **education is not covered in a balanced and comprehensive manner in Europe 2020 so as to meet the objectives mentioned in the Rio+20 outcome document.**

A last remark goes to a similar keywords text search we applied on the mentioned eight European policy documents (Europe 2020 and accompanying seven flagship initiatives); we were in fact interested in looking for three essential keywords that are expressed very comprehensibly the Rio+20 outcome. Therefore, we chose '**Sustainable Development**', '**Equity**' and '**Well-being**' and we searched them within all the mentioned documents. It is very surprising to say that we almost did not find these keywords at all. Only two mentions are made. The first one at page 17, under the box 'Flagship Initiative: "An industrial policy for the globalisation era", it is stated that at the national level, EU Member States will need "*to work closely with stakeholders in different sectors (business, trade unions, academics, NGOs, consumer organisations) to identify bottlenecks and develop a shared analysis on how to maintain a strong industrial and knowledge base and **put the EU in a position to lead global sustainable development**"*. The second mention of sustainable development is done under the flagship initiative **A resource-efficient Europe** where, in the context of the section 'resource

efficiency as an increasing global concern', the document explains "the EU has a strong interest in deepening cooperation on resource efficiency with international partners. This would contribute to the EU's objective of **sustainable development** and high-impact poverty reduction strategies in resource-reliant developing countries" (p.9). However, sustainable development appears as only related the issue of resource efficiency as, for instance, confirmed by the following paragraph: "The Rio+20 international conference on sustainable development in 2012 will focus on the 'green economy' and environmental governance and will provide a good opportunity for the EU to address resource efficiency with global partners" (p.9).

2.1.3. A more in-depth analysis of selected Rio+20 key topics in Europe 2020

Methodology and rationale

Until now, we analysed all Rio+20 key topics and looked at their representation in the EU SDS and the Europe 2020 strategy. With regard to Europe 2020, we clearly limited ourselves in looking at the main strategy document and the accompanying seven flagship initiatives to be able to present a sufficient analysis of the subjects. However, we are fully aware that Europe 2020 is not only described in those main documents, but in various other documents that are inextricably connected with the main documents. For instance, great importance is given to the so-called **'roadmaps'** (i.e. the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe) or other strategies (i.e. the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020).

For this reason, and given our limited resources, we chose to provide a more in-depth analysis of **selected three Rio+20 key topics** that were chosen based on a step-by-step process. A first step consisted in screening the Europe 2020 strategy in parallel with the Rio+20 Outcome Document "The future we want" and its key topics to highlight the number of those topics mentioned in Europe 2020. Then, the same screening process was performed with the inclusion of the seven Flagship Initiatives. Those documents were again studied in light of the Rio+20 Outcome Document and its key topics. Whenever a topic was not included in these EU documents, we signalled them with a blank cell. A third-level of analysis was then dedicated to look at those topics that were not included and, therefore, a list was produced with the intention of providing a comprehensive overview. From this screening, the following **fifteen Rio+20 Key Topics are not covered by the Europe 2020 and the seven flagship initiatives**:

1. Food security and nutrition;
2. Forests;
3. Chemicals;
4. Gender equality;
5. Sustainable tourism;
6. Cities;
7. Oceans and seas;
8. Land degradation;
9. Mining;
10. Institutional framework;
11. International environmental governance;

12. Special consideration of SIDS, LDCs, Africa;
13. Enhanced capacity-building;
14. International financial institutions;
15. Enhancing financial support for SD.

From this list, we decided to look into two topics more in-depth: (i) **Food security and nutrition**; and, (ii) **Forests**. For these three topics, we identified the main accompanying documents under the flagship initiatives (i.e. roadmaps, white papers, framework directives) to see whether we could find in those documents a mention of those Rio+20 topics. For this analysis (as **table 2.2 shows**), we considered four levels of ranking: (a) not addressed; (b) slightly addressed; (c) generally addressed; (d) substantially addressed. By "slightly addressed" we refer to a topic that has been mentioned only briefly. By "generally addressed" we refer to a topic that has been mentioned many times. And by "substantially addressed" we mean that, for the specific topic, either targets or goals or objective or specific policies have been outlined.

From this in-depth analysis, we could be able to provide a more substantial overview of the way Europe 2020 included Rio+20 relevant topics and how much its perspective appears to be in line with the Rio+20 outcome document. Firstly we discovered that between these two topics, none of them is comprehensively addressed in Europe 2020 and the key topic **Forests** is _not addressed at all_. In case of "**Food security and nutrition**", only one of three main sub-topics is _generally addressed_ (that we extracted from the Rio+20 outcome document as the most representative for the respective key topic); the other two subtopics are not addressed.

Table 2.2:

A more in-depth analysis

Rio+20 Key Topic	Topic in detail (Key-words selected)	Addressed by Europe 2020 documents	Where?		
			Europe 2020	Flagship Initiatives	Roadmaps
Food security and nutrition	Access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food;	**Generally**	X	X	**Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe**
	Fundamental right for food;	**Not addressed**	X	X	X
	Empowering rural women	**Not addressed**	X	X	X
Forests	Sustainable forest management;	**Not addressed**	X	X	X
	Reforestation, restoration and afforestation;	**Not addressed**	X	X	X
	strengthen forest governance frameworks;	**Not addressed**	X	X	X

	integrating sustainable forest management objectives and practices into the mainstream of economic policy and decision-making;	Not addressed	X	X		X

2.1.4. The global dimension of SD and intra-generational equity

The global dimension of SD

Considering the **global nature of most SD challenges**, the Rio+20 document adds an international development dimension (i.e. assisting developing countries in dealing with these challenges) to most thematic topics not explicitly targeting development assistance such as energy, forests, biodiversity, etc. In this respect, we can distinguish between issues of explicit global concern (i.e. global SD challenges which require concerted action at the international level) such as climate change or biodiversity and issues targeting development assistance in specific areas. Therefore, in this section's comparative analysis of Rio+20 and EU policies we highlight the inclusion and matching of abovementioned issues related to explicit global concern.

With respect to global SD challenges within the Rio+20 final outcome document and their uptake in European policies, **Table 2.3** below provides an overview about the most important key topics. At a first glance, the EU SDS addresses most of the Rio+20 global SD topics with special consideration of governance (i.e. *institutional framework*, *strengthening intergovernmental arrangements*, *special consideration of SIDS, LDCs, Africa* and *monitoring*) as well as environmental issues such as *oceans and seas*, *biodiversity* and *climate change*. Especially in the area of overall financing for SD (i.e. global SD challenges of *international financial institutions* and *enhancing financial support for SD*), the EU SDS plays a substantial role through its explicit contribution to MDGs and investment and development assistance.

In general, Europe 2020 addresses environmental issues such as biodiversity and climate change in a less comprehensive way compared to the EU SDS, whereas topics such as *technology transfer* and *access to information and intellectual property rights* are only covered by Europe 2020. While governance issues of global character are fully addressed by the EU SDS, Europe 2020 mainly contributes to *strengthening intergovernmental arrangements* and *monitoring/indicators*.

In the following **table 2.3**, we offer a more in-depth analysis (indicated by the asterisks "*") that shows the degree by which **Rio+20 global SD topics** are covered by the respective EU policy strategy (i.e. we distinguish between the categories "extensively covered" [**] through a separate dedicated section or directly addressed through targets and objectives, and "marginally covered" [*] through a single and related statements within a chapter

covering a different thematic topic).

Rio+20 key topic (global SD challenges)	EU SDS		Europe 2020	
International financial institutions	European Investment Bank contribution to MDG	*		
Enhancing financial support for SD	Official development assistance and contribution to MDGs	*		
Technology transfer			Facilitate collaboration and knowledge transfer in the EU only	*
Access to information and intellectual property rights			Promote open access of research	*
International trade	International trade as a tool for achieving SD	*	A trade strategy for tackling global imbalances and market access	*
Oceans and seas	Avoiding overexploitation of renewable natural resources (e.g. fisheries)	*		
Climate change	Reduce GHG emissions and enhance adaptation	**	Reduce GHG emissions	*
Biodiversity	Halting the loss of biodiversity	**	Halt further loss to and restore biodiversity	*
Institutional framework	Strengthened mandate and stable, adequate and predictable financing for UN	*		
Strengthening intergovernmental arrangements	Strengthening multilateral environmental agreements	*	International cooperation on the environment	*
International environmental governance	Improving international environmental governance	**		
Special consideration of SIDS, LDCs, Africa	Raising ODA and implement the EU strategies for Africa	**		
Monitoring (indicators and targets for Sustainable Development Goals)	Contribution to MDGs	**	Ensure appropriate indicator frameworks	*

2.2. Governance mechanisms and structures

2.2.1.   A comparison of governance mechanisms and structures

In this part, we explore substantial differences and similarities between the Rio+20 outcome document and European policy strategies (EU SDS, Europe 2020) with regard to governance mechanisms and structures. More specifically, the analysis focuses on: (i) governance principles and mechanisms for SD; (ii) participatory approaches; (iii) policy learning through monitoring and evaluation; (iv) the implementation of Rio+20; and (v) governance structures and institutions.

Governance structures and institutions

The following **table 2.4** provides an overview on distinct **key aspects of the governance structure and institutions of Rio+20, Europe 2020 and the EU SDS**.

Table 2.4: Comparative analysis on governance structures and institutions among the Rio+20 final outcome document, the EU SDS and the Europe 2020 Strategy (adapted and extended based on Pisano et al., 2011)

	Rio+20 final outcome document	EU SDS	Europe 2020 Strategy
Main strategy/ policy document	Rio+20 outcome document, "The Future We Want"	EU SDS (2006)	Europe 2020 (2010)
Responsible Unit	**UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)** as the highest level forum for sustainable development in the UN (in future replaced by the high-level political forum for sustainable development)	**Secretariat-General**, European Commission	**Secretariat-General**, European Commission
Orientation	**Renewing and strengthening commitment to sustainable development** and to ensuring the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations	Aims to achieve **SD, quality of life and well-being** in Europe in the long-term.	Aims to develop strategic **solution to bring the EU out of the crisis situation** and to deliver high levels of **employment, productivity and social cohesion**. It mainly focuses on economic growth and employment, but includes various environmental issues (e.g. climate change, energy, resource efficiency)
Governance Architecture	Elaboration of a **framework** for **further implementation[2] and follow** up of the Rio+20 outcome document, guaranteeing **accountability** as well as **monitoring progress**.	**Bi-annual progress reports** were written by the European Commission that reflect on the progress towards the objectives of the EU SDS. The 2007 progress report was based on Member States reports and the Eurostat Monitoring Report; the 2009 progress report was mainly based on the Eurostat Monitoring report and not Member States reporting was undertaken. Although requested in the EU SDS, no	The strategy is organised around a thematic approach and more focused country surveillance. More specifically: **Thematic approach**: deliver headline targets agreed at EU level combining concrete actions at EU and national levels; **Country reporting**: help Member States define and implement exit strategies to restore

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[2] http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1136matrix1.pdf

		review was undertaken in 2011.	macroeconomic stability, identify national bottlenecks and return their economies to sustainable growth and public finances.
		The **coordination with Member States is rather weak**: on the one hand, NSDS objectives are not always linked to the EU SDS and, on the other hand, no institutionalised coordination with national SD coordinators – the SDS Coordinators groups has not been called since 2007.	The monitoring of the strategy is integrated into the "European semester" (approved in September 2010).
Objectives	The structure comprehends 6 main sections: I. **Our Common vision** II. **Renewing Political Commitment** A. Reaffirming Rio principles and past action plans; B. Advancing Integration, Implementation, and Coherence: Assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges; C. Engaging major groups and other stakeholders; III. **Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication** IV. **Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development** A. Strengthening the three dimensions of sustainable development; B. Strengthening intergovernmental arrangements for sustainable development; C. Environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development; D. International financial institutions and United Nations operational activities; E. Regional, national, sub-national, local levels. V. **Framework for action and follow-up** A. Thematic areas and cross-sectoral issues; B. Sustainable development goals VI. **Means of Implementation**	7 key challenges and associated policy targets (2006): • Climate change and clean energy • Sustainable transport • Sustainable production and consumption • Conservation and management of natural resources • Public health • Social inclusion, demography and migration • Global poverty and SD challenges 2 cross-cutting policies: • education and training; • research and development	The objectives are formulated in 3 priorities: • **Smart growth:** developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation. • **Sustainable growth:** promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy. • **Inclusive growth:** fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion. This is then translated in 5 headline targets: • Employment: 75% of the population aged 20-64 should be employed • R&D / innovation: 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D • Climate change / energy: the "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right) • Education: the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree • Poverty / social exclusion: 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty

	A. Finance B. Technology C. Capacity-building D. Trade E. Registry of commitments		
Horizontal policy integration	Taking a sectoral and thematic approach with regard to **international relevant key challenges** (such as biodiversity or climate change, mining, or demographic changes) and at the same time **integrating economic, social and environmental issues** among those.	Aims to **balance economic, social and environmental objectives**, with an emphasis on the latter two. No clarification of relationship between economic growth and SD.	Focuses mainly on **economic growth and employment trajectories** and policies. SD issues are integrated in the strategy.
Coordination between various scales	**UN system – national level (UN Members)** Regular annual sessions of the General Assembly. The UN CSD (in future replaced by the high level political forum) being the one responsible for coordinating the process of implementation and follow-up of Rio+20 and, overall, cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system on sustainable development programmes and policies	**EU level & Member States** Group of Member States coordinators (SDS Coordinators Group) chaired by Secretariat-General met only twice in 2007. No institutionalised or structured coordination since then.	**EU level & Member States** Each year, in June, the Commission assesses the Stability (or Convergence) Programmes and the National Reform Programmes providing country-specific recommendations as appropriate, which are then discussed and formally adopted by the Council at the end of June or in early July.
Monitoring	Future indicator set delineated from to be elaborated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	EU SDS Indicators Set	Europe 2020 Indicator Set

2.2.2. Governance principles

(1) Balanced integration

Balanced integration

Amongst the principles of governance for SD, one of the most important is the principle of integrating environmental and social concerns into decision-making. This is in particular reflected in the following statement of the Rio Declaration of 1992: "In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it" (Principle 4, Rio Declaration). Hence, it is also called the 'holistic principle' as it calls for a **balanced consideration of economic, environmental, and social aspects** in policy-making and is expressed in e.g. horizontal policy integration and policy coherence initiatives. Moreover, this principle has been further stressed in the Rio+20 outcome document where (in paragraph 98) regional, national, subnational and local authorities are encouraged **to develop and utilize sustainable development strategies as key instruments for guiding decision-making** and implementation of sustainable development at all levels.

Reaffirming and being consistent with earlier UN documents such as the Rio declaration,

Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, **Rio+20** points out that a balanced integration of the three dimensions is among the major aspects within the institutional framework for SD. This especially applies to key topics, such as elaborating a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through incorporating in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their inter-linkages as well as at different institutional scales (i.e. regional, national, subnational and local levels) which play a key role in promoting a balanced integration.

In this respect, the **EU SDS** explicitly incorporates the principle of balanced integration of economic, social and environmental considerations as one of its major policy guiding principles and, moreover, states that major policy decisions are based on proposals that have undergone high quality Impact Assessment (IA), assessing in a balanced way the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

Overall, the principle of a balanced approach among the three dimensions of SD, as called for in the Rio+20 document, is somewhat stressed through the three key priorities (i.e. smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth) of the **Europe 2020 Strategy**: by arguing that the priority of sustainable growth and inclusive growth are reflecting the economic, environmental and social dimensions, respectively, the Europe 2020 strategy appears to aim at an integration of SD. However, this seems rather superficial, especially because the main focus of this strategy clearly remains on economic growth and increasing employment opportunities. Moreover, when it comes to the consideration of the more elaborated and thematically oriented Flagship Initiatives, the integration of all three dimensions of SD is marginal because only a few issues are taken up in an integrated way, which means considering all three dimensions of SD. This, for example, applies to the issue of green economy in the context of poverty eradication (in the FI "A resource-efficient Europe") outlining a model of economic growth with special consideration of environmental and social concerns.

(2) Vertical policy integration

Vertical policy integration

With regard to the integration of various institutional levels for SD governance, Rio+20 supports the idea of an effective linkage between global, regional, sub-regional and national processes – mainly through Sustainable Development Strategies – in order to advance sustainable development and, more specifically, to utilize these strategies as key instruments for guiding decision-making and implementation of sustainable development at all levels.

In respect to the development and implementation of EU policies at different levels, the **Europe 2020 Strategy** and the **EU SDS** are characterised by a top down and bottom up genesis process, respectively. In the case of the former, the Europe 2020 Strategy was developed in the first place, whereas the European Commission's "integrated guidelines" provide clear guidance with regard to implementation of the strategy through the National Reform Programmes. On the other hand, several EU Member States had already

developed National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) while the European Commission was still in the process of elaborating its first EU SDS in 2001. In the latter stages of its development, the revised EU SDS of 2006 acted as a point of reference for the further development and review of NSDSs in order to ensure consistency, coherence and mutual supportiveness.

In the EUSDS, we can say that the vertical policy integration is very loose and happens at the EU level and at Member States level. A Group of Member States coordinators (SDS Coordinators Group), chaired by the Secretariat-General, was formed but met only twice in 2007. Since then, no institutionalised or structured coordination really exists.

In regard with the Europe 2020 strategy, the vertical policy integration is much stronger and top-down. This happens at EU level & Member States: each year, in June, the Commission assesses the Stability (or Convergence) Programmes and the National Reform Programmes providing country-specific recommendations as appropriate, which are then discussed and formally adopted by the Council at the end of June or in early July.

(**3) Public participation**

Public participation

In our analysis, we apply the concept of public participation through a two-pronged approach: (i) the general understanding and value of participatory processes in each of the 3 strategies, such as increasing general public awareness and understanding for SD as well as building commitment for SD policies; and (ii) concrete proposals for participatory processes for implementing SD, such as engaging with stakeholders in processes that contribute to decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes.

In the **Rio+20** document, participation is dedicated to a separate chapter and fundamental to the implementation of SD. Hence, it covers not only a broad variety of actors, but also their active participation in "...processes that contribute to decision-making, planning and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development at all levels". Moreover, **broad and inclusive participation is an intrinsic part** of many key areas (such as green economy). With regard to particular stakeholder groups the Rio+ 20 document gives special reference to a wide audience of stakeholders and their potential role (i.e. workers and trade unions role in inter alia supporting the social dimension, information, education and training on sustainability at all levels) in contributing to SD.

Overall, at the **European policy level**, public participation is a well-established concept through the Aarhus Convention and the regulation related to its application, "European Governance: A White Paper". Therefore, with regard to overall societal challenges such as climate change, green economy or sustainable development as tackled by the Europe

2020 and the EU SDS alike, public participation still is an essential asset.

For what concerns the **Europe 2020 strategy**, participation of various **expert stakeholders** is encouraged in specific areas where their inputs are of substantiate importance for the success of the corresponding FI. In this regard, Europe 2020 calls for active participation of expert stakeholders within the respective FI's. Participation is encouraged in FI's where their engagement is of prime importance for the success of the FI (e.g. business, trade unions, academics, NGOs, consumer organisations for FI Industrial policy; social partners for FI Agenda for new skills and jobs).

On the other hand, participation and involvement of stakeholders within the **EU SDS** is directed not only to guarantee the success of the strategy through important input and collaboration from various stakeholders, but also by increasing **general public awareness and understanding** on the strategy and its main focus sustainable development. For instance, it is argued that:

> "*the Commission will mainstream sustainable development in its information, awareness raising and communication activities and continue, together with other Community institutions, to organise events and stakeholder meetings on the various strands of the strategy, to disseminate new ideas and exchange best practices. In this context the Commission should produce a layman's guide to this strategy, including good practice and good policies in Member States, to help increase public awareness of sustainable development. Use should be made of valuable communication tools to measure the impacts of human activities on the earth's capacity to support life in its diversity.*" (EUSDS, 2006, para.26)

Therefore, through its broad variety of initiatives and activities as well as stakeholder engagement, the EU SDS addresses the call for broad and public participation processes well through various activities as outlined in the Rio+20 document.

(4) Monitoring and evaluation

Policy learning through monitoring and evaluation

With regard to the institutional framework as outlined by the **Rio+20** document, the application of inclusive, evidence-based and transparent scientific assessments and the overall review and stocktaking of progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments are of substantial importance for an effective governance system. In this respect, special consideration is given to the elaboration of a set of internationally agreed Sustainable development goals (SDGs), while progress towards the achievement of the goals will be assessed and accompanied by targets and indicators.

In this regard, policy learning within the **EU SDS** is organised through a diverse set of activities. The Commission conducted regularly progress reporting (2007 and 2009; not however in 2011) on the implementation of the EU SDS in the EU and Member States. Furthermore, progress reporting has been reviewed by the European Council in order to provide general orientations on policies, strategies and instruments for sustainable

development. This assessment was partly based on a comprehensive set of sustainable development indicators (SDI) covering the complexity of sustainable development by addressing the various key challenges within the EU SDS. Furthermore, this set of SDIs is constantly being further developed and updated to increase their quality and comparability as well as their relevance to the renewed EU SDS and up-coming policy initiatives such as the GDP and beyond. Similarly, progress reporting at the national level (NSDS) is based on a two-year interval.

With regard to the progress reporting of the **five headline targets of Europe 2020**, the Commission set up a yearly cycle of economic policy coordination called the European Semester. This cycle of agenda setting and progress reporting and stock-taking is initiated through the European Commission's Annual Growth Survey setting out EU priorities for boosting economic performance for the coming year. In a next step, the European Council assesses progress towards and on i) the overall macroeconomic situation, ii) the five EU-level targets, and iii) progress under the flagship initiatives. At the national level, EU Member States are elaborating their plans (i.e. National Reform Programmes and Stability / convergence programmes) for achieving their headline targets and the aims of the FIs. The Commission assesses these programmes and provides country specific recommendations where necessary. With regard to monitoring and progress reporting towards the 5 headline targets and the implementation of the FIs, Ministerial meetings on specific policy issues are crucial.

With regard to policy learning, both EU policy strategies apply a set of activities that guarantee regular monitoring and evaluation of key indicators. However, due to its focus on employment, productivity and social cohesion, the Europe 2020 strategy might be in a difficult situation to adapt to a rather international framework of indicators addressing a wide set of different key challenges as indicated in the Rio+20 document. In this regard, the EU SDS, however, targeting a more international approach towards SD and by taking into account the multidimensional picture of SD, seems much better suited for addressing an international framework such as the UN elaborated set of SDGs.

3. EU SDS objectives not yet achieved

In this chapter, we want to describe those objectives included in the EU SDS of 2006 and which have not been achieved yet. We based our analysis on the **Eurostat Monitoring Report of the EU sustainable development strategy (2011)**. Measuring progress towards sustainable development is an integral part of the EU SDS, and it is Eurostat's task to produce a monitoring report every two years based on the EU set of sustainable development indicators (EU SDIs). In 2011, Eurostat published its fourth report to assess the progress in the implementation of the strategy's objectives and key challenges. As already outlines above, the EU SDS defines objectives and targets intended to put the European Union on a path towards sustainable development. Given these objectives and targets, the Eurostat monitoring report provides a quantitative assessment of whether the EU is moving in the right direction as reflected in the developments revealed by the EU SDIs.

In our analysis, we consider only those trends that were signalled by the Eurostat Monitoring Report as showing '**moderately unfavourable changes'** or '**clearly unfavourable changes'**. These indicators were, therefore, grouped under their respective EUSDS key challenges, and then analysed whether these 'not yet achieved' objectives or sub-objectives are covered within the main documents of Europe 2020.

For doing this, we used the graphical tool of a table where we show whether and in which flagships initiative those '*not yet achieved*' objectives are mentioned. To present this analysis in a more accessible way, we will divide the table into seven parts according to the EU SDS key challenge. A green field indicates that these objectives are mentioned/addressed in Europe 2020 documents, and a red field indicates that they are not mentioned.

TABLE 3.1   **1. Climate Change and Clean Energy**

Not achieved (2011 Eurostat monitoring report)	Resource efficient Europe	Innovation Union	Agenda for new skills and jobs	European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion	Industrial Policy	Digital Agenda for Europe	Youth on the move
1.1 Energy dependence	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟥
1.2 Electricity generation from renewables	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟥
1.3 Implicit tax rate on energy	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥

Green field = mentioned in the respective strategy document; red field = not mentioned in the respective strategy document.

Climate change and clean energy

In the EU SDS, the first key challenge formulated as overall objective the necessity *to limit climate change and its costs and negative effects to society and the environment*. In this regard, the 2011 Eurostat Monitoring report mentions that "for the majority of the climate change and energy indicators progress since 2000 has been good (…) while unfavourable trends continue for only a small number of indicators". These indicators are: (1) Energy dependence; (2) Electricity generation from renewables; and (3) Implicit tax rate on energy (see **Table 3.1** above). The **Europe 2020 strategy documents address**

these three topics quite comprehensively, especially through the flagship initiative "**Resource efficient Europe**", which aims to create a framework for policies to support the shift towards a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy in order to: (i) boost economic performance while reducing resource use; (ii) identify and create new opportunities for economic growth and greater innovation and boost the EU's competitiveness; (iii) ensure security of supply of essential resources; and, (iv) fight against climate change and limit the environmental impacts of resource use. It is also very important to mention that the Europe 2020 strategy documents have taken up the energy issue with a **headline indicator** that refers to the '20-20-20' goal: (a) reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels, or by 30%, if the conditions are right; (b) increase the share of renewable energy sources in our final energy consumption to 20%; and (c) a 20% increase in energy efficiency.

TABLE 3.2   **2. Sustainable Transport**

Not achieved (2011 Eurostat monitoring report)	Resource efficient Europe	Innovation Union	Agenda for new skills and jobs	European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion	Industrial Policy	Digital Agenda for Europe	Youth on the move
2.1 Energy consumption of transport relative to GDP	green	green	red	red	green	green	red
2.2 Modal split of freight transport	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
2.3 Modal split of passenger transport	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
2.4 Greenhouse gas emissions from transport	green	green	red	red	green	green	red
2.5 People killed in road accidents	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
2.6 Volume of passenger transport relative to GDP	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
2.7 Investment in transport infrastructure	green	green	red	red	green	green	red

Green field = mentioned in the respective strategy document; red field = not mentioned in the respective strategy document.

Sustainable transport

In the **table 3.2**, we described those indicators that were not met with regards to the second EU SDS key challenge "Sustainable Transport", which was set to *ensure that our transport systems meet society's economic, social and environmental needs whilst minimising their undesirable impacts on the economy, society and the environment*. The 2011 Eurostat Monitoring report argued that the overall picture stands rather unfavourable although with some favourable trends. Of these negative trends (see **Table 3.2**), only very few and those related to energy seem to be taken up by Europe 2020, namely: (i) energy consumption of transport relative to GDP; (ii) greenhouse gas emissions from transport and (iii) Investment in transport infrastructure. With regards to those negative trends **not addressed by the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives**, of particular importance towards sustainable transport are **those that would shift towards modes with lower environmental impacts, e.g. modal split of freight and passenger transport.**

TABLE 3.3   3. Sustainable Consumption and Production

Not achieved (2011 Eurostat monitoring report)	Resource efficient Europe	Innovation Union	Agenda for new skills and jobs	European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion	Industrial Policy	Digital Agenda for Europe	Youth on the move
3.1 Resource productivity	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red
3.2 Electricity consumption of households	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red
3.3 Domestic material consumption	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red
3.4 Hazardous waste	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
3.5 Car ownership	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red

Green field = mentioned in the respective strategy document; red field = not mentioned in the respective strategy document.

Sustainable consumption and production

The 2011 Eurostat Monitoring report argued that changes in consumption and production patterns since 2000 show some highly unfavourable trends, especially regarding consumption of materials and electricity, as well as the generation of hazardous waste, which we found to be still increasing (both in absolute terms and on a per capita basis).

The EU SDS key challenge that engages the EU in the promotion of "Sustainable Consumption and Production" is in general not mentioned in the Europe 2020 strategy or in the accompanying seven flagship initiatives. However, three out of five '*not-achieved objectives*' are addressed by at least three flagship initiatives. Unfortunately, "hazardous waste" and "car ownership" are not touched in Europe 2020.

TABLE 3.4   4. Conservation and Management of Natural Resources

Not achieved (2011 Eurostat monitoring report)	Resource efficient Europe	Innovation Union	Agenda for new skills and jobs	European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion	Industrial Policy	Digital Agenda for Europe	Youth on the move
4.1 Conservation of fish stocks	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
4.2 Increase in built-up land	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red

Green field = mentioned in the respective strategy document; red field = not mentioned in the respective strategy document.

Conservation and management of natural resources

The key challenge "**Conservation and Management of Natural Resources**", which aims to *improve management and avoid overexploitation of natural resources, recognising the value of ecosystem services*, has seen both favourable and unfavourable trends (Eurostat, 2011). From a negative point of view, "marine fish stocks remain under threat and built-up land continues to increase at the expense of areas of semi-natural land" (see **table 3.4**). In these regards, no flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy addresses these concerns.

TABLE 3.5   5. Public Health

Not achieved (2011 Eurostat monitoring report)	Resource efficient Europe	Innovation Union	Agenda for new skills and jobs	European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion	Industrial Policy	Digital Agenda for Europe	Youth on the move
5.1 Exposure to air pollution by particulate matter	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥
5.2 Exposure to air pollution by ozone	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥

Green field = mentioned in the respective strategy document; red field = not mentioned in the respective strategy document.

Public Health

In the EU SDS, the key challenge "Public Health" was in search *to promote good public health on equal conditions and improve protection against health threats*. In this regard, the 2011 Eurostat Monitoring Report pointed to a generally favourable trend in the EU-27. In more detail, it is explained that people are living longer in the EU. However, there are still important inequalities in health and access to healthcare. Furthermore, as **Table 3.5** shows, there remain challenges related to the environmental determinants of health, and especially related to people's exposure to ozone and to particulate matter. From our analysis of the Europe 2020 strategy and of the flagship initiatives, these two themes are not taken up or mentioned.

TABLE 3.6   6. Social Inclusion, Demography and Migration

Not achieved (2011 Eurostat monitoring report)	Resource efficient Europe	Innovation Union	Agenda for new skills and jobs	European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion	Industrial Policy	Digital Agenda for Europe	Youth on the move
6.1 Early school leavers	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩
6.2 Working Poor	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥
6.3 Lifelong learning	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟩
6.4 Low reading literacy performance of pupils	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩
6.5 Employment rate of older workers	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥
6.6 Public debt	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥
6.7 Retirement age	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥

Green field = mentioned in the respective strategy document; red field = not mentioned in the respective strategy document.

Social inclusion, demography and migration

This EU SDS key challenge aimed *to create a socially inclusive society by taking into account solidarity between and within generations and to secure and increase the quality of life of citizens as a precondition for lasting individual well-being*. The trends observed in the 2011 Eurostat Monitoring report in this theme are in general rather encouraging, especially in terms of reducing poverty. However, there have also been several unfavourable developments: the share of *working poor* has risen, participation in *life-long learning* has declined, and further progress is necessary in reducing the share of *early school leavers* and *low reading literacy of pupils*. These themes of unfavourable developments are addressed prominently in three flagship initiatives. For what concerns those indicators that are mainly relate to demographic changes, three have seen unfavourable trends: 1) employment rate of older workers; 2) public debt; 3) retirement age. From the **Table 3.6**, our analysis shows that only the *employment rate of older*

workers is addressed by Europe 2020, whilst *public debt* and *retirement age* are not mentioned.

TABLE 3.7   **7. Global Poverty and Sustainable Development Challenges**

Not achieved (2011 Eurostat monitoring report)	Resource efficient Europe	Innovation Union	Agenda for new skills and jobs	European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion	Industrial Policy	Digital Agenda for Europe	Youth on the move
7.1 Official development assistance							

Green field = mentioned in the respective strategy document; red field = not mentioned in the respective strategy document.

Global poverty and sustainable development challenges

The EU SDS's seventh key challenge aimed *to actively promote sustainable development worldwide and ensure that the European Union's internal and external policies are consistent with global sustainable development and its international commitments*. With regards to "Official development assistance", the 2011 Eurostat Monitoring Report affirms that the EU has missed the intermediate official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.56 % in 2010. In the **table 3.7** appears clear that this European target will not be addressed within the Europe 2020 strategy: all of its flagship initiatives do not mention it.

4. Recent developments

4.1. The 7th Environmental Action Programme

7th EAP

On 29 November 2012, the EU Commission published the "Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020", called <u>Living well, within the limits of our planet</u>. Also known as the **7th Environmental Action Programme (EAP),** it should guide environment policy in Europe up to 2020. The proposal, therefore, aims to **enhance Europe's ecological resilience and transform the EU into an inclusive and sustainable green economy**.

The 7th EAP aims to set out a strategic agenda for environmental policy-making with nine priority objectives to be achieved by 2020, distributed in three headlines (see also table 4.1):

1. To protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital;
2. To turn the EU into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low- carbon economy;
3. To safeguard EU citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing;
4. To maximise the benefits of EU environment legislation;
5. To improve the evidence base for environment policy;
6. To secure investment for environment and climate policy and get the prices right;
7. To improve environmental integration and policy coherence;
8. To enhance the sustainability of EU cities;
9. To increase the EU's effectiveness in addressing regional and global environmental and climate challenges;

The 7th EAP aims to support establishing a common understanding of the main environmental challenges the EU is facing and the necessary steps to tackle them effectively.

Table 4.1 "The 7th EAP"

7th Environment Action Programme	
Main policy document	General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 **"Living well, within the limits of our planet"**
Date and ref.	Brussels, 29.11.2012 COM(2012) 710 final 2012/0337 (COD)
Time span	2013-2020

Objectives	Nine priority objectives divided in three headlines:
	 A) <u>THEMATIC PRIORITIES</u>
	   1. **To protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital**
	   2. **To turn the EU into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low- carbon economy**

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3. **To safeguard EU citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing**

B) <u>THE ENABLING FRAMEWORK</u>
4. **To maximise the benefits of EU environment legislation**
5. **To improve the evidence base for environment policy**
6. **To secure investment for environment and climate policy and get the prices right**
7. **To improve environmental integration and policy coherence**

C) <u>MEETING LOCAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES</u>
8. **To enhance the sustainability of EU cities**
9. **To increase the EU's effectiveness in addressing regional and global environmental and climate challenges**

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4.2. The new EC Communication

"A decent life for all"

On 27 February 2013, the EU Commission published the communication "A Decent Life for All: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future" to foster a common EU approach to a diversity of challenges mostly related to *eradicating poverty and ensuring that prosperity and well-being are sustainable*. The Communication, firstly, identifies the main global challenges and opportunities. Then it takes stock and evaluates the success of the experience with the MDGs and the global poverty eradication agenda. It also outlines some of the key steps towards SD as agreed in Rio+20 and a number of key actions. Furthermore, it describes the challenges and elements for a future framework. Therefore, the Communication proposes principles for an overarching framework for post-2015 which aims to provide a coherent and comprehensive response to the universal challenges of poverty eradication and SD in its three dimensions.

The Communication also contains two annexes: **Annex I** describes a series of current and forthcoming main actions that are set out to contribute to the implementation of Rio+20 in the following areas: (i) Water and sanitation; (ii) Energy, climate; (iii) Biodiversity, forests, land; (iv) Oceans; (v) Waste, chemicals; (vi) Food, nutrition, agriculture; (vii) Taxes, subsidies; (viii) Clean industry and life cycle accounting; (ix) Sustainable consumption and production and Green public procurement; (x) Resilience; (xi) Disaster risk management; (xii) Cities, tourism, transport; (xiii) Full and productive employment and decent work; (xiv) Social protection, social inclusion and eradicating poverty; (xv) Corporate Social Responsibility; (xvi) Health; (xvii) Education; (xviii) Gender equality and women's empowerment; (xix) Justice, Human Rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, good governance and the rule of law; (xx) Science, technology, research and innovation; (xxi) Statistics; (xxii) Trade.

Annex II describes the efforts by the Commission with regards to public consultations, dialogues and outreach actions undertaken by the Commission on future perspectives of poverty eradication and SD.

Implementation: Actions at EU

In the Communication, there are few points that are crucial for our analysis. First of all, it is affirmed that ***the EU will continue to pursue the SD***, including by implementing Rio+20

and international level commitments through a range of overarching policies.

Secondly, *the Europe 2020 Strategy is seen as the main instrument for pursuing SD* as the EU's overarching strategy for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth.

Thirdly, the implementation and regular review of the Europe 2020 is seen as key to contribute to *greater coherence, mainstreaming and integration of the three dimensions of SD* in EU policies at large.

Fourthly, the Communication explains that *SD objectives will be made operational through a range of key policies* that are under preparation (including the reform of the Common Agricultural and the Common Fisheries Policies, the forthcoming 7th Environmental Action Programme, the Innovation Union, the new research framework program Horizon 2020, and the Social Investment Package).

Next steps In the last part of the Communication, 'next steps' are outlined. At first, it is affirmed that the *EU needs to engage fully in the forthcoming international processes with coherent and coordinated inputs at the UN and in other relevant fora*. Secondly, the Communication aims to kick-start a debate and discussions over these issues, over a common EU position, and for the **development of a common EU approach** that should:

- ensure a comprehensive follow up to Rio+20 and guide the EU position at the UN Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs, which will report regularly to the UNGA; and
- contribute to the preparation of the UN General Assembly Special Event on the MDGs in autumn 2013, including the report of the Secretary-General and the UN High Level Panel on post-2015, as well as the first meeting of the HLPF.

5. Reflections and points for discussion

In the course of this report, we touched upon many areas that require reflections. In this last chapter, we focus on seven crucial topics for further discussion:

1. **Sustainable development strategy**:
   The Rio+20 outcome document provides a common framework for sustainable development, where a **balanced approach is sought among economy development, environmental protection and social equity**. It clearly supports the development and/or continuation of **sustainable development strategies as the most useful tool to guide SD governance and decision-making**. It is important to keep in mind that the Europe 2020 Strategy has different objectives and was developed in reaction to the economic and financial crisis in Europe and, given this background, to define ways and means for more growth and jobs.

   As the 9th ESDN Workshop revealed and the Commission's Communication of February revealed, this issue is viewed differently by the Commission. The Commission believes that SD is sufficiently integrated into the Europe 2020 Strategy, whereas participants of the ESDN Workshop argued for a separate EU SDS to achieve a balanced approach and policy coherence for SD.

2. **Timeframes**:
   Compared to the **long-term time perspective required** for sustainable development, in general, and of Rio+20, in particular, the Europe 2020 Strategy has a rather short-medium term perspective (represented by the year 2020).

3. **Participation**:
   While in Rio+20 and SD in general, **participation of all citizens and society** as a whole is seen as fundamental, Europe 2020 focuses on expert stakeholder participation and no comprehensive public participation is foreseen.

4. **International perspective**:
   The Europe 2020 Strategy is very much focused on Europe and does not present an international outlook. **If the EU wants to keep its leading and strategic role in international SD, a strategic and long-term policy document on balancing economic, environmental and social issues in Europe and beyond is necessary.** The Europe 2020 Strategy, and its accompanying documents, cannot fulfil this aspiration and as they serve a different purpose.

5. **A different angle**:
   Our analysis on the way the Europe 2020 Strategy addresses several topics of the Rio+20 outcome document (i.e. Health and Education) clearly shows how different the chosen angles are: whilst **Rio+20 is more encompassing and has a**

broader viewpoint on the societal and the environmental issues, the Europe 2020 Strategy is very much focused on productivity, growth and efficiency as it is a strategy focussed on economic recovery and creation, where a more balanced approach towards sustainable development is largely missing. In general, key terms such as equity, well-being and sustainable development, are not mentioned in Europe 2020.

6. **Vertical policy integration:**
   In respect to the coordination and implementation of EU strategies at the Member States level, the **Europe 2020 Strategy** and the **EU SDS** are **very differently "orchestrated"**. For the EU SDS, vertical policy integration is very loose and no institutionalised or structured coordination really exists. For the Europe 2020 Strategy, vertical policy integration is much more formalised, better structured, and largely top-down oriented.

7. **Policy learning, monitoring and evaluation:**
   With regard to policy learning, both EU policy strategies apply a set of activities that guarantee regular monitoring and evaluation of key indicators. However, due to its focus on employment, productivity and social cohesion within the EU, the Europe 2020 Strategy might be in a difficult situation to adapt to a rather international framework of indicators addressing a wide set of different key challenges as indicated in the Rio+20 outcome document. In this regard, the **EU SDS**, however, by applying a more international approach towards SD and by taking into account the multidimensional picture of SD, **seems much better suited for addressing an international SD framework, such as the UN elaborated set of SDGs**.

8. **EU SDS 'not yet achieved' objectives:**
   From our analysis of the EU SDS objectives that have not been achieved yet, we could show that **only a small number of them are addressed by the Europe 2020 Strategy**, whilst most of them are not mentioned at all. The participants of the 9th ESDN Workshop suggested using the Eurostat Monitoring Reports on the EU SDS more intensively for a review of the EU SDS' objectives.

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