



ESDN ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018

CONFERENCE REPORT

**Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in the Age
of the SDGs: What new approaches are
required to be successful?**

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Introduction

This ESDN Conference Report provides information on the inputs, discussions and outcomes of the **ESDN Annual Conference 2018**, entitled “**Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in the Age of the SDGs: What new approaches are required to be successful?**”, which took place in **Vienna on 1-2 October 2018** in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism and was an Austrian EU Presidency Event. The ESDN Annual Conference 2018 provided a chance to learn about stakeholder-policy cooperation, approaches in different European countries, and good practice examples from national level policymakers and stakeholders on this topic. The conference was a 1.5-day event, and brought together policymakers and experts from different stakeholder groups from all over Europe and beyond. A total of 120 participants from 27 countries took part in the conference.

The conference started with a welcome and opening session, followed by six sessions.

- **Session 1:** Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation – What has changed with the SDGs?
- **Session 2:** Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation on SDG Implementation in the European Union
- **Session 3:** Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation for the SDGs – Perspectives of Governance
- **Session 4:** Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation for the SDGs – Effectively Tapping into Stakeholder Energy
- **Session 5:** ConverStations - Stakeholder activities and initiatives for the SDG implementation
- **Session 6:** Developing the Ingredients for Successful Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in SDG Implementation

To access the full documentation of the ESDN Conference 2018, please go to the [ESDN Website](#), where the following documents are available for download: 1) the conference agenda; 2) the conference background paper; 3) the PDFs of PowerPoint slides from keynote speakers; 4) the conference report; and 5) a photo documentation.

Welcome and Opening Session

The Secretary General of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, **JOSEF PLANK**, opened up the ESDN Conference with a speech, congratulating the ESDN for the work it has done over the last 15 years regarding sustainable development within Europe.

Mr. Plank then shared that while the Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism does not have a coordinating role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda within Austria¹, the very nature of the Ministry, and the areas under its responsibility and competencies², means that the Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism must address many of the SDGs. The broad competencies of the Ministry also potentially puts it in a good position to be the frontrunner in delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Austria. In response to these competencies, the Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism is in the process of elaborating a mid-term SDG Plan of Action that will outline the flagship initiatives of the Ministry that will be undertaken for the 2019-2022 period.

Mr. Plank then focused his speech on the theme of the Conference and reinforced the importance of stakeholder-policy cooperation as being a key success factor for developing and implementing action plans regarding sustainable development, which includes the SDGs. The involvement and engagement of stakeholders must be done in a transparent, comprehensive, and inclusive manner.

‘Building bridges’ is a key motto of the Austrian EU Presidency and it is a key responsibility of policy makers to build such bridges regarding a comprehensive, collaborative multi-stakeholder engagement that is on an equal footing and that combines efforts to move the 2030 agenda forward.

The ESDN Co-Chairs, Elisabeth **FREYTAG-RIGLER** and **WOLFRAM TERTSCHNIG**, also from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, gave a welcoming address on behalf of the ESDN Steering Group, where they both reflected on how far the ESDN has come over the last 15 years with regards to forwarding the goals of sustainable development in Europe, which includes pushing the European Commission and the EU on the issue of the 2030 Agenda.

The Co-Chairs both reflected on how important stakeholder-policy cooperation is in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and that having the correct cooperation is key and both questioned whether Europe currently has such cooperation, which provided participants with something to think about heading into Session 1 of the conference.

¹ The Austrian Federal Chancellery is responsible for the overall coordination of the 2030 Agenda nationally, and the Ministry of foreign Affairs is responsible for the external coordination.

² The Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism is responsible for: tourism, regional planning, agriculture and forestry, energy and climate, water and waste management, and other environmental challenges such as biodiversity and nature protection, raw materials and resource management policies.

Session 1: Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation – What has changed with the SDGs?

Session 1 focused on Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation and the changes that have occurred regarding the ways in which cooperation between stakeholders and policymakers takes shape since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

This session had two keynote presentations, which were given by **MONIKA LINN** from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and **GÜNTHER BACHMANN** from the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), where they both offered a look at stakeholder-policy cooperation at the global level and national level respectively. Both of their presentations can be found on the ESDN website under [ESDN Conferences](#). After the two keynote presentations, participants were asked to come together at their tables in groups of between 8-10 to discuss, in an interactive process, about practical examples of effective stakeholder-policy cooperation and whether the SDGs have changed the nature of that cooperation. Participants were then asked to write down up to three of their observations, whereby some of the discussion groups were then asked to share their results during the sounding panel, which consisted of Ms. Linn and Mr. Bachmann. The complete list of observations from all 11 discussion groups can be found below in the “Results of Session 1 Table Discussion” section.

MONIKA LINN’S keynote presentation addressed the topic of “Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in the Age of the SDGs: What new approaches are required to be successful?”. She began her presentation by providing a brief background of the UNECE; who they are and what they do. The UNECE represents 56 countries across Europe, North America and Asia. The UNECE focuses, among other things, on: 1) setting norms and standards, such as for road safety; 2) acts as a think-tank; and 3) provides a convening function.

Ms. Linn then transitioned to discussing the nature of stakeholder-policy cooperation, where she provided definitions as to the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of stakeholder-policy cooperation. The ‘what’ of stakeholder-policy cooperation was broken down into its main components: stakeholders, policy, and cooperation, where Ms. Linn defined the ‘what’ of **stakeholder** as “Groups representing key sectors of society, who work with official representatives and institutions (the ‘what’ of **policy**), and who are all on equal terms through policy dialogues and concrete collaborative activities (the ‘what’ of **cooperation**).”

The **reason for stakeholders and policymakers to go through any process of stakeholder-policy cooperation** (the ‘why’) is to: 1) Increase legitimacy and ownership of decisions; 2) have a transformation process that requires all actors; and 3) increases the likelihood of effective implementation.

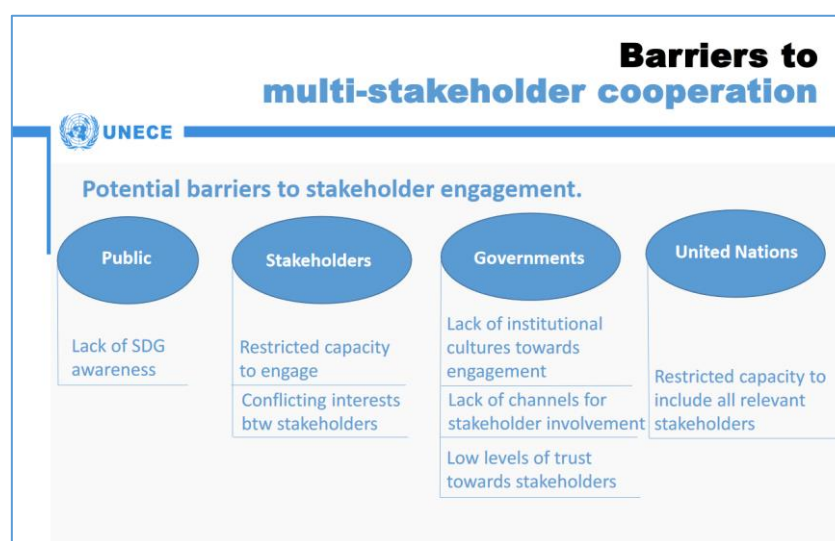
In order to be able to determine how the advent of the SDGs has potentially changed stakeholder-policy cooperation, Ms. Linn drew upon past experiences of stakeholder-policy cooperation as it relates to sustainable development and drew on the experience of Agenda 21 and the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, where she mentioned that already at this point in time there was already recognition of how important it was to involve the public in the decision-making process. “One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision making.”³ At the time the Rio Earth Summit and the Commission for Sustainable Development was at the forefront of stakeholder-policy cooperation.

³ Agenda 21, Preamble, Chapter 23.2.

Ms. Linn then transitioned into discussing the **ways in which the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs have changed stakeholder-policy cooperation** in that the 2030 Agenda is an overall more inclusive agenda that calls upon the active engagement and involvement of stakeholders in many regards, making many references to the importance of this heightened cooperation and involvement throughout the document itself.

However, despite the more inclusive nature of the 2030 Agenda, Ms. Linn also pointed out some of the **barriers to multi-stakeholder cooperation**, which can be seen below and which was taken from one of her PowerPoint slides.

Figure 1: Barriers to multi-stakeholder cooperation



Source: https://www.sd-network.eu/pdf/conferences/2018_vienna/presentations/Monika%20Linn.pdf

Along the same lines, Ms. Linn also shared that there are some **main avenues by which stakeholder-policy cooperation could be improved and strengthened**. Namely, at the national and local level by allowing stakeholders to play an important role in raising public awareness for the SDGs and also including stakeholders in the implementation, monitoring and reviewing process of policies that relate to sustainable development. At the global and regional level, the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in processes pertaining to sustainable development need to be strengthened, such as the private sector and academia. Additionally, more opportunities for practical exchange between different stakeholders on solutions for SDG implementation are necessary.

Ms. Linn concluded her keynote speech by discussing the **future of stakeholder-policy cooperation** and what needs to be done to make sure it has its best chances to succeed. 1) Build the capacities of civil society to be informed and engaged; 2) Build up capacities within governments to engage with key national stakeholders, as well as to create institutional cultures and attitudes towards engagement and inclusion, whereby these successful mechanisms should then be shared with other countries; 3) Mobilize funds for stakeholder involvement; and 4) Build up trust between stakeholders.

GÜNTHER BACHMANN'S keynote speech centered on stakeholder-policy cooperation in the age of the SDGs and focused on the new types of approaches that are required for it to be successful. Mr. Bachmann has provided a complete transcript of his keynote speech, which can be found on the [ESDN website](#). Mr. Bachmann provides overarching views on the current status of stakeholder-policy cooperation, as well as provides the specific case example from the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE).

In Mr. Bachmann's transcript, he provides some **food for thought for those seeking to undertake stakeholder-policy cooperation process**:

1. Timing is essential: Every policy has a special policy cycle, sometimes open, sometimes hidden or tacit. If access to a pre-existing policy cycle is no option, creating one from scratch might be.
2. Cooperation is for everyone, but must never sideline parliaments and parliamentary democracy.
3. Build on competence, commitment, and capacity, the three big C.
4. Fatigue can be counteracted by design and impact.
5. Start with the audacity of hope: Big hairy ideas are the more useful than analyzing the acceptable.
6. Tolerate failures and flops, but never repeat the same ones.
7. Hear what is not being said - the single most important issue for moderating any cooperation
8. Work out what really matters for stakeholder as opposed to what is said and fought for.
9. Make it personal, e.g. by using clear language and avoiding passive idioms.
10. Silos: In principle, silos are part of the problem: But never waste a good one.
11. Addressing a certain group of stakeholder must not delegitimize others.

Mr. Bachmann expanded these ideas and food for thought further by providing **insights into different modes of cooperation**, as getting to know the differences of stakeholders helps to run stakeholder processes successfully. Being able to differentiate between scope and purpose can also be helpful. In the case of the RNE, Mr. Bachmann shared that making use of both open access processes, targeted invitations, and other structured approaches is useful. The purpose often translates into the type of activity, with all overlaps and crossovers and those include:

1. Talking: Sharing insights and disseminating information;
2. Empowering: Deliberating agreements and delivering joint action;
3. Designing: Setting rules of conduct and initiating processes; and
4. Partnering: Creating and advancing communities of practitioners.

Mr. Bachmann finished by sharing that cooperation can be fun, and should be made a fun experience in order to ensure viable results. To care about purpose, meeting schedules and paperwork sounds dull and exhausting. The fun part, however, often materializes through a good moderation, through an interesting in mind-opening location, or through surprising processes. The best surprise, of course, is when participants surprise themselves by new ideas. They then almost without taking notes merge into cooperation style attitudes.

Results of Session 1 Table Discussions

After Monika Linn's and Mr. Bachmann's keynote presentations, participants were asked to work in groups in an interactive session for 20 minutes, in which they were asked to **discuss any practical examples of effective stakeholder-policy cooperation they have from their country or in their experience, and whether the SDGs have changed the nature of stakeholder-policy cooperation**. Participants were then asked to write down up to three of their observations, whereby some of the discussion groups were then asked to share their results during the sounding panel that followed. **The results of each table discussion can be found in the tables below.**

Table 1
1. New global, universal agenda that mentions that governments cannot do it alone, so that new people wake up.
2. Stakeholders should see financing has to be meaningful and not just stressing the budget.
3. Awareness raising and overcoming people who already know about sustainability.

Table 2
1. UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development – nationally, multi-stakeholder network focused on the domestic implementation of the SDGs
2. SDG Watch → Multi-stakeholder review and accountability
3. SDG solution talks by social city and UNIDO, multi-stakeholder dialogue on each SDG started in September 2019.

Table 3
1. Switzerland: companion-group: national and sub-national cantonal representatives
2. Catalonia: Common narrative for CSOs: dialogue platform, big conference for all stakeholders to share ideas Agreement-dialogue
3. Finland: Coordination changed from the Ministry of the Environment to the Prime Minister's Office→good example for others, e.g. cities and businesses to move sustainable development into the core of their strategies.

Table 4
1. SDG framework is creating new alliances and bringing together constituencies previously working in silos: i.e. SDGs and human rights actors (not always the same people, but still sharing the same goals).
2. 'National Conversation'- "The Wales We Want" based on "The Future We Want"
3. With the SDGs "new" stakeholders find their way into sustainable development policy-making. Case example: Finland's monitoring system and work on the new sustainable development indicators.

Table 5
1. Taiwan: More cooperation between government and NGOs, especially young leaders in NGOs.
2. Economic and social council in Greece (consultative for legislation and social dialogue) Consists of 3 groups of stakeholders: 1) employers; 2) employees; and 3) others: farmers, consumers, etc.
3. SDG lab in Geneva, which is an initiative of the UN in Geneva and brings the UN, international organizations, NGOs and the 2030 ecosystem together.

Table 6
1. More interest and energy at the local level Columbia: mining data from 70-80 Colombian companies regarding sustainability for use in a voluntary national report
2. In 2018, for the first time in Malta, the European Sustainable Development Week was held in the last weeks of May and 1 st week of June. Several events were held during this Week with each event addressing a specific SDG, which was listed in the 2018 HLPF Agenda. There was a high response from the public, as many participated and we look forward to augmenting this week of event in the future to increase awareness on sustainable development among the general public.

3. In some cases, such as at SDG Watch Europe and at the national level, a broader spectrum of stakeholders is now talking to each other: from more sectors and especially from domestic and external policy work.

Table 7

1. Youth engagement and empowerment
2. Improved government = stakeholder
3. Dialogue: SDGs as a framework for policy Dialogue: → Baltic 2030 HP or Nordic Council of Ministers Generation 2030 program

Table 8

1. SDGs as a common narrative for stakeholders (including business). Besides 3 sustainable development dimensions (social, economic, and environment) 17 concrete topics that gain attention.
2. Still constant risk of SDG-washing.
3. New ways of cooperation between stakeholders thanks to the SDGs, i.e. the Coalition for Sustainable Development in Estonia.

Table 9

1. 12.3. champions against food waste
2. Aligning municipal budgets along the SDGs
3. Highlighting actions for the SDGs on the local and regional level. Taskforce at EU level to maintain the localization of SDGs and encourage good practices of activities of actors and regions and national associations of local and regional governments.

Table 10

1. Spain: National action plan on SDGs have included an extensive stakeholder process. Shared responsibility between government, stakeholders, and civil society. The change is guided by leadership, with the president guiding the implementation of the SDGs, affecting action in the ministries. For example: all ministries now have the SDG logo.
2. Austria: Development cooperation program is in line with the SDGs.
3. Germany: Establishment of forum on sustainable development under the Federal Chancellery, involving broad spectrum of stakeholders for yearly meeting. The responsible person in ministry must listen to wishes and demands from different sectors of society and respond on how they will act on these wishes and demands.

Table 11

1. Mainstreaming in ministries.
2. Private sector involvement
3. -

Feedback Session with Monika Linn and Günther Bachmann

One of the participants shared that in Switzerland, there was a panel, which was established in 2016 that involved business, research, and NGOs for the purpose of Switzerland's first Voluntary National Review (VNR). This collaboration was fruitful, because it helped the government design a process for stakeholder engagement. As an added bonus, this panel of stakeholders also became politically active.

Cooperation in Switzerland is nothing new, as it is deeply engrained in the culture, but with respect to sustainable development, this panel and cooperation were new.

A participant from Belgium shared that more people and stakeholders are certainly engaging with the SDGs, but that even though stakeholders are being invited to discussions, it has a very huge impact on their budgets in terms of being able to travel to these discussions. If more discussions happen, then it becomes infeasible for many stakeholders to participate in the process.

Another barrier to stakeholder-policy cooperation is that certain stakeholders, from certain industries, such as the forestry sector, see themselves as already engaging in sustainable development and want to be left alone and not approached with the SDGs.

After hearing these couple of points that were brought up during the interactive table discussions, **Monika Linn and Günther Bachmann provided their feedback and insights.**

Ms. Linn began by sharing that there has almost always been stakeholder engagement at the UN level. From the UN's point of view, it is the stakeholders that now should get their acts together and start engaging with the SDGs.

Mr. Bachmann then added that with the SDGs, there is an increasing readiness to act. However, that does not mean that stakeholders or governments are prepared to act, as everyone lacks the resources and experiences.

While many stakeholders need to get their acts together, Ms. Linn shared that there are some stakeholder groups that know which buttons to press to be heard and taken into account, this also extends on how to get funding.

Mr. Bachmann then shared that some communities in Germany, without any kind of additional funding for sustainable development, are able to bring together people for the SDGs, whereas other communities do have money to deal with sustainable development issues and can deal with bigger challenges, such as mobility.

Session 2: Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation on SDG Implementation in the European Union

Session 2 of the Conference focused on stakeholder-policy cooperation at the European level and featured keynote presentations from the ESDN Co-Chairs, **ELISABETH FREYTAG-RIGLER** and **WOFLRAM TERTSCHNIG**, who presented on the European Commission's Multi-Stakeholder Platform on SDGs, focusing on its functionality and how it strives to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. After this keynote speech, other members of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform, **ARNAU QUERALT I BASSA** from the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC), **BERNHARD ZLANABITNIG** from the European Environment Bureau, and **INGEBORG NIESTROY** from Public Strategy for Sustainable Development and a steering group member for SDG Watch Europe also gave their impressions and feedback regarding the Platform. The last keynote speaker was **BRENDA KING**, who is a member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and also is a member in the Multi-Stakeholder Platform.

After the keynote presentations and interventions by some of the members of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform, Session 2 continued with an interactive table discussion among participants similar to Session 1 that focused on how to strengthen stakeholder-policy cooperation on the European and European Union level.

After the table discussions had concluded, the feedback from all the tables was collected, the results of which can be seen in the tables below. Some of the observations from the table discussions were then fed back to the keynote speakers and the audience for further comments and discussion.

ELISABETH FREYTAG-RIGLER and **WOFLRAM TERTSCHNIG** began this session in place of Mr. Marcel Haag, who runs the **Multi-Stakeholder Platform**, as he was unable to attend the Conference. However, Mr. Haag provided his PowerPoint presentation, which was used by the ESDN Co-Chairs in their presentation of the functionality of the Platform. The PowerPoint slides can be found on the [ESDN website](#).

Ms. Freytag-Rigler and Mr. Tertschnig shared that the Platform was established on 22 May 2017 for many purposes, such as to provide support and advice to the European Commission on the implementation of the SDGs, contribute to the work on reflection papers, exchange experiences and best practices, and help to prepare the selection process for the European sustainability award.

The Platform is chaired by First Vice-President Timmermans and is made up of 30 high-level experts from civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and academia, and also has 7 observers, which are made up of international organizations. The 30 members that were selected as members of the Platform were chosen from a total of 160 organizations that put forward their candidacy.

The Platform itself meets once per year, whereas the Management Committee of meets three times per year. The Management Committee is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the Platform and operationalizes the guidance set out by the Platform. There also exists subgroups, which are chaired by Commission Services and made up of members of the Management Committee, to assess specific themes.

After introducing how the Multi-Stakeholder Platform came into being and what its main responsibilities are, Ms. Freytag-Rigler and Mr. Tertschnig discussed the Platform's working method, sharing that the work of the Platform is steered in a bottom-up approach by the stakeholder members, so that all the stakeholders have ownership over it. When developing recommendations and position papers, the Platform relies mostly on consensus. Regarding transparency, the Platform's working

documents, including agenda meetings and minutes are published on the [Platform's website](#). The Platform is scheduled to adopt a reflection paper on October 11, 2018 and has already published four position papers and recommendations on different topics.

Short Statements from Members of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform

Following Ms. Freytag-Rigler's and Mr. Tertschnig's keynote presentation, other members of the Platform were invited to provide their impressions of the Platform. **ARNAU QUERALT I BASSA** from the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC) began his feedback on the Platform by stating that it is a question of expectations and dreams, as in one year the **Platform has made many contributions**, such as to the Multiannual Financial Framework and in the Platform's reflection paper. However, he shared that there is **no longer time for discussions** at the European Union level, because more has to be done than simple contributions from the Platform; the Platform needs to **make sure that what it is proposing is being acted upon and followed through on by the Commission**. Decisions regarding the implementation of the SDGs need to be taken in real time.

The **fate and the future of the Platform is also not known** and it is not known if it will exist by the end of 2018. The Platform, therefore, needs to have a clear intention and perspective on its future, especially going into 2019 and the last year of the current Commission.

BERNHARD ZLANABITNIG from the European Environment Bureau was next to take the stage to provide participants with his view on the Platform. Mr. Zlanabitnig began by stating that the **Platform would benefit from a stronger mandate and role in implementing the SDGs**, which could be brought about by having stronger cooperation with other EU institutions. Overall, the **design of the Platform is well-balanced in terms of stakeholder groups being representing**. However, it was intended that the Platform would adopt a similar structure to the UN bodies, but there is no representation of women's rights organizations, migration organizations, farmers' organizations, etc.

A drawback to the Platform and its processes is that the **processes themselves are quite top-down**, with too many high-level presentations that leave very little room for discussions. There is also a **lack of strong mandates to monitor the implementation of the SDGs**, as well as participatory processes of the Platform. There also exist certain issues regarding transparency surrounding how members for the Platform were chosen, since there was only a list published of accepted members, but not a list of all organizations that had sent in their candidacy, which shows a lack of transparency on behalf of the Commission in how the initial selection of representative organizations was made and why certain organizations were chosen over others.

INGEBORG NIESTROY from Public Strategy for Sustainable Development and a steering group member for SDG Watch Europe also provided feedback on the Platform, sharing that the Commission was eager to receive input and support, but that it was unclear at the political level what the intention of the platform was, as there was no mention of utilizing it as a support for an SDG implementation agenda.

Within the Platform there is the involvement of some quite conservative actors, such as from the business sector. Ms. Niestroy felt the **Platform needs more progressive actors**, as there is too much negotiation within the Platform and it is very much focused around "position", "position", "position". The Platform, therefore, needs to come up with **new ways of channeling experiences to facilitate change and enhance its ability to act as a supporting institution**.

BRENDA KING, before beginning her keynote speech, also provided her feedback regarding the Platform, stating that the **EESC is pleased that the Platform exists**, but would prefer that the Platform receive a permanent status, rather than exist in its temporary form. Ms. King also mentioned **transparency as being problematic**, highlighting many of the same points as Mr. Zlanabitnig. The work

of the Platform is generally good, but the uncertainty that surrounds how the work of the Platform will be used, such as from its position papers and reflection papers, that is less helpful.

Ms. King also brought up issues with the Platform in terms of who is allowed to participate and be a member, where she pointed out that there is **no representation from EU Member States and from the European Parliament, which is disappointing**, as they represent two very important stakeholder groups.

After giving her feedback on the Multi-Stakeholder Platform, Ms. King delivered her keynote speech on the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and how they are representing stakeholders in EU policy-making.

The EESC acts as a bridge between EU institutions and Civil Society, where the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has been given the highest priority. The EESC has been calling for an overarching EU strategy with concrete objectives and targets to foster a transition to a society that is sustainable in economic, environmental and social terms. Ms. King shared that this can only become a reality if everyone takes collective action, which requires ownership from local, regional and national level to EU and the HLPF.

Public consultation is not sufficient, as there is a need for a new governance mechanism that has public participation embedded within it. This is a key approach to achieve policy coherence. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a participatory process that will need to have a strong coordination between the EU and EU Member States. Given that 24 Member States have already done their VNRs, regardless of a common EU strategy shows there is a lack of European-wide cooperation.

Ms. King also shared that sustainability initiatives are usually driven by a bottom-up approach. Instead of these bottom-up approaches being promoted, institutional and structural barriers are in some cases, hampering them. To help combat this, the relationships between policymakers and stakeholders need to change, so that the best and worst practices from stakeholders should inform the policy-making process.

After Ms. King concluded her keynote speech, participants were asked to discuss at their tables how stakeholder-policy cooperation on the EU and European level could be strengthened. After 20 minutes of discussion amongst the tables, participants were then able to feedback some of their insights to the main room. **All the results from each table are listed in the tables below.**

Results of Session 2 Table Discussions

Table 1
1. Make sure the sustainable development is in the government's 5-year program and the president's priorities. Also the involvement of Parliament.
2. Multi-Stakeholder Platform is a good starting point, but no use to continue it as it is. The composition needs to be decided differently – more openness. Agenda setting needs to be done by Multi-Stakeholder Platform, not the EC.
3. Make more use out of the ESDW

Table 2
1. The economic case for SDG action in Europe → a "Stern" like report showing the prize at the end of the road (e.g. GDP gain/job/Gini index/environmental health), including cost of inaction.

2.	The government needs to take responsibility to implement the SDGs. Platforms can be catalyzers for the implementation, but not the replacement of political institutions. They are discussion platforms and not elected institutions.
3.	Stopping inequality can be the new project for the EU. The SDGs can be the means to realistic ends: stopping inequality, but also the other way around it is a part of implementing the SDGs.

Table 3	
1.	Cooperation of EC/stakeholders on cross-sectoral issues could build on the Multi-Stakeholder Platform experience: persuade it and involve the Member States and the European Parliament, and the Presidency country.
2.	Multi-Stakeholder Platform should be linked to other/all commissioners. Interaction with the Commission and an annual dialogue.
3.	Multi-Stakeholder Platform October meeting → paper on the future? → letter to Marcel Haag and shared with Multi-Stakeholder Platform members before October 11 th .

Table 4	
1.	Need for EU vision paper on SDGs (link to key EU challenges)
2.	Clarify roles and mandates of existing stakeholder engagement mechanisms and their contribution to sustainable development in the EU.
3.	(Resign as Multi-Stakeholder members if so badly engaged.)

Table 5	
1.	Education at all levels
2.	Coordination/flow of information between levels of governance and sectors (e.g. policy-science interface), social innovation with diverse stakeholders.
3.	Implementation: develop vision/input/strategy depending on local needs and context, resolve conflicts between financial/adopt goals of sustainability. Can't "implement" SDGs, but take actions towards achievement. Affordable and sustainable housing and transport.

Table 6	
1.	Broaden the representativeness of the stakeholders in the Multi-Stakeholder Platform, given the members the mandate to consult their constituencies, so more stakeholders' views are captured. Improving working methods.
2.	Strengthen the link between the Multi-Stakeholder Platform and the Member States. The Council could retrieve the Platform's work and use it to inform its resolutions. On the other side, the Council should act with more transparency and engage with stakeholders.
3.	Continue the Multi-Stakeholder Platform beyond 2019, ensuring the connection with the new EU Commission.

Table 7	
1.	Continue the Multi-Stakeholder Platform, but with much more transparency. Transparent criteria for selections. Open up!
2.	Enhanced mandate of NGOs
3.	Multi-Stakeholder Platform should include more experts and Member States.

Table 8
1. Gap analysis conducted by the Platform on policy, on indicators/data availability. Study on how representation is structured (who is represented or not, and how).
2. Bring good, existing examples to the Forum. Stakeholders can push that the SDGs are adopted in all different EU policies. Give concrete reason for stakeholders to be involved, through concrete outputs.
3. Use VNR process to demonstrate progress on an annual basis - show progression. Also allow for review at the EU level by EESC or other body.

Table 9
1. SMART → smart cooperation schemes. (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Resourceful, Time-frame). Use this framework for the mandate of the Multi-stakeholder Platform.
2. “Hairy idea”- Commission must build another instrument to decide internally on how they will work to implement the SDGs → implementation plan.
3. Membership in the Multi-Stakeholder Platform: Transparency needed Member State membership Think of the Platform’s role The Platform should be self-organized

Table 10
1. Regular high-level roundtables on sustainable development/Agenda 2030. Intertwined with European Sustainable Development Weeks and European sustainability award.
2. Transparent, structural stakeholder selection for a representative voice (not top-down, much more bottom-up aspects needed) and structures/procedures for a participatory, transparent review/monitoring report.
3. SDG champions and role models to raise awareness and level –up the commitment!

Table 11
1. EU needs a mission for a sustainable future in Europe.
2. -
3. There is a need of capacities, resources for stakeholders to support their engagement.

Session 2 Feedback from Tables:

There were many different feedback points being brought into the discussion on what Europe needs to move forward in terms of sustainable development and implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

It was shared that the ESDN was of the opinion that the Multi-Stakeholder Platform should become a permanent body and should involve the EU Member States and the European Parliament. A letter is to be addressed to Marcel Haag, who would then be asked to circulate the letter among the members of the Platform before they adopt their reflection paper on October 11, 2018.

Another participant shared that the technicalities should be discussed, as a new Commission will soon be elected and taking the place of the current Commission. It is imperative, therefore, that the **new Commission takes sustainable development seriously** and that sustainable development needs to be at the heart of the new Commission. It is everyone’s joint responsibility, therefore, to make sure sustainable development becomes anchored in the new Commission.

One participant noted that there seems to be a very **large need for capacity building and support for stakeholders**, so that they are able to better engage with policymakers.

Another participant drew focus to the fact that there **should be an economic case made for the SDGs**, as currently everyone relies very heavily on moral suasion to get people to act. Moral suasion is not the most reliable method to use when issues are pressing and one would never engage as a company if results or gain cannot be guaranteed.

Session 3: Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation for the SDGs – Perspectives of Governance

Session 3 featured a **panel discussion between national level policymakers responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and a stakeholder representative from their country**. The panel discussion focused on the perspectives of governance that exist within their countries and how these structures are used to further enhance stakeholder-policy cooperation. **Estonia** was represented by **EILI LEPIK** from the Government Office and **SIGRID SOLNIK** from the Estonian Coalition for Sustainable Development. **Finland** was represented by **ANNIKA LINDBLOM**, the Secretary General of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and **JUSSI KANNER** from the NGO platform Kehys.

Estonia

EILI LEPIK began the discussion about the governance structures in Estonia from the policymaker side, stating that **stakeholder engagement is not a new issue in Estonia**, as their Commission for Sustainable Development was established in 1996. Although the Commission has existed for over 20 years, Ms. Lepik shared that the journey has not always been easy, but that it has gone through reforms. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister is no longer leading the Commission and that it is now run by stakeholders. This was due to a change in priorities of the Prime Minister, who did not feel stakeholder cooperation was such a high priority. The Government Office, therefore, acts as the secretariat for the Commission and the stakeholders are the ones who are able to choose the topics they wish to discuss and the reports they wish to write.

Ms. Lepik stated that stakeholder engagement is not an easy task and that it is rather quite difficult, as it is sometimes **hard for the government to distinguish whether stakeholders are presenting the point of view of their organization or if they are just expressing their personal opinions**.

However, stakeholders are involved in cooperative processes, such as when the government drafts action plans. If stakeholders have the analytical capacity to bring insights into the process and discussions, then they are invited by the government to participate.

Apart from official cooperative mechanisms, there now exists the Estonian Coalition for Sustainable Development. The government was not a part of this Coalition and actually asked to join it, as the Coalition deals with many practical issues relating to sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

SIGRID SOLNIK followed up on where Ms. Lepik left off discussing the Coalition, mentioning that the Coalition is a wonderful thing that looks really great on paper. The Coalition is supposed to be the platform and body for exchange, as well as an advisory body for the government. However, **sustainable development is not a top priority of the government**. It is unfortunate when the government does not care about the advice of the Estonian Commission for Sustainable Development or of the Coalition.

Ms. Solnik shared she sees the government's inaction as a clash of two worlds when it comes to old structures, methods, and processes, as they might be at odds with what is necessary when it comes to sustainable development.

Ms. Lepik reacted to Ms. Solnik's point of Estonian politicians not engaging with the SDGs or with sustainable development, sharing that public officials oftentimes cannot do very much, but that many in the government know that the SDGs need to be embedded within policies and strategies. Ms. Lepik also added that the Estonian government is doing a lot regarding sustainable development and the

SDGs, but this is not being made apparent because the **government is not linking the activities it is doing to the SDGs or the 2030 Agenda.**

There are 20-25 representatives on the Commission. Umbrella organizations working with different topics can be quite dependent on the person who is representing the organization and meet 3 times per year. Representatives are elected from boards, but can be the same people year after year. This becomes an issue if representatives work together for too long; they lose track of the home organization's agenda and of their own social group.

It was also shared that within the Commission it can be difficult to have a constructive discussion, as there is a lot of clashing agendas and discontent that hampers output and change. The key, therefore, is to find people who actually represent their home organization. Question is what is the aim of the commission, as prevalent structures tend to "kill" the inspiration. The Coalition, therefore, has the potential to offer a space to foster this energy and inspiration without being held back by change-reluctant structures that seem to dominate the Commission.

However, the Commission has a high level position and is revered regardless of the commission perhaps not contributing to any specific outputs. Ms. Lepik shared that the Commission will publish a spotlight report, and that it can then maybe have a chance to gain more space to share.

Finland

ANNIKA LINDBLOM began her discussion points by raising a critical eye to Finland and how Finland could be seen by others as merely building nice institutional arrangements. However, it is these **institutional arrangements that are important as there needs to be coherent governance mechanisms in place to combat the 'business as usual' mindset.**

After framing the importance that appropriate governance structures play in sustainable development, Ms. Lindblom discussed Finland's history with sustainable development and that they have had the National Commission for Sustainable Development for 25 years that has lasted through 10 different governments.

With such an established governance mechanism, **silos thinking is not only prevalent from within the ministries and departments, but also from stakeholders.** However, **in Finland there are not so many hierarchies involved in governance processes**, which make collaboration easier and may be the reason as to why Finland is further along than many other countries in terms of sustainable development and stakeholder-policy cooperation. It is the long-term work that builds legitimacy of sustainable development, as well as the trust between stakeholders and provides continuity.

Within Finland, the Minister of Finance is now becoming more involved with the SDGs and towards a budget that is aligned with sustainable development.

As a final note, Ms. Lindblom shared that it is important to note that for stakeholder engagement **trust is the most important factor.** Everyone needs to come to the table with their "sustainable development hat" on, not their personal or 'business as usual' hats. This goes for all stakeholder groups.

JUSSI KANNER, whose stakeholder organization Kehys is a part of the National Commission on Sustainable Development, added to what Ms. Lindblom mentioned, saying that in Finland stakeholders are aware of how much time and resources it takes to have these cooperative mechanisms. Mr. Kanner briefly mentioned the Multi-Stakeholder Platform and stressed that the results of such cooperative mechanisms may not be so helpful for stakeholders when the mechanisms do not deliver on the issues

discussed, meaning when positions are adopted within such mechanisms among the stakeholders and subsequently shared with politicians, oftentimes politicians do not take the findings of such processes into consideration. Therefore, making such a process as the Multi-Stakeholder Platform permanent may not actually be helpful if the results are not being used.

When working with stakeholders, Mr. Kanner shared that there are **3 main things that stakeholders value in any type of governance process**:

1. There is a *two way street* between stakeholders and policymakers;
2. *Mutual respect* is important for stakeholders; and
3. The *management of expectations* is vital for all taking part in the process.

He mentioned that it is easier to build trust and respect when there is **honesty about what the goals and ideals of the cooperative process** are. In Finland, the Commission does this very well and could be a factor of why the Commission has continued to function so well.

Regarding the government's implementation plan, it reflects stakeholder positions very well, but the government itself did not take on board the results of the stakeholder discussions. Mr. Kanner then said that it is important to note that the role of elected parliament can also not be overruled by stakeholder organizations. Parliament, therefore, needs to be involved in stakeholder-policy cooperation mechanisms and processes.

From his position as a stakeholder, Mr. Kanner mentioned that being a stakeholder and playing the part of the stakeholder in such cooperative processes means knowing how one fits into these processes and how one can contribute to the overall discussion and help generate outcomes and not just shoot down everything that comes along.

The Conference moderator, Peter Woodward, then asked both panelists about why they thought Finland is so successful when it comes to the SDGs, asking if it is a cultural aspect that sets the groundwork for such success?

Ms. Lindblom answered that **Finland has the lowest hierarchies in the world** and that it is **easy to work across the government**. Doing things together is engrained. It is the long-term work that has made us more successful. It is the legitimacy that the Commission has that has helped in Finland's overall progress and success.

Mr. Woodward then followed up with another question regarding the Commission and who is responsible for designing and facilitating the overall process of the Commission. The answer was that it works from both sides, so from government and external facilitators. Finland also has the tradition from the civil society side, too, that also facilitates and invites government representatives and vice versa. It is not expected that the government always needs to ask to discuss topics, but that stakeholders can also do the asking.

Mr. Woodward then asked if the SDGs have been a support in terms of cooperation. Mr. Kanner shared that the SDGs have helped bring more organizations closer to sustainable development, as everyone finds their place in the universality of the agenda, making it easier to get stakeholders engaged.

Mr. Woodward then brought in the concept of "dinosaur-busting", which was a reference to older people, or people who have occupied higher positions of power for long periods of time, and how to make them see the benefit of **engaging with stakeholders and breaking away from 'business as usual'**. Mr. Woodward asked the panelists what they thought the solution was to this issue. Ms.

Lindblom shared that there are people everywhere who want to engage with sustainable development and that it is these people that can be the knowledge brokers to their old dinosaur colleagues.

Along the vein of making stakeholder engagement with the sustainable development easier, Finland designed “Society’s Commitments towards Sustainable Development”, which allows everyone and all stakeholders to determine how they will address sustainable development issues. Ms. Lindblom shared that with other policies and plans, companies, for example, did not necessarily agree with the plans or with other stakeholders. Instead of completely disengaging, “Society’s Commitment” offers another route of engagement.

Mr. Kanner added to this, sharing that by looking at the commitments that have been registered on the government’s website, the private sector far outpaces civil society actors in terms of engagement with sustainable development.

Session 4: Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation for the SDGs – Effectively Tapping into Stakeholder Energy

The topic of Session 4 focused on **stakeholder-policy cooperation and how national governments can effectively tap into already existing stakeholder energy for sustainable development and the SDGs**. The format of Session 4 was the same as in Session 3 and featured national level policymakers and their stakeholder counterparts from **Belgium** (**SIMON CALLEWAERT** and **WISKE JULT**), **France** (**STÉPHANE BERNAUDON** and **SARAH SCHÖNFELD**), and **Italy** (**ANNA BOMBONATO AND** . This session was then concluded by **ANDRÉ MARTINUZZI** from the Institute for Managing Sustainability at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, who gave a summary of the first day and food for thought regarding the future of stakeholder-policy cooperation.

SIMON CALLEWAERT from the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development in Belgium began the discussion about **releasing stakeholder energy**. An interesting aspect of stakeholder integration in Belgium is when the Working Party 2030 works, civil society is involved in discussions. It is useful to combine different stakeholder groups and CSOs, such as ‘The Shift’, which is useful through a PR perspective to focus attention on certain issues.

WISKE JULT, from the stakeholder organization 11.11.11 (the coalition of NGOs, unions, movements and various solidarity groups in Flanders) took over the discussion and shared the organization’s viewpoint.

11.11.11 has a broad constituency of volunteers and organizations that has also learned how to appreciate Agenda 2030 as a move from the Millennium Development Goals, as this was more focused on development cooperation. Within 11.11.11., they had to move beyond their own silo thinking to include ecological aspects, as the SDGs are a bit different.

Ms. Jult shared that Belgium has a **long history of working with sustainable development**, such as through the interministerial conference on sustainable development to coordinate policies towards sustainable development. The Council is a place for advice, where civil society are a part of the process. The Council, however, has some limits, such as the fact that it is missing the women’s lobby. Another benefit of the Council is that stakeholders do not only have the option to discuss the issues within an official, political forum, but also an informal one. This then broadened the spectrum to a bigger coalition, which submitted a report on the SDGs to the government and created a huge enthusiasm within the civil society engaged in this coalition and report.

In concluding her discussion, Ms. Jult provided some food for thought by posing a few questions: 1) Transformative politics is necessary, but what is needed to achieve it?; 2) Why is there not more political initiative?; and 3) Politicians have the power, but is Agenda 2030 just about relaying responsibility?

A question was posed to the panel about the National Belgium Sustainable Development Strategies, as they are not difficult to produce at the federal level, because the responsibility goes to the regional level, and whether that was still the case. Mr. Callewaert answered that it is not true that the regional level has to follow the federal sustainable development strategies. However, if there is a strong federal strategy, the regions do not want to lag behind in implementation and targets.

Ms. Jult also shared that the **role of stakeholders and NGOs is to not only name and shame, but as an organization they can bring their proposals and suggestions to the table**. She shared that this is the limit of civil society organizations: They can only propose and suggest courses of action, but it is

ultimately still up to the political level to choose to listen and hear the advice and opinions that stakeholders share with them.

Some of the take-away messages from Belgium are that it is important that everyone is on the same page, because everyone is in the same boat. Ms. Jult added that if one works together, it is necessary to be inclusive and make sure that those whom one is discussing are included and that everyone is able to clearly voice what it is they expect from their government in any sort of governance process, making sure that there is a strong consensus that is being reached.

France

STÉPHANE BERNAUDON, from the Ministry for an Ecological and Solidary Transition, represented France as the national level policymaker. Mr. Bernaudon shared that **France is currently developing a French SDG strategy and roadmap**, which includes 25 Working Groups, involving CSOs. This roadmap is composed of 4 chapters, one about vision, 4: implementation tools, 2: SDG by SDG, which is steered by leading ministries and involves CSOs. The third chapter is about involvement of stakeholders and what each stakeholder can do. This is further broken down into working groups for business, trade unions, etc. From the civil servant side, there has been increased cooperation and the civil servants have found great amounts of energy in collaborating with civil society.

SARAH SCHÖNFELD, from the stakeholder organization Comité 21 gave a brief overview of the organization, which includes 400 organizations that are members, including industry, regional organizations, public and private research institutions/universities, etc. Comité 21 focuses on raising awareness for the SDGs and helping members to integrate the SDGs into their existing strategies. Comité 21 also organizes workshops on best practices, publishes analyses and methodological guides to take step-by-step ownership of the SDGs.

The activities of Comité 21 are supported by the Ministries of Ecology and Foreign Affairs. Through these ministries, Comité 21 has developed two projects, one of which is the SDG tour de France, which focuses on regional territories and their approach to the SDGs, as local actors should know that an SDG review is of what they are already doing. It is necessary, too, that these local actors exchange amongst peers, share best practice cases, learn from each other, etc. They need an institutional framework and Comité 21 set up a commission and a road map to implement the SDGs. Local actors need tools to implement the SDGs. It is, however, normal that we haven't fulfilled all criteria that the SDGs set out, but that is because they are still relatively new.

Italy

ANNA BOMBONATO, from the Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, represented Italy's national level policymaker in the discussion panel. Ms. Bombonato began by stating that Italy is very committed to Agenda 2030 and that the government's National Sustainable Development Strategy sought to overcome the different sectorial policies to establish one consistent policy.

In order to fulfill that desire, it was established very early on that **stakeholder integration was crucial for the implementation of the strategy**. Therefore, the government tried to include their opinions through a multi-level consultation process from the beginning of the entire strategy development process, where more than 200 NGOs, academia, etc. were involved. The Strategy was based on a context analysis and then validated through the consultation, which was responsible for coming up with concrete action points and objectives. The strategy was approved in 2017 and the main responsibilities lay with the Council of Ministers. However, each ministry contributes to the implementation of the strategy in relation to their own expertise and competences.

The Ministry of Environment, for example, is tasked with coordinating the Forum for Sustainable Development, which will have its first meeting by the end of December 2018. The challenge is to create something that can be transparent and permanent, and where civil society is involved in an active and transparent way.

Ms. Bombonato provided participants with some advice on tapping into energies that may already exist, sharing it is helpful to try to reflect and continue to push for the implementation of Agenda 2030, but to also do so on the sub-national level. Consultation of civil society is a key aspect being pushed also on regional level within Italy. It is also helpful to try to overcome the sectoral perspective and create dialogue with, and between, regional actors to facilitate mutual learning and experience exchange.

GIULIO LO IACONO, from the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), briefly introduced the make-up of the Alliance, which is an umbrella organization, bringing together over 200 CSOs, businesses, unions, foundations, universities, etc. The Alliance has a daily updated website, newsletter, etc., to provide continuous information on the 2030 Agenda.

The Alliance's first pillar is to improve quality of public information, which takes the form of a yearly report that looks at how Italy is performing for each SDG. As an Independent organization, the Alliance is also able to point out flaws.

For the regional level, the Alliance has also developed composite indicators, which improve the flow of information to and from the government.

The second pillar of the Alliance is to improve education, such as introducing the SDGs in schools and universities, etc., such as by offering teachers training and summer sustainable development courses.

The third pillar is communication, as a lot of people are unaware of the 2030 Agenda. The Alliance also organized the Italian Sustainable Development Festival, which is dedicated to promoting the SDGs and encouraging other stakeholders to conduct events that address the SDGs.

After having listened to the panel discussions between national policymaker representatives and stakeholder organizations from Belgium, France and Italy, participants conducted discussions at their tables to reflect on what was shared in Sessions 3 and 4, as well as to discuss their experiences and breakthrough insights of releasing the energy of stakeholders. **The results of all table discussions are documented below.**

Results of Session 4 Table Discussions

Table 1	
1.	Officials should take NGOs seriously (but not only NGOs)
2.	-
3.	-

Table 2	
1.	Coalition between stakeholders is important to promote and facilitate dialogue between them.
2.	Depending on civil society organization mandate, the role of governments might be different.
3.	-

Table 3
1. Lack of actual support to make stakeholder engagement meaningful (resources, capacity, etc.)
2. Involve stakeholders already in the design of the process to allow for ownership.
3. -

Table 4
1. Creating space to exchange experiences and to build trust and transparency.
2. Concentrate on specific goals/specific SDGs
3. Deal with hard data.

Table 5
1. Put the young people forward to talk about their understanding of sustainable consumption and how consuming influences them.
2. -
3. Bring in youth to discuss with ministers.

Table 6
1. Governance does matter: civil society plays a role, but cannot replace government.
2. Cultural background traditional level of stress
3. Finance helps

Table 7
1. Get progressive business people involved in SDG issues and stakeholder forums. Politicians listen to the business sector.
2. It's not civil servants vs. stakeholders, but everyone is a stakeholder and lines go between pro-SDG and don't-care-SDG people within groups of different stakeholders.
3. -

Table 8
1. Importance of civil society self-organizing and joining in versus government 'convening'.
2. Importance of process design and environments to keep participation appropriate to topic/content and inclusive ownership.
3. Trust – in process – in each other - Clear understanding of 'deal' and expectations.

Table 9
1. What is the added value of sustainability in business-as-usual policies? Not to isolate sustainable development, but integrate/mainstream.
2. Looking towards collective solutions to pressing problems
3. -

Table 10
1. High level coordination required. Many counterproductive measures.
2. Go beyond subsidies. Exchanging experience
3. EU SDG policy and vision needed.

Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation – Main Insights from Day 1

ANDRÉ MARTINUZZI focused his presentation, which can be found on the [ESDN website](#), on the issue of **trust in stakeholder-policy cooperation**. One of the main factors contributing to trust and trust in stakeholder-policy cooperation is **legitimacy**. The Edelman trust barometer indicates that **people have lost trust in the political system** due to issues like the financial crises, EU-crises, migration crises, etc. More than half of the population lost trust and it is in combating the loss of trust that everyone must now focus on stakeholder cooperation. However, Mr. Martinuzzi cautioned that in implementation – co-design, and co-creation process, which brings together the right people, is not necessarily enough to ensure implementation.

Mr. Martinuzzi then transitioned to empowerment and that **empowerment is a question of continuity**. However, there are arguments and questions raised against stakeholder cooperation, such as if stakeholders are qualified, legitimate, or organized; What happens if stakeholders have more opinions than knowledge?

Legitimacy, however, raises its own set of issues, such as **the selection procedures used to determine who can participate and how are they organized**. For example, research and business tend to be organized, but civil society and the public not so much. Questions then surface regarding the mechanisms to communicate with policymakers in a continuous manner, as stakeholders often lack the capacity to do so.

The **roles that stakeholders** have are sources of information, target of information, partner for implementation, agenda-setting and quality control, as well as reflexivity. One must also think about the **roles of participation**, who does what for whom, and that competition within stakeholder cooperation exists.

Mr. Martinuzzi then offered a **glimpse of the future of stakeholder-policy cooperation**, which is a process of going **from cooperation to managing systems** and the tools that are needed to achieve this, meaning how can stakeholders and policymakers intervene within the system to go from managing mobility, for example, to intervening in mobility systems that link technologies and personal networks.

Session 5: “ConverStations” - Stakeholder activities and initiatives for the SDG implementation

The “ConverStations” that took place during Day 2 of the Conference were **centred on stakeholder activities for the implementation of the SDGs**. In total, there were **12 different “ConverStations”** that took place over three different rounds, which afforded participants the chance to listen to 3 stakeholder organizations share their experiences in SDG implementation in-depth, as well as ask questions and have discussions.

For more details of the different stakeholder organizations that took part in the “ConverStations”, please refer to the [Conference Discussion Paper](#), which has descriptions of the organizations.

Session 6: Developing the Ingredients for Successful Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in SDG Implementation

Session 6 was a session that **allowed participants to bring together everything they had learned over the course of the Conference** and, in small groups formed around tables, work on developing **successful ingredients that ensure effective stakeholder-cooperation can take place**.

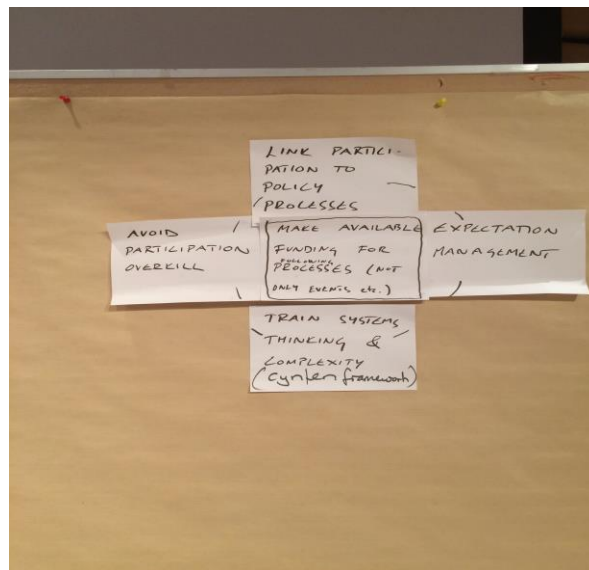
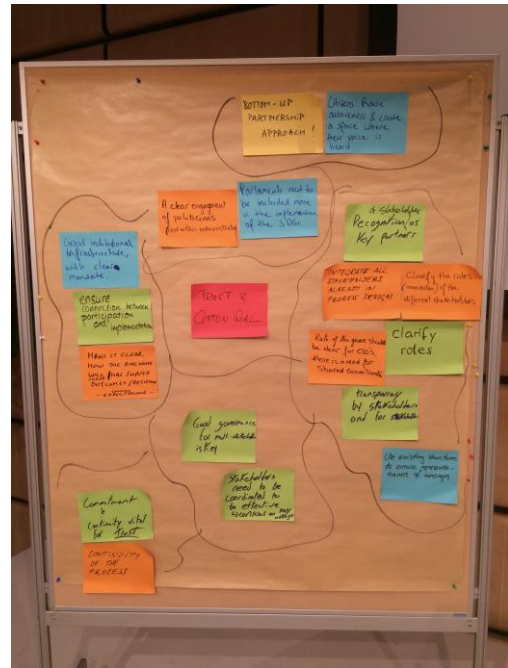
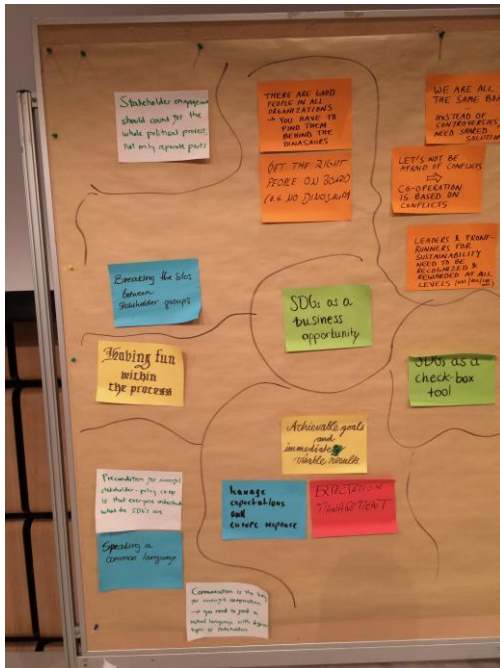
Participants were asked to discuss for 25 minutes and write down their ingredients on moderation cards for the feedback session that occurred afterwards.

During the feedback session, the Moderator asked for individual ingredients and began to **cluster the ingredients**, as can be seen in the pictures below, which capture the results of the feedback session, as well as the clusters that were formed. **The clusters that were formed were summarized by the ESDN Office and are presented below. Photos of the results can be found on the next page.**

Ingredients for Successful Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in SDG Implementation

- 1) One of the main ingredients that participants came up with as being important in successful stakeholder-policy cooperation is the **management of expectations**. This goes for the management of stakeholder expectations of one another, of the process, of expected results, etc. Along the same line, the management of goal setting should be able to be achieved.
- 2) **Effective communication** is another ingredient that is important in cooperation, as all stakeholders need to be able to speak the same language when it comes to the SDGs, so that common and joint understandings can be reached.
- 3) **Clarify roles** of all stakeholders involved in the process and how they are can work and fit within the cooperative process. This also helps stakeholders know who is responsible for what and can better and more easily commit themselves to the cause and goals of the process.
- 4) **Breaking the silos between stakeholders** was also put forward as an important ingredient for the overall success of cooperative processes. Having the correct stakeholders on-board helps in being able to bridge the gaps between the silos. One must also remember that there are good people in every single stakeholder organization and that these individuals need to be located.
- 5) The **inclusion of politicians and parliaments** in the cooperative processes is important, as legitimately elected officials should not be overruled by stakeholder group desires. Having engaged politicians also helps the overall results of these stakeholder-policy cooperation mechanisms become adopted.
- 6) Most important for any cooperative process is **trust and continuity**. Trust can only be built up over time and this build up takes processes that meet regularly and for extended periods of time. As cooperative mechanisms will inherently have conflicts, the overall success of managing these conflicts in a way that provides positive results requires trust.

Photos of the group work results on ingredients for Successful Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in SDG Implementation:



Conference Closure

The ESDN Co-Chairs, Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler and Wolfram Tertschnig, **and thanked all speakers and participants for taking part in another successful ESDN Conference**, and wished that everyone found the topic of this year to be highly relevant for their work and to bring back to their home institutions.



