



# PARLIAMENTARY MECHANISMS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

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## Introduction

While the mandate for implementing the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lies with the executive branch of each country, parliaments play an important role in ensuring a just and representative process. The 2030 Agenda itself is based on a top-down and a bottom-up approach to ensure ownership by all relevant actors. The role of parliaments is described in §45 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

*‘We acknowledge also the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments. Governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, subregional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others’ (2030 Agenda, p. 11)*

In addition, parliaments have their own targets as part of SDG 16 *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*; Target 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels) and 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels).

This Report focuses on the question on how parliaments can fulfil their role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It explores how different mechanisms for involvement work, what different strategies parliamentarians employ and how citizens’ participation can be ensured. A particular focus will be on how parliaments can use their main functions, which are also mentioned in §45 of the 2030 Agenda that is quoted above: legislation, budget, oversight and representation of civil society.

The first chapter of this Report will describe the tools that parliamentarians have at their disposal to promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In the second chapter, a survey of 25 parliaments in Europe and their practices with regards to the 2030 Agenda will be analysed. This survey was conducted by the ESDN Office in cooperation with the parliamentary administration of the Austrian Parliament. The results of the survey are discussed in Chapter 3. The discussion also includes aspects that were brought up at the 19<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop on *Parliamentary Mechanisms in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*, which took place in Vienna and online in June 2021.

# Chapter 1: Mechanisms for Parliamentary Involvement in SDG Implementation

Due to the all-encompassing nature of the 2030 Agenda, all issues that come before a national parliament can be considered to be related to the SDGs or at least have a (positive or negative) impact on their achievement. Parliaments play a crucial role in ensuring that implementation of the 2030 Agenda is just, equitable and leaves no one behind. In addition, they are the institution that provides democratic legitimacy for international agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda. Even though the 2030 Agenda is not legally binding by international law, ratification by the national parliament confers democratic legitimacy upon the government's actions that are geared towards the achievement of the SDGs (Bexell & Jönsson, 2020). On the other hand, the parliament's role is to scrutinise and support the government through referring on citizens' needs and opinions to the government (Bexell & Jönsson, 2020).

The following paragraphs summarise the literature surrounding parliamentary involvement in SDG implementation. The recommendations were used as the basis for the study of European parliaments that is described in Chapter 2.

Depending on national institutional mechanisms, parliamentarians have varying tools at their disposal to work towards SDG implementation in their country. This depends, for example, on whether parliaments have the mandate to propose laws, influence the budget or take other major decisions (Hague & Harrop, 2004). In addition, parliaments may set up different structures to organise their work. For example, it can be helpful to set up a committee or form an informal group of MPs that coordinates the activities surrounding sustainable development for the parliament.

The tools that are available to parliamentarians roughly fall into the four categories that are mentioned in the 2030 Agenda itself (§45): legislation, budget, accountability and monitoring, and representation. In the following paragraphs, the tools within each category will be described.

## Legislation

While the executive branch (the government) is the designated entity for implementing the SDGs, parliamentarians play a crucial role in ensuring that sustainability issues are an essential part of a country's legal framework.

Parliaments can be involved in the strategic planning towards achieving the SDGs. Many countries develop a strategic document, often called the *National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS)*, which spans several legislative periods. Parliaments or individual parliamentarians can become involved in the development and preparation of this document. One way of doing so is by forming a parliamentary committee. Some countries have established multi-stakeholder committees that include representatives from civil society, parliament and government, for example Hungary and Denmark (UNDP et al., 2017).

If a parliament has the mandate to initiate laws, proposing bills is a direct way for parliamentarians to contribute to achieving the SDGs. However, not all parliaments have this option (Hague & Harrop, 2004). Parliaments can assess and analyse laws regarding their suitability to achieve the SDGs. This can be done by parliamentary committees, or the parliamentary administration. Ideally, this would involve an impact analysis for new laws that includes sustainable development, as well as human rights issues (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

The process of deliberation of new laws, including parliamentary debates and a back- and forth between the plenary and committees, can serve to raise awareness and influence public opinion on important issues (Kreppel, 2020). This can be used to raise awareness about the importance of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the trade-offs and synergies the SDGs offer.

To ensure that the SDGs play an active role in legislation, it is helpful if there exists institutionalised or consistent cooperation between those parliamentary committees concerned with sustainable development and the government and its agencies (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

An important aspect of sustainable development and the SDGs is their interdisciplinary nature. Therefore, parliament needs to find ways to address the interlinkages between the SDGs (policy coherence for sustainable development), how to capitalise on their potential synergies and to balance trade-offs. One way of taking these interlinkages into account is to have one standing rapporteur, i.e. one parliamentarian in every committee who is responsible for cross-cutting issues and who can coordinate with other committees (Niestroy, 2019). This is a way to prevent legislative proposals that actively counteract sustainable development in general, as well as one or more SDGs. Another way would be the establishment of a dedicated SDG committee.

## Budget

Parliaments' control over the budgetary process varies. In many countries, the debate about the budget is rather nominal and the proposal by the government cannot be modified (Hague & Harrop, 2004). However, most parliaments review and discuss the government's budget in plenary and some have a dedicated committee for the budget. When discussing the budget, parliamentarians can question the government on what the budget intends to deliver regarding the SDGs (Mesiano, 2015). As other debates, the budget debate can also raise awareness and steer public opinion (Kreppel, 2020). As the budgetary process usually receives a lot of attention, also by the media, giving the SDGs a prominent role will raise awareness as to their importance not only within parliament, but also with the public.

Niestroy (2019) argues that the budgetary process usually brings together many different committees across political issues. It could, therefore, function as a role model for overcoming political silos (i.e. integration of different political sectors) in the implementation of sustainable development. Ideally, SDG implementation is mainstreamed into all government and parliamentary activities, also to ensure that different policies do not counteract each other and jeopardise the achievement of the SDGs (Inter-parliamentary Union & United Nations Development Programme, 2017). This is currently being implemented through the [European Semester](#) mechanism, which seeks to align economic policies and strategies across EU Member States. In its country reports, the European Commission also analyses the contribution of macroeconomic policies on the achievement of the SDGs (European Commission, n.d.).

Similarly to the impact assessment of laws mentioned above, it is recommended to conduct a sustainability check for the budget. Equally, the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) recommends an audit for the budget from a human rights and gender perspective (Rodriguez et al., 2016). The parliament, with the help of supreme audit institutions or national statistics offices, can also request a performance audit of the budget. This not only assesses whether the budget was spent in line with the law and government's plan, but also to what extent it has achieved the desired results (UNDP et al., 2017).

## Oversight and monitoring

Holding the government accountable towards its progress on the SDGs is arguably one of the most effective ways for parliament to become involved in SDG implementation (UNDP et al., 2017). The parliament exercises its key role as a representative of the people by scrutinising the work of the executive branch (Hague & Harrop, 2004). The most obvious way of doing this is to query the government during ‘question time’ and by posing inquiries to the government (Niestroy, 2019; UNDP et al., 2017).

To support its monitoring efforts, the parliament can request data from national statistics offices or supreme audit institutions, which could also apply to the SDGs and sustainable development. Sometimes, the parliament can be involved in defining the national indicators for sustainable development (UNDP et al., 2017). Based on assessments and audits, parliamentary committees can make recommendations to the government on how to address gaps in achievement and implementation (UNDP et al., 2017).

The other major avenue for parliaments to monitor their government’s progress is to participate in the drafting and writing of Voluntary National Review (VNRs) to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF is the UN’s main forum for sustainable development and is central for follow-up and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda (United Nations, n.d.) in UN Member States. VNRs are a way for countries to undertake a holistic assessment of their progress. Parliaments can make sure that the government collects all the necessary data and addresses the relevant gaps. On the other hand, the VNRs present an opportunity for parliamentarians and those in the parliamentary committee that is responsible for SDG implementation to assess and adjust their own work and focus (Mesiano, 2015).

## Representation

Representing the citizens of its country is one of the main functions of a national parliament. Parliamentarians are supposed to advocate for their constituents and ensure that their perspectives, values and interests are represented in the policy process (Kreppel, 2020). In the context of the SDGs, this means that it is one of the key roles of parliaments to ensure that their constituents’ voices are heard when it comes to setting priorities in designing policies for implementation and deciding on trade-offs between different goals (Bexell & Jönsson, 2020; Niestroy, 2019). Through public forums and citizen consultations, parliamentarians can make sure that the public dialogue about the SDGs keeps going (UNDP et al., 2017). Here it is especially important to keep the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised citizens in mind. Parliamentarians can make sure that trade-offs and decisions are not made at the expense of those stakeholders (Mesiano, 2015).

Founding an SDG committee can be one way of signalling to the public that the parliament places a lot of importance on the 2030 Agenda (Mesiano, 2015; UNDP et al., 2017). Alternatively, other committees can be mandated with the topic of sustainable development or parliamentarians can form an informal group. Citizen involvement is an especially important aspect of the parliament. Parliamentary committees can call on citizens to provide their views on implementation and potential trade-offs. This knowledge is then fed back into government planning (Niestroy, 2019).

## Challenges

As the SDGs are interdisciplinary and address the whole array of sustainability issues, parliaments face the same challenges in their implementation as governments and civil servants often do. The overall structure of parliaments is often not conducive to cross-silo thinking and addressing overarching issues. Parliaments can be divided across party lines and/or government and opposition, and their

thematic work is strongly structured in committees that do not necessarily interact with one another. However, sustainable development needs strong vertical and horizontal coordination in order to integrate different political challenges and harness synergies. The structure of most parliaments does not favour cooperation across political silos (Niestroy, 2019). The Inter-parliamentary Union recommends that parliaments self-assess their capacity to contribute to the SDGs every three to five years. This self-assessment can include many of the mechanisms that were described above (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

In order to establish parliamentary structures that are conducive to promoting the SDGs in all the above-mentioned ways, it can be useful for parliamentarians to join international networks and learn from each other's good practices, for example the [ECPRD | European Center for Parliamentary Research and Documentation \(europa.eu\)](https://ecprd.europa.eu/), the [Inter-Parliamentary Union | For democracy. For everyone. \(ipu.org\)](https://www.ipu.org/), the [Parliaments in Partnership | INTER PARES \(inter-pares.eu\)](https://inter-pares.eu/).

## Chapter 2: National Activities

Together with the Austrian Parliamentary Administration, the ESDN Office conducted a study to assess the current state of parliamentary involvement in SDG implementation in Europe. The following chapter summarises the findings of a survey sent out via the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD), a network of parliament administrations.

### Method

The questions of the survey were developed based on the literature available on parliamentary involvement in Agenda 2030 implementation. In each category of parliamentary mechanisms (legislation, budget, oversight, representation), respondents were asked whether the tools described in Chapter 1 were used with regards to 2030 Agenda implementation, and if so, how, and to what effect. The questionnaire can be found in Annex 2.

The questionnaire was sent out through the ECPRD to parliamentary administrations all over Europe in the beginning of April 2021. Most answers arrived by the end of April 2021. In total, 24 parliaments out of 48 replied. In addition, the ESDN Office sent out questionnaires to its National Focal Points, who are civil servants in national ministries that are responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The information in *Table 1* on the Netherlands and Greece have been derived through answers by National Focal Points, but were not included in the more detailed analysis. The information on Denmark and Romania was derived through presentations during the 19<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop (Fetting, 2021). They were also not included in the analysis, but can be found in the table. A list of all sources can be found in Annex 3.

A qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was conducted with the help of the coding software MaxQDA. The categories were derived through a mixture of inductive and deductive methods. The survey questions provided the main categories, while the subcategories were established inductively from the answers.

There are several limitations to the analysis of this survey. Often, answers did not explicitly mention the SDGs or even sustainable development, but rather referred to topics and issues related to SD. Those mentioning sustainable development in general were included in the analysis, while those who did not (for example a new climate or environmental law without any mention of SD) were not included. Not all questions were answered by each respondent. It is unclear whether this is because no relevant activity is happening in this area or for another reason.

### Results

The first part of this section provides an overview of the different mechanisms used in each parliament. The answers to questions in each section of the questionnaire are summarised to give the reader an impression of the mechanisms that exist. The second part of this chapter focuses more on the forms that different mechanisms can take and they are described in more detail. The countries, to which a certain mechanism applies, are mentioned with their abbreviation in the footnote.

## 1. Table representation

Table 1 summarises the responses given by ECPRD respondents and represents the main activities undertaken by each parliament. Under monitoring and accountability, please note that most respondents indicated that MPs may use traditional elements of oversight, such as parliamentary inquiries.

*Table 1*

Country	Legislation	Budget	Monitoring and accountability	Representation	Committees and Multi-stakeholder Councils
<b>Albania –Assembly of Albania</b>	Draft laws have to be accompanied by a report that, inter alia, takes into account the extent to which the SDGs are being met	Budget 2021 includes explicit references to the SDGs	Statistical agency reports on SDG indicators to the Finance and Budget Committee		Subcommittee on Sustainable Development
<b>Austria- Nationalrat</b>		SDGs debated in budget plenary debate for the first time in 2021 Budgetary committee takes SDGs into account Budget-service of Parliament analyses impact of budget and occasionally individual laws on SDGs	Government report debated in plenary and in constitutional committee Parliament takes note of the report Supreme audit court has assessed the SDGs, report used by parliamentarians		Budget committee, supreme audit committee, constitutional committee, committee for external affairs
<b>Belgium – House of Representatives and Senate</b>	Committee will examine the new Federal Sustainable Development Plan and hold hearings with the government				Committee on Energy, Environment and Climate
<b>Bulgaria – National Assembly</b>					The Chair of the Development Council invites the heads of all parliamentary groups as well representatives of

Country	Legislation	Budget	Monitoring and accountability	Representation	Committees and Multi-stakeholder Councils
					relevant standing committees to participate in sittings of the council
<b>Croatia – Hrvatski Sabor</b>	SDGs mentioned in almost all deliberations on draft laws and reports Parliament held a formal debate and vote on NSDS		Parliament adopts report by State Audit Office on implementation of SDGs		Jurisdiction of many committees, e.g. Environment, Health, Finance
<b>Cyprus – House of Representatives</b>	MPs have submitted laws that explicitly refer to the SDGs, e.g. on environmental protection		Parliament consulted for VNR but does not participate in drafting Government in constant dialogue with Parliament on progress of SDGs	Citizens' assembly 'Parallel Parliament' was encouraged to deal with implementation of SDGs and also discusses sustainable development	Committee on the Environment, Committee on Foreign and European Affairs Committee with participants from all areas of government, including Parliament, planned
<b>Czech Republic – Chamber of Deputies</b>	MPs are part of the body that provides key strategic development documents		Ministry of Environment preparing report on Agenda 2030 implementation to Parliament, which will be discussed in the Environment Committee		Subcommittee on Sustainable Development (within Environment Committee) Government Council for Sustainable Development includes one representative of each chamber of the Czech Parliament
<b>Denmark - Folketing</b>				2030 Panel includes parliamentarians, CSOs, business representatives etc., members are designated by the 2030 Network of the Parliament	2030 Panel is a multi-stakeholder council Informal all-parliamentary group for the SDGs

Country	Legislation	Budget	Monitoring and accountability	Representation	Committees and Multi-stakeholder Councils
<b>Estonia – Riigikogu</b>	Parliament debated and approved the Estonian NSDS	Prime Minister presents to the Parliament how the budget is related to the strategic goals of the NSDS			
<b>Finland - Eduskunta</b>		SDGs have been raised in budget debates but not played a crucial role	Government submits report to Parliament which debates report Committee of the Future prepares parliamentary response	Committee for the Future organises seminars and other events for stakeholders and civil society	Parliamentary Committee: Committee for the Future National Commission on Sustainable Development is a multi-stakeholder council, including government, MPs, other stakeholders
<b>France – Assemblée Nationale</b>	Parliamentarians were part of multi-stakeholder working groups preparing the national roadmap for the SDGs	Green budget that assesses the environmental impact	The government must present progress on 10 indicators related to SD to the Parliament annually	-> Consultation launched by several MPs to gain civil society's opinions on SDG implementation -> Initiative "Parlement & Citoyens" allows citizens to co-write laws with MPs	Committee on Sustainable Development and Land Use Planning
<b>Germany- Bundestag</b>	Several initiatives by different parties to make SD a guiding principle of law making have been adopted Government submits SD strategy to Parliament, which takes notice of it		Advisory Council on Sustainable Development assesses whether the Impact Assessment of draft laws provided by the government is sufficient, can request more details Government regularly updates Parliament and Advisory Council on its progress Parliament has adopted a motion according to which the government needs to report on the status of SDG	Council of elders of the Parliament has initiated a citizens' council which provided a list of recommendations to the Parliament about the future of Germany	Advisory Council on Sustainable Development

Country	Legislation	Budget	Monitoring and accountability	Representation	Committees and Multi-stakeholder Councils
			implementation in the middle of each legislative period		
<b>Germany- <i>Bundesrat</i></b>	Federal States have submitted laws with reference to the SDGs to the Federal Council				
<b>Greece – Vouli</b>			Parliament participated in elaboration and presentation of VNR The submission and discussion of government progress reports is envisioned		Debates mostly initiated and steered by Committee on Environmental Protection, but no committee has an explicit mandate
<b>Hungary – <i>Országgyűlés</i></b>	– NSDS debated in Parliament, amendments proposed, adopted by a vote		NCSD prepares progress report, which includes members of the government and Parliament		Speaker of the Parliament is president of the multi-stakeholder National Council for Sustainable Development Subcommittee for Sustainable Development
<b>Israel – <i>Knesset</i></b>			A representative of the Knesset was involved in writing a progress report		
<b>Italy – <i>Senato</i></b>	Amendment of Italian Constitution foreseen to include SD and environmental protection Parliament debated the NSDS	A series of indexes of sustainable welfare are published as annex to the Economy and Finance Document Minister of Economy and Finance has to present a report to Parliament that reports on effect of budget on different SD indicators	Minister of Finance reports to the Parliament each year		

Country	Legislation	Budget	Monitoring and accountability	Representation	Committees and Multi-stakeholder Councils
<b>the Netherlands</b>	SDG assessment was added to draft laws at the request of the Parliament MPs request the government to strengthen its performance with regards to SDGs At least one legislative initiative referring explicitly to SDGs	The monitor on wellbeing indicators that is submitted by the government to the Parliament also includes reference to the budget	Annual <i>Accountability Day</i> : Government submits wellbeing report with SDG indicators to Parliament, Parliament debates the report with the Prime Minister		Committee for Foreign Trade and Development, mainly looks at SDGs in context of international development
<b>Latvia - <i>Saeima</i></b>	<i>Saeima</i> approved the National Development Plan The Sustainable Development Committee was involved in the preparation		The Supreme Audit Office assesses SDG indicators and submits reports to Parliament The SAO cooperates closely with different parliamentary committees		Sustainable Development Committee
<b>Lithuania- <i>Seimas</i></b>	Members of the Commission were involved in preparation of NSDS <i>Seimas</i> approved the concept of spatial Plan for Lithuania	<i>Seimas</i> called on government to integrate long-time goals of SD into budgeting and financial instruments			Commission for Energy and Sustainable Development Working Group developing a document reflecting the Assembly's commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda
<b>Poland- <i>Sejm</i></b>	The national strategic document was discussed with ministers in several committees		Supreme Audit Office: activities related to the SDGs are presented to the <i>Sejm</i> annually Government consulted select parliamentary committees for national progress report		

Country	Legislation	Budget	Monitoring and accountability	Representation	Committees and Multi-stakeholder Councils
<b>Portugal</b> – <b>Assembleia de República</b>	<i>Assembleia</i> is currently discussing a national climate law SDGs have been the subject of several speeches by MPs				
<b>Romania-Parliament of Romania</b>			Government presents annual report to Parliament about progress on SDGs		Sub-Committee in Foreign Affairs Committee
<b>Slovakia – National Council</b>	Currently discussing legislative measures to mitigate climate change MPs were involved in preparing NSDS through inter-institutional working groups	Committee on the Environment discusses Environment Chapter of the Budget with regards to SDGs	The Supreme Audit Office submits a report about its activities, SDGs are debated in this context		Committee on Agriculture and Environment Head of Parliament Office is a voting members of the multi-stakeholder Government Council for the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development
<b>Slovenia - Državni zbor, National Assembly</b>	Parliament has adopted resolution on environmental protection strategy				
<b>Spain- Congress of Deputies</b>	Parliament influences government through non-legislative motions Legislative proposals often refer to the SDGs	Government must inform the Parliament on how the budget finances the SDGs A lot of attention is paid to the SDGs in budget debates	High frequency of interpellations and questions to the government on the SDGs	Online platform: <a href="#">Parlamento 2030</a> to track all Parliamentary activity related to the SDGs	Joint Commission for the Coordination and Monitoring of the Spanish Strategy to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) International Development Cooperation Committee
<b>Switzerland - Bundesversammlung</b>	SDGs are completely mainstreamed and therefore not explicitly the subject of any specific				

Country	Legislation	Budget	Monitoring and accountability	Representation	Committees and Multi-stakeholder Councils
	actions, debates or committees				
<b>European Parliament</b>		The EP added the implementation of SDGs to the Inter-institutional agreement on the Multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027			Environment Committee mostly debates these issues but does not have an explicit mandate Informal SDG Alliance of motivated MPs
<b>Catalonia</b>	Parliament has passed several motions to urge the government to take action Parliament has voted on detailed requirements that should be part of the implementation plan	SDGs have played a role in budget debate in plenary and in committees	Advisory Council appears in Parliament twice a year to report about SDG implementation Government answers questions and interpellations about SDGs regularly		Mostly in the Commission for Foreign Affairs, Institutional Relations and Transparency
<b>Wallonia</b>	Parliament has adopted a decree that foresees the elaboration of an SD strategy every legislative term		Court of Audit sent a review on SDG preparedness to Parliament in 2020	Youth Parliament for SD	Committee for the Environment

## 2. Description of mechanisms

This section of the analysis focuses on the forms that the different mechanisms described in Chapter 1 can take in different countries. For example, while almost every country has tasked a specific committee with sustainable development issues, in some, the topic is integrated into other committees, while others have established a specific committee to explicitly deal with sustainable development. Similarly, the tasks and mandates related to the topic are very different.

The countries, to which each description applies, are mentioned in the footnote. A list of country abbreviations can be found in Annex 1.

### General Activities and Committees

The SDGs were explicitly the subject of a plenary debate at least once in almost all parliaments<sup>1</sup> that responded to this survey. Many countries<sup>2</sup> indicated that the SDGs are regularly mentioned on the parliamentary floor. For example, the respondent from the German *Bundesrat* (Federal Council) stated that the SDGs had come up at least 400 times in discussions since 2015. In Croatia, they are mentioned regularly in debates on a variety of topics. In others<sup>3</sup> the topic has come up in reference to adopting the National Sustainable Development Strategy or in response to a government progress report<sup>4</sup>. This usually provides an opportunity to debate the general state of 2030 Agenda implementation in the country. In several countries, the subject was mostly debated in the committees mandated with sustainable development<sup>5</sup>.

Finland was the first to establish a parliamentary committee dedicated to issues that are now reflected in the 2030 Agenda. The Parliament's Committee for the Future was first established in 1993 as a temporary committee, but has been a permanent fixture of the Finnish Parliament since 2001. The German Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development was established in 2004. Latvia and Hungary have established a standing committee for sustainable development in 2014. Similarly, France has a committee dedicated to sustainable development. In the Czech Republic and Albania, sustainable development is the responsibility of a subcommittee. The Spanish Congress and Senate have established a joint committee that deals with the implementation of sustainable development.

In most other countries, one, or several, already existing committees usually deal with issues related to sustainable development. Often, the responsibility lies with committees on the environment or energy<sup>6</sup>, as well as committees of foreign affairs<sup>7</sup> or international development<sup>8</sup>. Sustainable development can also be part of the work of committees on finance, budget or economics<sup>9</sup>. For example, the Croatian respondent pointed out that the SDGs had become an inherent part of national legislation and therefore fell under the jurisdiction of various committees, including environment, finance and budget, health and social policy.

The responsibilities of the committees mandated with sustainable development are mainly related to monitoring and supporting the government's strategy and implementation. For example, the Finnish

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<sup>1</sup> The Bulgarian correspondent did not provide an answer to this question. In Belgium it has not been debated on the federal level. In Switzerland, the SDGs are mainstreamed and therefore not explicitly topics of debates.

<sup>2</sup> AL, AT, CY, DE (BR+BT), EP, ES, FI, FR, HU, HR, LT, PO

<sup>3</sup> AL, DE (BT), EE, LT, SL

<sup>4</sup> AT, CY, FI

<sup>5</sup> BE, EE, IR, IT, LV, SK

<sup>6</sup> BE, CY, DE, EP, HR, LT, PO, SK

<sup>7</sup> CY, IT, PO

<sup>8</sup> DE, EP, ES

<sup>9</sup> HR, LT

Committee for the Future prepares the parliamentary response to the government's annual Report on the Future, including recommendations. In many other parliaments, the responsible committee monitors the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy or is actively involved in its preparation. In addition, it can push the government towards strengthening its activities. In the Czech Republic, the Committee is responsible for linking the activities of the Parliament with those of the Government Council for Sustainable Development. Similarly, in Latvia, the committee liaises with other public, non-governmental and private sector bodies that are involved in strategic planning for the country's future.

The German Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development (*Parlamentarischer Beirat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung*, PBnE) is not a committee, but, as the name suggests, a council. It has several tasks: firstly, it develops position statements on sustainable development issues, which are noted by the plenary, but not voted on. Secondly, it makes visible the work of the Parliament and raises awareness in civil society. Finally, the PBnE also works with the government on 2030 Agenda implementation. This includes the development of indicators and national goals, deciding on specific mechanisms and instruments, and connecting different policies.

Committees are also an important vehicle in representing civil society. For this purpose, almost all committees regularly invite stakeholders to hearings and consultations. The Spanish Joint Commission, for example, has invited the President of UNICEF to talk about the SDGs and their importance. Often, these activities do not exceed usual hearings of stakeholders and civil society that other committees also do.

While usually the relationship between the government and parliament is defined by the parliament monitoring and overseeing the work of the government, as well as approving legislation, there are several examples of a more close cooperation between the government and parliament with regards to the 2030 Agenda. This often happens through the involvement of parliamentarians in multi-stakeholder or government councils for sustainable development. In several countries<sup>10</sup>, parliamentarians are members of the government council for sustainable development. In Hungary, the National Council for Sustainable Development is a multi-stakeholder council that was initiated by members of Parliament. In 2008, it was established through a five-party consensus. It is chaired by the incumbent speaker of the Parliament and includes representatives of the Academy of Science, churches, local governments and ethnic minorities, as well as Members of Parliament and representatives of several ministries. It is mandated to be an advisory and interest reconciliation body and its responsibilities include the definition of principles, objectives and tasks of sustainable development in Hungary, as well as supervising and promoting the implementation of the SDGs in Hungary.

The German Parliamentary Advisory Council for Sustainable Development cooperates closely with the state secretariat in the Federal Chancellery, which coordinates the government's sustainable development activities. Members of the Advisory Council participate in meetings of the State Secretaries Committee.

However, most respondents indicated that in their parliament, the main role in relation to the government was to monitor the government's activities (also by inviting ministers to relevant committees)<sup>11</sup>, call on the government to strengthen its commitment towards sustainable development<sup>12</sup> or respond to the government report.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> CZ, CY, DE, FI, HU

<sup>11</sup> AT, BE, CY, EE, HR, IT, LT, LV, PO

<sup>12</sup> ES, LV

<sup>13</sup> FI

## Legislation

Laws that explicitly refer to sustainable development or the SDGs are relatively rare. Many respondents indicated that there were no laws that explicitly referred to the 2030 Agenda or specific SDGs<sup>14</sup>. However, due to the all-encompassing nature of sustainable development, it was pointed out several times that the laws often do address issues that are raised in the 2030 Agenda, even though there was no specific reference made to the Agenda or individual SDGs.

On the other hand, in Albania, the report accompanying a law must analyse the law's contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The Spanish Climate Change Law refers to its contribution to the SDGs in the preamble. In several other countries<sup>15</sup>, there have been draft laws that explicitly refer to the SDGs, however it is not clear from the survey what the status is on these laws. In France and Italy, there are initiatives to include the SDGs (FR) or SD principles (IT) in the constitution. In addition, in France, there is a mechanism that ensures that laws cannot be detrimental to the SDGs.

Impact Assessments are another way to influence legislation. Most respondents to the survey stated that their parliament's impact assessments usually included sustainable development issues in a more general way.<sup>16</sup> Several impact assessments place a focus on environmental issues<sup>17</sup>, gender issues<sup>18</sup>, or social and societal issues, in general<sup>19</sup> without explicitly referring to sustainable development.

As mentioned above, in Albania, draft laws have to be assessed, among others, regarding their contribution to achieving the SDGs. In Austria and Finland, assessment takes place, especially with regard to the budget. In Austria, the intended impacts of the budget need to be attributed to relevant SDGs. Similarly, in Finland, the budget often refers to the 2030 Agenda, however, not to individual SDGs. In several countries, impact assessments do not refer to the SDGs.<sup>20</sup>

Being involved in drafting the NSDS represents another mechanism through which parliament can be involved in legislation regarding sustainable development. This was the case in several of the responding countries<sup>21</sup>. This usually happened either through the sustainable development committee or working groups specifically formed for the occasion. In Italy, the involvement of a newly created committee is foreseen in the development of the next NSDS.

Even when parliaments were not involved in the elaboration of the NSDS, it was often a subject of debate. The NSDS was debated in the plenary in many countries<sup>22</sup> and in the relevant committees<sup>23</sup>. In Italy, the then Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea (now ministry for Ecological Transition) was heard by the Senate's Environment Committee on the environmental aspects of the National Energy Strategy and on the Strategy for Sustainable Development. The German National Council produced a statement on the German Sustainable Development Strategy.

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<sup>14</sup> AT, CZ, FI, HU, HR, IR, LT (EE and LV stated that no analysis had been conducted in this regard)

<sup>15</sup> AL, CH, CY, DE (BR & BT), ES

<sup>16</sup> BE, BU, CH, CZ, DE, HU, IR, SK

<sup>17</sup> CZ, HU, SK

<sup>18</sup> IR

<sup>19</sup> CZ, HU

<sup>20</sup> CY, EE, IT, LV, LT, PL

<sup>21</sup> LV, LT, IT, CZ, FR

<sup>22</sup> DE (BT), EE, FI, HR, HU, IT, LV, SK

<sup>23</sup> EE, ES, IT, CZ, PL

In addition to a formal debate, national strategies were voted on in the plenary<sup>24</sup> and in the relevant Committee.<sup>25</sup>

## Budget

In almost all corresponding countries, the SDGs have so far not played a crucial role when the parliament has debated the budget.<sup>26</sup> The SDGs may have been mentioned, but they were not a major topic during the debate. In Estonia, the Prime Minister presents the budget to Parliament, which includes a reference to how the budget relates to the goals laid out in the National Strategy 'Estonia 2035'. Similarly, the Spanish budget must have a reference to the fulfilment of the SDGs. The Lithuanian Parliament (*Seimas*) has adopted a resolution which calls on the government to integrate the long-term strategic development goals into all policy documents, including the budget and financial instruments.

France has introduced a green budget in 2021, which assesses the budget with regards to favourable, neutral or unfavourable impacts of the budget items with regards to the six areas mentioned in the recently published EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance (climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, protection of marine resources, transition to circular economy, pollution prevention and control, protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems).

In Austria, the budget office of the parliamentary administration analyses the budget with regards to sustainable development. All intended impacts of the budget are attributed to at least one of the SDGs. The budget service occasionally also analyses individual laws with regards to the SDGs.

The annex of the Italian main budget and finance document (DEF) includes a number of sustainable welfare indicators. The Parliament adopts a resolution on this document, which includes an exam of these indicators. In addition, the Finance Minister has to submit a report to both Chambers annually, in which he outlines the evolution of BES indicators based on the effects determined by the budget law for the current three-year period. However, the respondent from Italy pointed out that over the last five years, fulfilling the SDGs has not played a big role in Parliament.

## Monitoring and Accountability

One key task of parliaments is to monitor their government's activity and hold their government to account.

One way of monitoring the government is when the government reports on its activities itself. However, many governments do not submit a progress report on the SDGs to the parliament.<sup>27</sup> The Swiss and Estonian parliaments take note of the government's report, but neither discuss it nor take any other action. In several countries, the report is mainly discussed within a committee.<sup>28</sup> The Cyprian Government is in constant dialogue with its Parliament when it comes to sustainable development. The German Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development is currently developing a position statement on the next part of the German Sustainable Development Strategy and its implementation. This document will also be debated in Parliament. In Finland, the Government annually reports to Parliament on progress in the area of sustainable development. The Committee for the Future prepares the parliamentary response, which includes an assessment of sufficiency, as well

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<sup>24</sup> EE, HR, HU, LV, LT

<sup>25</sup> CZ

<sup>26</sup> AL, BE, CH, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, HR, HU, IR, PL, PO

<sup>27</sup> AL, FR, IT, IR, PO, SK

<sup>28</sup> AT, BE, CZ, DE, PL

as suggestions for further measures. In the next annual report, the government then has to report on the measures to implement the position statements that were given by the Parliament.

Another progress report by the government is the Voluntary National Review (VNR). This report usually covers a longer period of time, as governments are recommended to submit them every two to three years, but at least twice before 2030 (UNDP, 2017). Most governments do not involve their parliaments in the preparation of the VNR.<sup>29</sup> In Albania, the Assembly reports to the relevant institutions collecting the data. The Cyprian Parliament is consulted, but does not participate in the drafting of the report. In Spain, Members of Parliament were part of the panel that prepared the report. In Israel, one representative of the *Knesset* administration was involved through the Inter-ministerial Committee that was drafting the report. The Croatian government included MPs in the delegation to the HLPF in New York, but did not include the Parliament in drafting the VNR. In Hungary, the Parliament is involved through the NFFT, which is chaired by the speaker of the Parliament. It prepares a progress report every two years.

Most national statistics offices do not submit their reports on the SDGs to the parliament and parliaments do not make use of it formally, if such a report exists. However, the German Parliamentary Advisory Council prepares a position statement and the plenary of the Parliament takes note of the report. In Albania, the statistical data regarding SDGs is reported to Parliament. The Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Czech Republic, which was in part prepared by the Czech statistical office, serves as a basis for the work of the Committee for Sustainable Development.

In a similar vein, many supreme audit institutions examine SDG implementation. Some of them also officially submit this report to the parliament.<sup>30</sup> In Poland and Croatia, the report is presented to the parliament and noted and adopted respectively. In Austria, the report is submitted and strongly influences the work of parliamentarians. Notably, it serves as a basis of discussion for the budget committee. In Finland, the National Audit Office cooperates with the Parliament and provides an annual report including recommendations on how to improve SDG implementation. Similarly, the Italian Court of Audit sends an annual report to the Parliament with suggestions on how to better monitor the SDGs, specifically on how to integrate non-monetary indicators. In France, the government needs to present a report annually on the evolution of 10 indicators related to sustainable development.

With regards to other mechanisms, many respondents stated that parliamentarians may use the traditional tools to hold the government to account, namely oral or written questions, and hearings in standing committees. Several respondents stated that this had happened with regards to the SDGs,<sup>31</sup> in the case of Spain they are a very regular subject of interpellations.

## Representation

While all parliaments have mechanisms for civil society engagement, there are only a few initiatives that relate directly to the SDGs. The Council of Elders at the *Bundestag* initiated a civil society council in the beginning of 2021 to consult randomly selected German citizens on issues that correspond to standing committees in the *Bundestag*. One sub-committee was specifically tasked with questions of sustainable development. The conclusions of this civil society council were handed over to the Parliament in April 2021.

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<sup>29</sup> AT, BE, DE, EE, FI, IT, LT

<sup>30</sup> AL, AT, BE, EP, FI, HR, HU, IT, LV, PL, SK

<sup>31</sup> DE, EE, ES, HU, IT, LIT, PL

In France, parliamentarians founded a group called '*parlement & citoyens*' (parliament and citizens) in 2013. This group enables members of civil society to submit their opinions and suggestions to the Parliament through an online platform. In both Finland and France, there were specific consultations on the 2030 Agenda and the national roadmap for achieving the SDGs.

The Spanish website 'Parlamento 2030' tracks activities of the Parliament and individual MPs publicly. This way, civil society and other stakeholders can follow and hold their Parliament accountable.

In several countries<sup>32</sup>, there are multi-stakeholder councils that include members of parliament, but also representatives of civil society, such as business associations, faith groups, academia and NGOs. For example, the Hungarian National Council for Sustainable Development, which was initiated by parliamentarians in 2008, is responsible for the definition of the principles, objectives and tasks for sustainable development in Hungary, the raising awareness, promoting the regular revision of the Sustainable Development Strategy and other tasks related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

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<sup>32</sup> ES, FI, HU

## Chapter 3: Analysis and Conclusions

The following analysis and discussion of the survey results is complemented by points made during the 19<sup>th</sup> ESDN workshop on *Parliamentary Mechanisms in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda* that took place in June 2021 in Vienna and online.

### Analysis

As shown by the results above, there is a variety of mechanisms that parliamentarians make use of to further the implementation of the SDGs in their country. In addition, the ways in which these mechanisms are applied and used are very different. This is also due to the fact that the governance structures vary in each country, so not all parliaments are able to make use of the same tools in the same way. In none of the responding countries did parliamentarians make extensive use of all or even most of the mechanisms that were recommended in the literature. As can be seen from the table in Chapter 2, the most activities happen in the category of legislation (in 22 out of 30 parliaments represented in the table). 20 countries report monitoring activities and 12 countries report activities in the area of budget. Only seven countries report SDG related activities in the field of representation.

In addition, none of the responding parliaments are active in all of the four categories of legislation, budget, accountability and representation. However, due to the all-encompassing nature of the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development, in general, it is very likely that these mechanisms are used to promote the aims of the SDGs in spirit, but without an explicit reference to the SDGs. Indeed, many of the responses to questions referred to laws or initiatives that are related to sustainable development, often environmental or climate related issues, but also gender or human rights issues.

It is, however, noticeable that sustainable development is often still attributed to environmental issues. This can be seen, for example, in the allocation of responsibility to different standing committees. When there is no standing committee specifically dedicated to sustainable development, SDGs and sustainable development are most often allocated to the environment, land use or agriculture committee. The attribution to the sector of environment corresponds to the allocation within governments, as often it is the Ministry of Environment that works most closely with parliaments on sustainable development or which chair inter-institutional or multi-stakeholder councils. This issue also became apparent in discussions between parliamentarians at the 19<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop, who mentioned that many of their colleagues are not aware that the SDGs may also concern their area of work (Fetting, 2021).

Yet, it is in the nature of sustainable development to take a more holistic approach and take many areas into account, among others social issues, health, employment, etc.

Not all parliaments have established a standing committee or subcommittee that is specifically assigned to sustainable development. According to discussion at the 19<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop (Fetting, 2021), there are several advantages to establishing a dedicated committee, but also potential risks. In addition, there is also a clear point of contact for actors outside the parliament, for example the government, civil servants and civil society representatives. However, forming a committee can only be a first step in bringing the SDGs into the parliament. It is important to make all members of parliament aware of the work of the committee and the principles of sustainable development. Otherwise, there is a risk that sustainable development remains to be seen as the sole responsibility of that one dedicated committee. Silo-thinking is a common danger in the implementation of sustainable development, in general, and forming a sustainable development committee can contribute to the sealing off of SD issues. However, this also depends on the work of the committee and the structure of parliament.

In the field of legislation, many answers in the survey mentioned laws or initiatives that address the issues of the SDGs (most often environmental issues), without explicitly referring to the SDGs. It has to be noted that not all parliaments have the mandate to initiate laws, so there is often a limit on the ability to influence the legal framework of a country in this way (Hague & Harrop, 2004; Kreppel, 2020). More commonly, parliaments are involved in the national strategic development document, either in the preparation of the document itself or through debating and voting on the document. This is a key recommendation by the literature surrounding SDG implementation, as strategic documents set the framework of action for a long time (UNDP et al., 2017).

A sustainable budget is considered a crucial means to ensure SDG implementation, but also as a way for parliaments to ensure that funds are channelled towards the right goals. Both, the UNDP (2017) and the IPU (2017) recommend a strong involvement of parliaments in this regard. Similarly, at the Workshop, it was underlined that a sustainable budget is a key way to garner more political will (Fetting, 2021). Yet, very little activity by parliaments was reported in the survey. While the SDGs might be mentioned occasionally in budget debates, the majority of parliaments do not have any formal mechanisms to make sure that the budget is in line with their country's national SDG indicators or strategic aims with regards to sustainable development. Again, this may be due to the fact that parliaments do not usually have any actual control over the budget (Hague & Harrop, 2004). However, like other debates in general, the budget debate can serve to draw attention to certain issues (Kreppel, 2020) and raise awareness about the SDGs. For this, it is helpful to have a thorough analysis of the budget. For example, in the Austrian Parliament, the budget office assesses the budget with regards to its effects on the SDGs.

There are many different instruments for parliamentarians to monitor their government's progress and hold the government to account. The most common is during question time and interpellations (questions followed by a short debate), which is mentioned in many recommendations in the literature (Rodriguez et al., 2016; UNDP et al., 2017).

Another mechanism that is frequently used are government progress reports. While some parliaments merely take note of them, others debate or even provide recommendations. Supreme audit institutions and their reports on the SDGs or sustainable development are used more often than reports by national statistics offices. Supreme audit institutions also sometimes give recommendations on further actions. How much these instruments are used also depends on the structures in the particular country. For example, in Austria, the Parliament can request certain reports from the Court of Audit. However, in other countries, the Court of Audit is more independent and parliament has no influence on the investigations of the court (Fetting, 2021).

While representation of citizens is one of the main mandates of parliamentarians, there are hardly any special mechanisms to hear and include citizens' or marginalised voices on SDG implementation. However, it is important to note that the questionnaire specifically asked for mechanisms that go beyond the usual consultation of stakeholders in committees or other mechanisms a parliament may use to hear the opinions of its citizens. In the Workshop, a few more ideas and initiatives were discussed, such as mini-expos of civil society organisations in the parliament or institutionalised dialogue formats. From a civil society perspective, it is important that all actors maintain an open and transparent dialogue (Fetting, 2021). An example for this would be the Spanish initiative *Parlamento 2030* that closely documents all SDG-related activity that happens in both chambers in a way that is easy to understand and follow by civil society.

There are currently many civil society actors who are voicing their demands and are willing to work with parliamentarians. For example, SDG Watch Europe has pushed for an initiative in the European Parliament for a long time and is now working towards making the SDGs even more prominent with

all MEPs. Civil society actors and organisations and their specific knowledge can be a resource for the work of parliamentarians (Fetting, 2021).

Multi-stakeholder councils or groups are often used to bring civil society actors and parliamentarians together. Their advantage is that all actors are encouraged towards consensus finding from the start. However, this also represents their main challenge. In many countries, the government has initiated the multi-stakeholder council and parliamentarians are not always a part of it. On the other hand, when the group was initiated by the parliamentarians themselves, like the 2030 Panel in Denmark, parliamentarians will feel ownership of the process and be more motivated to participate (Fetting, 2021).

## Conclusions and reflections on the 19<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop

The discussions at the 19<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop mainly revolved around two major issues: a) the lack of awareness for the SDGs or their implications and of political will; and b) silo-thinking and trade-offs. These challenges are not unique to parliaments and often come up in discussions around the implementation of the SDGs (Fetting, 2021).

Parliamentarians from several countries stated a lack of awareness for the SDGs among their colleagues. Either, other MPs did not know about the SDGs, or they believed the SDGs were merely an environmental or international development issue. This may be a reflection of the fact that in many countries, sustainable development is assigned to environmental committees and the ministry of environment. An awareness of the all-encompassing nature of the SDGs and their connection to the work of parliamentarians in other sectors is missing.

To create more awareness and political will, Austrian and Danish parliamentarians suggested conducting an official gap analysis of the status quo of implementation in the country. This will most likely show that the rich countries in Europe are lagging behind in a lot of areas (especially for environmental and climate indicators). It would also show where work needs to be done in other areas. This would underline the urgent need for action in all policy areas. In addition, it should be communicated that the cost of inaction will be much higher than the cost of implementation.

In order to create more enthusiasm for the SDGs, participants agreed that there should be a lot more innovative and positive communication about the SDGs, especially about their synergy potential and when there are success stories (Fetting, 2021).

However, some of the Workshop participants established that, while the SDGs are not ideological, discussions around their implementation can easily become ideological, which inhibits constructive work and cooperation towards their implementation (Fetting, 2021).

As governments are the institution mainly tasked with SDG implementation, parliamentarians can often be dependent on the government to include them or the parliament as an institution in the implementation process. Governments do this to a varying degree. For example, the Austrian Court of Audit has called on the government to include the parliament more.

However, it is also evident that the most efficient structures for cooperation cannot replace political will. For example, the Hungarian institutions are rated as very conducive to sustainable development, while lagging substantially behind in their implementation (Fetting, 2021).

Silo-thinking is often mentioned as a challenge with regards to sustainable development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in general, and parliaments face similar issues due to their structure (Niestroy, 2019). At the ESDN Workshop, two kinds of silo-thinking were discussed. On the

one hand, sustainable development is often understood as an environmental issue and policymakers or parliamentarians working in other sectors or committees do not think they need to be concerned with these issues. There is a need to educate all stakeholders and decision-makers about their role and the need for their input to Agenda 2030 implementation. This is crucial for creating political will by all relevant actors, as was discussed above.

Secondly, there are institutional silos, meaning there is little cooperation or transparent exchange between parliaments, governments, civil society and other actors. It is important that governments and parliaments cooperate and that civil society is invited to the table when discussing implementation of the SDGs. The IPU handbook suggests that parliaments self-assess their capacity for implementation every few years, this also includes the potential for cooperation and synergies with other actors (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

Overall, it appears that parliaments are often very involved in their country's 2030 Agenda implementation process and utilise many different tools to ensure the achievement of the SDGs. As the governance structure and the roles attributed to parliaments are different in each country, the scope of parliamentary action differs, too. Not all initiatives and mechanisms will work in each country. The mechanisms described above can still serve as inspiration and motivation for parliamentarians in Europe to become more involved and motivate their colleagues from all areas of expertise to join the sustainable development movement.

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# Annex

## 1. List of country abbreviations

AL – Albania  
AT – Austria  
BE – Belgium  
CH – Switzerland  
CY – Cyprus  
CZ – Czech Republic  
DE – Germany (BR – Bundesrat, Federal Council, BT – Bundestag, Federal Parliament)  
EE – Estonia  
ES – Spain  
FI – Finland  
FR – France  
HR – Croatia  
HU – Hungary  
IR – Israel  
IT – Italy  
LT – Lithuania  
LV – Latvia  
PL – Poland  
PO – Portugal  
SK – Slovakia  
SL – Slovenia  
EP – European Parliament

## 2. Questionnaire

### General questions concerning the engagement of parliaments with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development/SDGs

- 1) Has the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development been the subject of parliamentary deliberations and/or activities in your parliament/chamber since 2015?
  - a) If yes, when and how often?
  - b) What initiated the parliamentary discourse?
- 2) Does a particular committee primarily deal with the 2030 Agenda or sustainable development?
  - a) If there is such a committee, what led to its establishment?
  - b) Does this committee also involve stakeholders from outside the parliament in its work or are there other platforms for stakeholder involvement? Are there any other peculiarities regarding this committee's working methods?
- 3) Do the government and the responsible administrative bodies include your parliament into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?
  - a) Are there any established or institutionalized formats in place for the involvement of the parliament?
  - b) Are there any special formats in place for the exchange between Members of Parliament and officials of the ministries regarding sustainable development and/or the 2030 Agenda? Are any other stakeholders participating in these procedures?

## **II. Legislative Procedures**

- 1) Have Members of your parliament/chamber initiated legislation that explicitly takes account of one or more SDGs (e.g. in the legal text or explanatory materials). If so, did parliament enact such laws?
- 2) Are the SDGs an integral part of impact assessments of government draft bills and members' bills? If yes, does the assessment highlight possible positive and negative effects in light of the SDGs? If no, are there proposals or discussions to implement such assessments?
- 3) Did your parliament/chamber participate in the formulation of the national strategy or the national plan for sustainable development? If so, was there a formal debate and vote in a committee or in plenary?

## **III. Budgetary Planning**

- 1) Are there any formal rules or informal practices to consider the SDGs when parliament debates the budget? If yes, in which form?
- 2) Has the question of fulfilling specifying SDGs played a crucial role in budget debates of the last five years? Have there been debates on the budget allocations with reference to SDG-fulfilment?

## **IV. Parliamentary control of the government**

- 1) Does government submit regular progress reports on SDGs to your parliament/chamber? How does your parliament take notice of such reports? Does it vote on recommendations?
- 2) Do supreme audit institutions in your country review the implementation of the SDGs and report to parliament? What impact do such reports have on other parliamentary business and debates?
- 3) Do national statistical agencies evaluate and report the implementation of the SDGs? What impact do such reports have on parliamentary business and debates?
- 4) Is your parliament/your chamber involved in the preparation of progress reports? (i.e. Voluntary National Reviews) If so, how?
- 5) Which other instruments does your parliament/chamber use to hold government accountable with regard to the implementation of SDGs? (e.g. written questions, evaluations, reports)

## **V. Representation of the civil society**

- 1) Are there any multi-stakeholder-committees in your country, which include Members of Parliament and deal with sustainable development or SDGs? If yes, how are the Members of Parliament selected?
- 2) Apart from the one mentioned in I. 2, has your parliament/chamber introduced any further ways of involving the civil society and/or academia into the implementation or the monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs (e.g. Citizens' Dialogues or online debates)?

## **VI. Further activities**

- 1) Has your parliament/chamber initiated any further activities to promote the SDGs? For instance: Education for sustainable development, events, changes concerning the infrastructure or procurement procedures of the parliament, etc.
- 2) If yes, have these activities positively affected the work of the administration?

### 3. Source of information about countries

#### ECPRD

Albania

Austria

Belgium

Switzerland

Cyprus

Czech Republic

Germany, Bundesrat and Bundestag (BR – Bundesrat, Federal Council, BT – Bundestag, Federal Parliament)

Estonia

Finland

France

Croatia

Hungary

Israel

Italy

Lithuania

Latvia

Poland

Portugal

Slovakia

Slovenia

Spain

European Parliament

#### National Focal Point (only in table)

Catalonia

Greece

Netherlands

Slovakia

Wallonia

#### Workshop presentation (only in table)

Denmark

Romania

