Commission (Eurostat) publishes 2022 report on Sustainable Development Goals in the European Union

Brussels, 23 May 2022

Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, published today the ‘Sustainable development in the European Union — 2022 monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context’, which provides a statistical overview of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the EU.

The data included in the report show that the EU has made progress towards most goals over the last five years, in line with Commission's priorities in key policy areas such as the European Green Deal, the Digital Strategy and the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. While progress towards reaching some goals was faster than for others, movement away from the sustainable development objectives occurred only in few specific areas.

The unprecedented instrument of NextGenerationEU adopted by the Commission in response to the pandemic, and the reforms and investments envisaged by Member States in their Recovery and Resilience Plans, will make a major contribution to achieving the SDGs in the EU in the future.

Commissioner Gentiloni, Commissioner for Economy, said: “Europe is facing its second 'black swan' event in three years. But while managing the impact of the economic shock caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine must not lead us to lose sight of our goal of transforming the EU's economic model. It must instead galvanise us to redouble our efforts to boost our resilience and the sustainability of our production processes and everyday activities. In this collective effort, the Sustainable Development Goals remain both our compass and our measure of success.”

Key findings

The report shows that, over the last five years, the EU has made significant progress towards five SDGs and moderate progress toward most others. In particular:

- Like in previous years, the EU continued to make the most progress towards fostering peace and personal security within its territory, improving access to justice as well as trust in institutions (SDG 16). The share of the EU population reporting crime, violence and vandalism in their neighbourhoods has fallen from 13.2% in 2015 to 10.9% in 2020. Moreover, the share of the EU population considering the justice system in their country to be sufficiently independent, increased by 4 percentage points between 2016 and 2021 (from 50% to 54%).

- Significant progress was also made towards the goals of reducing poverty and social exclusion (SDG 1), the economy and the labour market (SDG 8), clean and affordable energy (SDG 7), as well as innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9). In the area of poverty (SDG 1), available data partly refer to the pre-pandemic period and therefore do not yet fully capture the impact of the pandemic.

- The favourable assessment of SDG 7 was strongly influenced by a remarkable reduction in energy consumption in 2020 (minus 8% compared to 2019) as a result of COVID-19 related restrictions on public life and lower economic activity. Therefore, the EU was able to reach its 2020 energy efficiency target and, based on the progress achieved so far, appears to be on track towards its 2030 target. Moreover, the use of renewable energy has grown continuously, with its share doubling since 2005. By 2020, renewable energy accounted for 22.1% of gross final energy consumption. However, imports of fossil fuels still cover more than half of the EU's energy demand, and lower energy consumption recorded in 2020 is likely to be temporary.

- Likewise, progress toward SDG 8 on the economy and labour market, for which the latest available data is 2021, was positively influenced by strong economic growth and labour market performance of last year. For example, the employment rate went up to 73.1% in 2021, even exceeding its pre-pandemic level.

- Progress towards the goals in the areas of health and well-being (SDG 3), life below water (SDG 14), gender equality (SDG 5), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), reduced
inequalities (SDG 10), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), quality education (SDG 4), climate action (SDG 13) and zero hunger (SDG 2) was moderate.

- The overall assessment of EU progress for partnerships (SDG 17) and clean water and sanitation (SDG 6) was neutral, which means that they were characterised by an almost equal number of sustainable and unsustainable developments.

- Finally, a slight movement away from the respective Sustainable Development objectives over the past five years has been found for life on land (SDG 15), indicating that ecosystems and biodiversity remained under pressure from human activities. While both the EU’s forest area and the terrestrial protected areas have slightly increased, pressure on biodiversity continued to intensify. As an example, the occurrence of common birds is an indicator of biodiversity because many of them require specific habitats to breed and find food, which are often also home to many threatened plant and animal species. Since 2000, the number of common birds is estimated to have declined by 10%. However, after many years of decline, it appears that the numbers of common birds have started to stabilise.

The EU SDG indicator set is reviewed every year. The indicator set for the 2022 report was reviewed to align with the 8th Environment Action Programme and the new targets of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. There is also an improved analysis of spillover effects covering CO2 emissions, land footprint, material footprint and gross value added generated outside the EU by consumption inside the EU. Finally, the report includes a specific analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the SDG.
Background

Sustainable development objectives have been at the heart of European policy-making for a long time, firmly anchored in the European Treaties and mainstreamed in key projects, sectoral policies and initiatives of the von der Leyen Commission. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations (UN) in September 2015, have given a new impetus to global efforts for achieving sustainable development. The EU has fully committed itself to delivering on the 2030 Agenda and its implementation, as outlined in 'The European Green Deal' and the staff working document 'Delivering on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals — A comprehensive approach'.

Today’s publication is the sixth in a series of annual monitoring exercises launched by Eurostat in 2017. It is based on the EU SDG indicator set that was developed to monitor progress towards the SDGs in an EU context. The SDG monitoring report aims to present an objective assessment of whether the EU — according to the selected indicators — has progressed towards the SDGs over the past five- and 15-year periods.

Indicator trends are assessed on the basis of their average annual growth rate during the past five years. For the 22 indicators with quantitative EU targets, progress towards those targets is assessed. These targets mainly exist in the areas of climate change, energy consumption and education. All other indicators are assessed according to the direction and speed of change.
For more information

**Sustainable development in the European Union — 2022 monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context**

**Sustainable development in the European Union. Overview of progress towards the SDGs in an EU context**

**Digital publication “SDGs & me”**

**Visualisation tool “SDG country scores”**

**Statistics Explained articles on Sustainable development in the EU**

**Dedicated section on the EU Sustainable development indicators**

**Database on the EU Sustainable development indicators**

Communication from the Commission: "**Next steps for a sustainable European future – European action for sustainability**"

Commission staff working document '**Delivering on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals – A comprehensive approach**'

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