



Assises de la Coopération Décentralisée
Regions and Cities for Development
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ROUND TABLE 1 on Sustainable Development Goals

*2030 Agenda and European sustainability: Local and regional authorities
as policy-makers and implementing actors of the SDGs*

Abstract

The aim of this Round Table is to outline the role of Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) in implementing the SDGs and to identify the LRAs' competences linked to the achievement of the goals, the particular challenges in the localisation of the goals, the main priorities and mechanisms of the decentralised cooperation to achieve them, and the steps to follow.

Leader

Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia

Background information

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, is an attempt to respond to the changes and challenges at global level in our increasingly globalised world. This framework sets ambitious commitments translated into 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to encourage and spur all countries to move towards sustainable and inclusive development strategies. The EU already took a number of steps towards the implementation of this new global agenda. The European Commission Communication on "Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability" highlights the relevance of the SDGs for Europe and explains how the EU will contribute to reaching them.

Before 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) fully grasped the guiding principles for decentralised cooperation in developing countries. All levels of government -including the local and regional ones- therefore proved their ability to contribute to the MDGs through their knowledge and assets in terms of local services and competences.

The 2030 Agenda is not directed exclusively at the national and international levels of government: this framework has to be regarded as a multi-level and multilateral agenda. Many of its objectives and targets are directly relevant to the spheres of action and competence of local authorities. It is therefore necessary to involve local and regional authorities (LRA) in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in order to achieve those global objectives.

Leader:



Content

The aim of this Round Table is stated in the abstract.

Building inclusiveness, safety, resilience and sustainability, confirming the link between local, regional and national dimension is crucial for lasting solutions to complex global challenges. The EU and its Member States must work more closely with LRAs, emphasizing the crucial importance of decentralised cooperation.

Given the inclusive nature of the 2030 Agenda, the support and participation of a large number and a wide range of actors is required. LRA are important actors for the SDG implementation, considering the added value they can bring in terms of experience and proximity to the local communities.

Decentralised cooperation is also a powerful tool to promote the exchange of experiences and best practices between various actors at the infra-state level within their specific competencies and skills. In the run up to 2030, decentralised cooperation can play a key role in the creation of permanent partnerships and multilateral alliances to promote the SDGs both in developed and developing countries. Decentralised cooperation can allow mutual learning, bilateral support, exchange of experiences and best practices, and development of bottom-up initiatives. At the same time, new modalities of cooperation have emerged. It is the moment to think about how the decentralised cooperation for SDGs should be in the road to 2030.

The coherent integration of the SDGs within national public policies is also essential, as well as their translation at the local level. Indeed, a large number of these goals -including the fight against poverty and the improvement of basic social services- are, to a large extent, the responsibility of local and regional administrations. The need to support and empower (financially, legally, technically) LRAs in the implementation of the SDGs is therefore extremely clear, as local and regional actors are the ones effectively delivering these services. This process must be developed at the lower decisional level, the closest to citizens to create and entrench mechanisms of participation, ownership and democratic control. These processes ought to be learnt, understood and finally internalised by the citizens. This is a two-tier process, in which LRAs should be able to identify needs and push for new national and international policies.

To sum up: LRAs must be considered as central actors for the relevant identification and implementation of the SDGs. The decentralised cooperation can bring additional support for the creation of multilateral alliances, the transfer of experiences and skills and the dissemination of good practices. The activities brought about at local level are the most efficient way to promote the shift towards more inclusive and sustainable patterns of development. Finally, this change will require the participation of LRAs both as policy-makers and implementers.

Questions

- 1) *Knowing that 2/3 of the SDGs are linked to the competences of the cities and regions, which are the main messages to convey about the role of LRAs in their implementation?*
- 2) *Which are the challenges to the fulfilment of the SDGs identified so far at regional and local level? How can we go further in coordination between the levels?*
- 3) *How should decentralised cooperation look like in the coming years, in order to bring the SDGs into reality? Which purposes, priorities and mechanisms can we identify?*
- 4) *How do we see, as LRAs, the next steps in this process?*