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### **OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

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Subject: The EU at the half-time of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:  
Steering transformative change and expediting progress at all levels  
- Council conclusions (27 June 2023)

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Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the EU at the half-time of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as approved by the Council at its 3962nd meeting held on 27 June 2023.

**The EU at the half-time of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:  
Steering transformative change and expediting progress at all levels**

**Council conclusions**

**THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

1. *REAFFIRMS* that the European Union (EU) and its Member States stand firmly behind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as our collective roadmap to a sustainable future. *RECALLS* its conclusions of June 2017, April 2019, December 2019 and June 2021, the European Council conclusions of October 2018, as well as the key political messages for the 2023 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and *REAFFIRMS* the commitments therein.
2. *STRESSES* that peace, security and respect for international law, including international human rights law, are prerequisites for sustainable development, in line with the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the 2030 Agenda as enshrined by SDG 16. *REITERATES* its resolute condemnation of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, which blatantly violates international law, including the UN Charter; *REITERATES* its solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people; and *SUPPORTS* the UN Secretary-General's call to Russia to end its aggression.
3. *NOTES* that this year marks the half-time of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and *EXPRESSES CONCERN* regarding the findings of the UN Secretary-General's SDG Progress Report confirming that global efforts so far have proved insufficient. *STRESSES* that business as usual will not be sufficient and that evidence-based and game-changing transformative interventions and increased resilience to future crises are required. *ACKNOWLEDGES* the need to increase efforts and *URGES* the international community to accelerate progress and live up to global collective commitments and actions.

## **AHEAD OF THE SDG SUMMIT, THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

4. *RECOGNISES* that the world is facing increasing geopolitical tensions. *REITERATES* its firm support for a strong, rules-based multilateralism, with the UN at its core. In this regard, *WELCOMES* the opportunity provided by the SDG Summit and other high-level meetings to build the momentum necessary to enhance the multilateral system and accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs. In this regard, *CALLS FOR* high-level participation at the SDG Summit.
5. *ACKNOWLEDGES* the crucial role of science in assessing the implementation status of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the role science plays in identifying key evidence-based solutions. *CALLS FOR* particular attention to be paid to the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) and the recommendations it identifies as key for the transformative shifts needed to achieve the SDGs. In particular, *CALLS ON* the Commission to take these fully into account in its relevant policy-planning processes.
6. *EMPHASISES* the crucial need to enhance the mobilisation of financial resources from all sources, such as public and private domestic funding and international resources, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. *STRESSES* that improving current financial flows and removing barriers to potential flows is crucial in order for developing countries to achieve the SDGs, particularly those in situations of fragility and experiencing acute vulnerability.
7. *EXPRESSES* its support for a reform of the international financial architecture that supports the most vulnerable while safeguarding global public goods. *RECOGNISES* the momentum provided by various initiatives underway, such as the Bridgetown Agenda, the UN Secretary-General's SDG Stimulus Plan and the Paris Summit for a New Financial Pact, that can provide important input to the SDG Summit, the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development, the annual meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, and COP 28.

8. *WELCOMES* the call made to all the stakeholders of international financial institutions (IFIs) to reform multilateral development banks' (MDBs) practices and priorities so as to systematically address global challenges while maintaining their focus on poverty reduction and shared prosperity. Further *WELCOMES* the call to make all financial flows consistent with the protection of global public goods, including climate neutrality and climate-resilient development pathways, in line with the Paris Agreement and towards achieving the SDGs. Also *ENCOURAGES* MDBs to strengthen the technical expertise, instruments and incentive structure they offer to developing countries to elaborate, amongst others, energy transition projects that will attract domestic and foreign private investors.
9. *RECOGNISES* the crucial role of international cooperation and that official development assistance (ODA) remains a major source of finance for achieving progress towards the SDGs. *RECALLS* that the EU and its Member States remains the world's largest provider of ODA and *REAFFIRMS* the collective commitment of the EU to providing 0.7 % of gross national income (GNI) as ODA.
10. *EMPHASISES* that the Global Gateway strategy will contribute directly to the implementation of a range of interlinked SDGs, as the EU's offer and effective contribution to strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership by promoting smart investments in quality infrastructure, while respecting the highest social and environmental standards, in line with the EU's interests and values: the rule of law, human rights, and international norms and standards.
11. *REITERATES* its support to the United Nations Development Reform and *STRESSES* the relevance of continuing the High-Level Political Dialogues between the UN and EU to increase cooperation, coordination and the effectiveness of their actions and efforts.
12. *WELCOMES* the UN Secretary-General's report, 'Our Common Agenda' (OCA) and the Report of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB).

13. *INVITES* the UN Secretariat to build on the insights and recommendations of the GSDR in the follow-up processes to the OCA report, including the recommendations of the HLAB, to ensure maximum progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Further *INVITES* the UN Secretariat to maintain a continuous dialogue with the UN Member States in this regard.

**ON REGULAR REVIEWS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF), THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

14. *UNDERLINES* the importance of honest, inclusive, evidence-based, action-oriented and forward-looking reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The EU, being at the forefront of that implementation, has a significant role to play in this respect.
15. In this regard, *WELCOMES* the adoption by the Commission of the first EU Voluntary Review (EU VR) of SDG implementation and its presentation at the HLPF in July 2023. *ENCOURAGES* the Commission to use the EU VR as a vehicle for raising awareness and further strengthening implementation at regional, national and local levels.
16. *NOTES* that the EU VR is primarily a reporting exercise to assess the achievements to date and identify challenges and gaps, and *STRESSES* the urgent need to make further progress on an integrated, strategic, ambitious and comprehensive EU approach to implementing the SDGs by 2030 and beyond. *REITERATES* its call for a comprehensive implementation strategy. This should set the stage for and enable upcoming Commissions, in particular the upcoming 2024-2029 Commission, to move urgently forward in addressing the implementation of SDGs at all levels by focusing on gaps and addressing interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.
17. In this endeavour, *WELCOMES* the EU VR's strategic overview of the EU commitments and targets on progress towards the SDGs, including quantified and time-bound targets for 2030, and of orientations on actions to be undertaken to take implementation of the 2030 Agenda forward, in particular in anticipation of the next Commission's political priorities. However, *ENCOURAGES* the Commission to more clearly identify the extent to which existing EU commitments and targets suffice to implement the 2030 Agenda at EU level. *NOTES* that a comprehensive implementation strategy could provide an opportunity for such identification.

18. *INVITES* the Commission to present a new voluntary review of the EU's internal and external implementation of the SDGs at least once every four years and ahead of the next SDG Summit at the latest. In relation to this endeavour, *INVITES* the Commission to establish a timely, open, transparent and multilevel participatory process for the preparation of the next EU VR, with the active involvement of the Council and in close consultation with key stakeholders and the European Parliament, in line with the UN Guidelines. *WELCOMES* that the EU VR contains forward-looking elements, but *HIGHLIGHTS* that forthcoming EU VRs should reinforce their role as a forward-looking policy project and tool envisaging the pursuit of transformative policies.
19. *REITERATES* the EU's firm commitment to Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) in line with the 2019 OECD Ministerial Recommendations. In this regard, *CALLS FOR* forthcoming EU VRs to further develop a more comprehensive and a more critical assessment of achievements as well as shortcomings of policy coherence in the EU's internal and external actions, including potential synergies and trade-offs, having specific regard to impacts on partner countries.
20. In this regard, *INVITES* Eurostat to include an enhanced analysis of the spill-over effects of internal and external policies, including interlinkages between the different SDGs and the impact of domestic actions in partner countries, as intended by SDG 17.14. Further *ENCOURAGES* Eurostat to pay particular attention, in its annual report, to the impact of EU policies on the key transformative shifts outlined in the 2023 GSDR report.
21. *REITERATES* the importance of inclusive and transparent review processes in line with the overarching principle of leaving no one behind and balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. In this respect, *WELCOMES* the consultations that the Commission has conducted with the Council and stakeholders when drafting the EU VR, but *REQUESTS*, having regard to institutional roles and prerogatives, enhanced efforts and increased transparency to ensure that the outcomes of consultations with stakeholders are well reflected in forthcoming reviews.

## **TO STRENGTHEN THE WORK AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION, THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

22. Given the crucial importance of the next seven years, *STRESSES* the importance of strengthening interaction and collaboration between the Commission, including Eurostat, and the Council, as well as with the European Parliament, the European External Action Service, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions, on a regular basis as a means of accelerating the collective implementation of the SDGs at EU level and enhancing PCSD.
23. Building on the regular structured dialogue with the Commission in the context of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making, further *UNDERTAKES* to examine how best to establish a structured annual work cycle on SDG implementation in the Council, beginning with the publication of the Commission's annual work programme. *PROPOSES* a pilot year beginning with the publication of the Commission's annual work programme for 2024.
24. *COMMITTS* to follow up the annual Eurostat report with a written recommendation to the Commission to ensure coherent follow-up having regard to the SDGs that indicate moderate or negative trends, for consideration when the Commission drafts its annual work programme. *REAFFIRMS* its commitment in the latest Joint Declaration on EU legislative priorities to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and *UNDERTAKES* to ensure that due consideration is given to the implementation of the SDGs in the regular dialogue with the Commission ahead of the adoption of the Commission's annual work programme, based on the latest Eurostat Monitoring Report.
25. *COMMITTS* to analysing selected legislative proposals in the Commission's annual work programme that have the biggest impact on the SDGs, paying particular attention to those that indicate moderate or negative trends. *INVITES* the Commission to present how the impact assessments accompanying the selected legislative proposals have integrated SDGs in accordance with the 2021 revision of the Better Regulation policy framework, to facilitate the consideration by Council of the analysis conducted by the Commission. In light of the impact assessments, *COMMITTS* to sharing the analysis made on the specific proposals and their impact on SDGs through a written recommendation to relevant Council bodies.

26. *ACKNOWLEDGES* that the European Semester framework for the coordination and surveillance of economic and social policies is an important tool for aligning internal policies with the 2030 Agenda, and therefore *INVITES* the Commission to consider an interim assessment of this process as a contribution to the integrated, strategic, ambitious and comprehensive EU approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Further *RECOGNISES* the importance of anticipatory tools, such as foresight methods, which should be enhanced gradually to address challenges and bottlenecks in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

**TO STRENGTHEN THE ‘WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY’ APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION,  
THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

27. *UNDERLINES* that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a shared responsibility that requires a ‘whole-of-society’ approach anchored in human rights, ensuring that no one is left behind and that the furthest behind are reached first, and therefore *RECOGNISES* the need to strengthen the collaboration between the Council and stakeholders on SDG implementation, to enhance unity and increase visibility on the joint work towards accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

28. In this regard, *URGES* the Commission to re-establish a dedicated permanent consultation platform that engages a wide range of stakeholders in EU work on the SDGs, at both EU and global levels, with inclusive and representative membership, to facilitate the ‘whole-of-society’ approach to enhancing action and delivery on the SDGs. *PROPOSES* that such a platform should be involved in the monitoring of SDG implementation at EU level and in future EU voluntary reviews in the framework of the HLPF. *INVITES* the Commission to present and build on lessons learned from the previous multi-stakeholder platform.

29. *ACKNOWLEDGES* the importance of promoting exchanges of information and peer-learning exercises among Member States, including through existing networks, instruments and communities of practice, also to enable alliance-building and improving the collective action towards SDG implementation.



30. *EMPHASISES* the importance of close cooperation within the Council, especially in specific cyclical processes, such as the preparation of key political messages before each annual HLPF. *PROPOSES* having the key political messages agreed upon early in the spring so that they can be used by EU actors on a voluntary basis during the string of events leading to each annual HLPF. Furthermore, *PROPOSES* having the key political messages approved by the Council.
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