EU action for sustainability

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PURPOSE: to present a strategic approach to achieving sustainable development in Europe and the world.

BACKGROUND: world leaders adopted at the 70th UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015 a new global sustainable development framework: the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** having at its core the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the same year, the Paris Climate Agreement (COP21), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction were also adopted.

The global 2030 Agenda has now become the world's **blueprint for global sustainable development**. It represents a commitment to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030 worldwide. Its aim is to eradicate poverty, strengthen peace and security.

The 17 SDGs are global in nature, universally applicable and interlinked. All countries, developed and developing alike, have a shared responsibility to achieve the SDGs. The 17 SDGs provide qualitative and quantitative objectives for the next 15 years.

The EU is fully committed to be a frontrunner in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, together with its Member States, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. The 2030 Agenda will further catalyse a joined-up approach between the EU's external action and its other policies and coherence across EU financing instruments.

CONTENT: the EU's answer to the 2030 Agenda will include two work streams. The first work stream, presented in this Communication, is to **fully integrate the SDGs in the European policy framework** and current Commission priorities, assessing where we stand and identifying the most relevant sustainability concerns.

The communication sets out the most relevant **synergies between the SDGs and the ten priorities**:

- the number one priority since the start of this Commission has been to **boost jobs, growth and investment**: investments in **quality education and training and among young people** are essential to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth. The investment plan for Europe aims to mobilise EUR 500 billion of additional investment in the real economy through the European Strategic Investment Fund (EFSI) by 2020. The **circular economy** encourages sustainable consumption and production patterns. The **common agricultural policy** can play an important role as it is intrinsically linked to issues such as jobs, food, air, climate change, water, soil and biodiversity;
- the **Energy Union's objective** is to ensure affordable, secure and sustainable energy for businesses and households. As a follow-up to the 2015 Paris Agreement, the EU will take measures to reduce emissions, strengthen **climate change** adaptation and disaster risk management, but also on enabling factors that accelerate public and private investment;
- an innovative approach, which is linked to several SDGs, is adopted to ensure **sustainable financing** . The Capital Markets Union sets out concrete initiatives for example on green bonds, promotion of long-term investments or the prudential aspects linked to the regulation of banks;
- the issue of inclusive and sustainable growth, employment and decent work is more topical than ever for Europe. The European Pillar of Social Rights aims at putting social fairness at the heart of EU policies. Furthermore, EU action on **social and corporate responsibility** encourages the private sector to contribute to the achievement of social and environmental objectives;
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- the EU is making continuous efforts in the area of justice and fundamental rights based on mutual trust which includes continued policy efforts on **justice and gender equality**;
- in the context of the **refugee crisis**, work towards a new policy on migration is needed. A new comprehensive migration policy is needed, promoting regular channels and tackling irregular migration flows, thereby saving lives, preserving human dignity. **The European agenda on migration** and its follow-up actions, including the new partnership framework with third countries, provide such a comprehensive approach grounded in the respect of fundamental rights, trust, solidarity and mutual accountability;
- the vision of the 2030 Agenda is fully consistent with the objectives of **EU external action**: the global strategy on foreign and security policy for the European Union stresses the need for an integrated EU approach to increase the EU's impact in responding to and **preventing violent conflicts and crises** as well as of improving coherence between the EU and its Member States. The EU advocates a **rights-based approach to development cooperation**, whose implementation is critical in delivering on the SDGs. Lastly, the EU's **humanitarian assistance** plays an important role in the provision of lifesaving assistance.

The Commission is fully committed to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda through the following key actions and governance elements:

- ensure that existing and new policies should take into account the **three pillars of sustainable development**, i.e. social, environmental and economic concerns through the use of its better regulation tools;
- take implementation of the 2030 Agenda forward with the Council and the European Parliament as the co-legislators and budgetary authority of the EU;
- launch a **multi-stakeholder Platform** with a role in the follow-up and exchange of best practices on SDG implementation across sectors;
- provide **regular reporting** of the EU's progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.