Implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

2022/2002(INI) - 23/06/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 470 votes to 56 with 67 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Parliament reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its 17 SDGs and its pledge to leave no one and no place behind, especially in view of current and future pandemics and the consequences of the war in Ukraine.

Governance

Parliament welcomed the Commission President's commitment to a ‘whole-of-government’ approach to the EU's implementation of the SDGs and to integrate the SDGs into the portfolio of each Commissioner. It believes that such an approach can only be effective with leadership at the highest level and a concrete plan to ensure comprehensive action by the Commission on the implementation of the SDGs.

Parliament recalled that in order to achieve the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda requires a high level of societal legitimacy and a genuine political reset, which will only be possible if the SDGs are perceived as an opportunity for citizens. It recalled that the importance of structured stakeholder engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships is at the heart of the SDGs. It called for the urgent reinstatement of the multi-stakeholder platform or the establishment of a new structured engagement mechanism.

The resolution called for more coordinated internal and external EU action to achieve more progress at the global level. The SDGs should form the backbone of European public policies.

Members regretted that the lack of an implementation strategy for the SDGs makes policy coherence more complicated, as there are no clear, measurable and time-bound EU-wide targets to report on for all the SDGs.

They called on the Commission to adopt a **new high-level EU 2030 Agenda implementation strategy**. Such a strategy should define, at a minimum:

- **a new governance framework**, led by a single high-level Commissioner who is accountable for the implementation of the SDGs across all portfolios and who will systematically consult the new multi-stakeholder platform;

- **a revised set of concrete measurable**, **EU-wide, time-bound targets** to bolster the EU’s ambition and concrete measures for achieving them;

- **an updated monitoring system and indicators**, taking into account the EU’s internal and external impact on global SDG progress;

- **a single financial plan** to achieve the EU’s SDG objectives, linked to the above targets;

- **a plan for the EU’s SDG diplomacy** and international cooperation, led by a Special Envoy for the SDGs, to ensure fair burden sharing and a level playing field.

Monitoring

Members called for Parliament to appoint a standing rapporteur on the implementation of the SDGs, who will work with the Bureau and across committees, as well as with the multi-stakeholder platform.

In order to better understand the true impact of the EU on progress on the SDGs in the EU and globally, Parliament called on the EU to intensify technical cooperation with developing countries to address the lack of available data at global level.

Parliament recalled that **voluntary national reviews** are the main accountability tool for the 2030 Agenda. It called on the Commission to present an EU voluntary review at the 2023 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and every year thereafter, and to push for the generalisation of national voluntary reviews. It stressed the need for a system of regular reviews of the implementation of the SDGs at regional and local levels within the EU.

Budget

Concerned that the current crisis has exacerbated these debt-related vulnerabilities, Parliament called for the creation of a **multilateral debt management mechanism**, under the auspices of the UN, to address the debt crisis in developing countries and the financing needs of the 2030 Agenda.

Members regretted that, despite the Commission's November 2020 commitment, insufficient progress has been made in tracking all resources and expenditure related to the SDGs, except in the area of external actions. They therefore insisted on the need to ensure **comprehensive tracking of SDG-related expenditure** using dedicated methodologies, for example with regard to inequalities (SDG 10) and their strategic importance for the implementation of all SDGs. Members also expect the European Semester process to strengthen the capacity of Member States to monitor progress on the implementation of the SDGs.

Stressing that public and private financing must be aligned with the SDGs, Parliament called on the Commission to embed the 2030 Agenda into economic and financial policies and legislation. Financial institutions should define strategies and targets to align financial portfolios with the SDGs and report regularly on progress.

Members called on the Commission to urgently come up with a specific plan to finance the SDGs, given the estimated annual funding gap for the SDGs of USD 3.7 trillion after the COVID-19 crisis. This plan should have clearly defined and quantifiable targets and should allow for the overall monitoring of SDG-related spending within the EU budget.

The resolution stressed the importance of **SDG 4.1**, which aims for a full, quality 12-year primary and secondary education cycle, provided free of charge for all; recalls that current levels of government spending in low- and lower-middle-income countries fall short of the levels required to achieve the SDGs. Members also regretted that three of the four targets for 2020 under **SDG 14** (life below water) had not been met by the EU and that EU actions had not restored marine waters to good ecological status or brought fishing to sustainable levels in all seas. They called for legally binding nature restoration targets.

Multilateral cooperation

The resolution stressed that a new global political engagement and enhanced multilateral cooperation will be needed if the EU and its partners are to make significant progress over the next eight years. It called for **concrete commitments** to the achievement of the SDGs by the 2023 SDG summit.

Parliament urged the EU and its Member States to remain fully committed to their international obligations and commitments on climate and biodiversity and to the Green Deal, including the Biodiversity Strategy and the Farm to Fork Strategy, especially in a context where the pandemic crisis and the war in Ukraine have shown how vulnerable developing countries are to disruptions in the global food market.