



The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN)

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NETGREEN workshop
The Hague, 11 June 2014

The **European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN)** is an informal network of public administrators and other experts dealing with sustainable development (SD) strategies in Europe.

Strategic targets:

- ***Promoting and advancing sustainable development*** at the EU and Member States level;
- ***Facilitating the exchange of good practices and experiences*** on SD and national SD strategies;
- ***Providing added-value for policy-makers*** on advancing SD in Europe;
- ***Mainstreaming SD issues*** into vertical and horizontal integration, especially integration of SD in the executive and steering-cycle of the EU.



- **The Hague, 2002:** public administrators in charge of national SD strategies from several EU Member States MS met for the first time for a workshop-like exchange of experiences
- **Vienna, 2003:** target group was broadened considerably, by inviting experts from the European Commission, representatives from various National Councils for SD, and national members of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC)
- **Windsor, 2005:** decision to strength the network by establishing a Steering Group and a permanent support mechanism (the ESDN office)
- **Salzburg, 2006:** ESDN was established in its current form

Structure of the ESDN

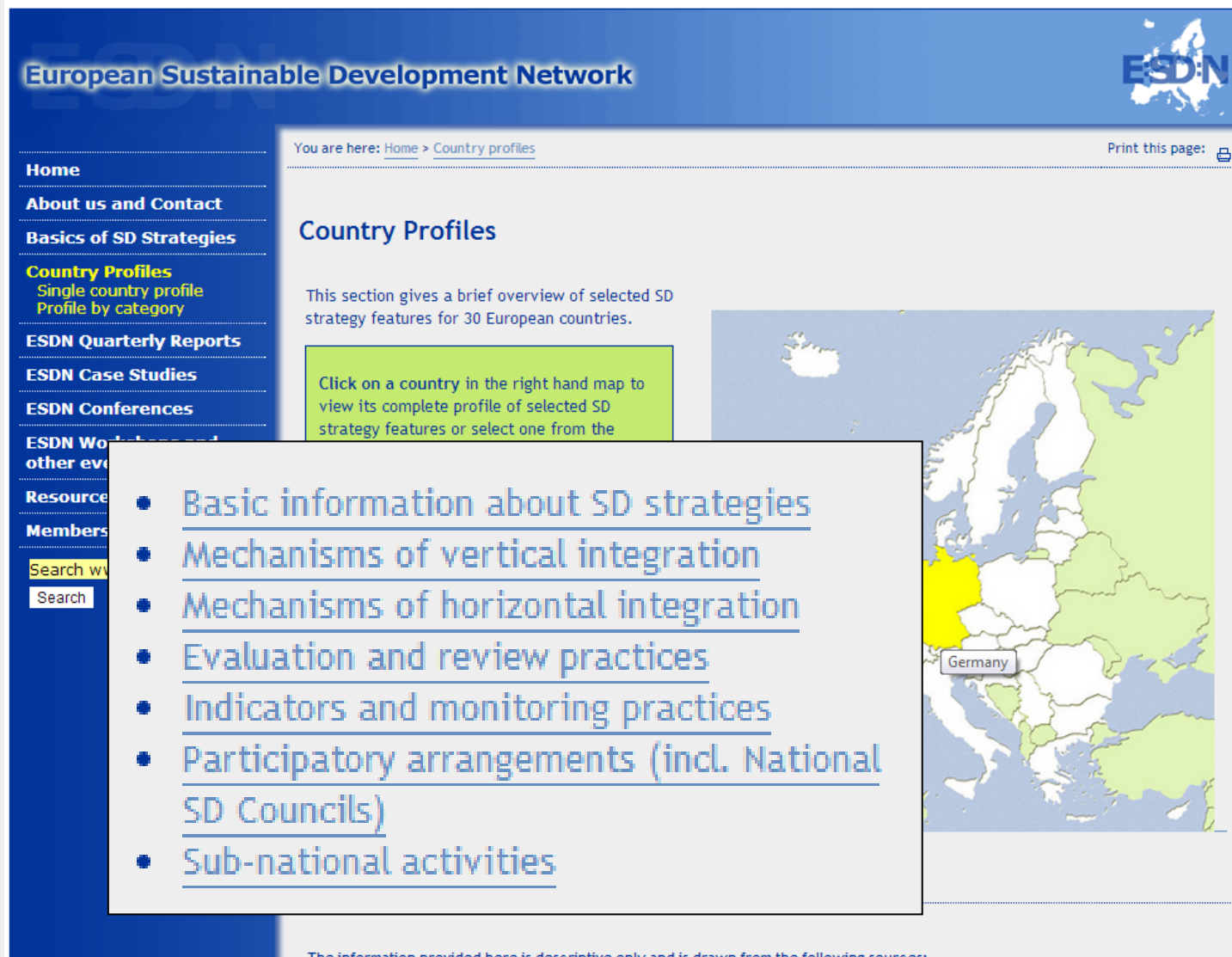


- **Steering Group:** representatives from 7 countries (AT, BE, CH, DE, FI, FR, NL), chaired by Austria
- **ESDN Office:** run by the Institute for Managing Sustainability at the Vienna University of Economics and Business; provides (scientific) support to Steering Group and ESDN members (e.g. quarterly reports & case studies), organisation of the annual ESDN conference and the ESDN workshops
- **ESDN members:** government officials responsible for SD policy formulation and implementation; currently 177 members from 37 countries (incl. EU-28)
- **Associated partners:** senior experts from business, research, NGOs, national SD councils; currently 100 associated partners


Main activities of the ESDN



- **ESDN Website** (www.sd-network.eu) is the one-stop-shop for SD strategies and governance in Europe
- **Country profiles** providing background info about SD policy of individual countries
- **ESDNewsletter** summarising recent developments on SD strategies in individual countries and at EU level
- **Quarterly reports & case studies** on topical SD issues
- **Annual conferences** as platform for exchange and recommendations
- **Workshops** – 1-2 per year, in-depth discussion about one specific topic



European Sustainable Development Network

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Country Profiles

This section gives a brief overview of selected SD strategy features for 30 European countries.

Click on a country in the right hand map to view its complete profile of selected SD strategy features or select one from the

- [Basic information about SD strategies](#)
- [Mechanisms of vertical integration](#)
- [Mechanisms of horizontal integration](#)
- [Evaluation and review practices](#)
- [Indicators and monitoring practices](#)
- [Participatory arrangements \(incl. National SD Councils\)](#)
- [Sub-national activities](#)

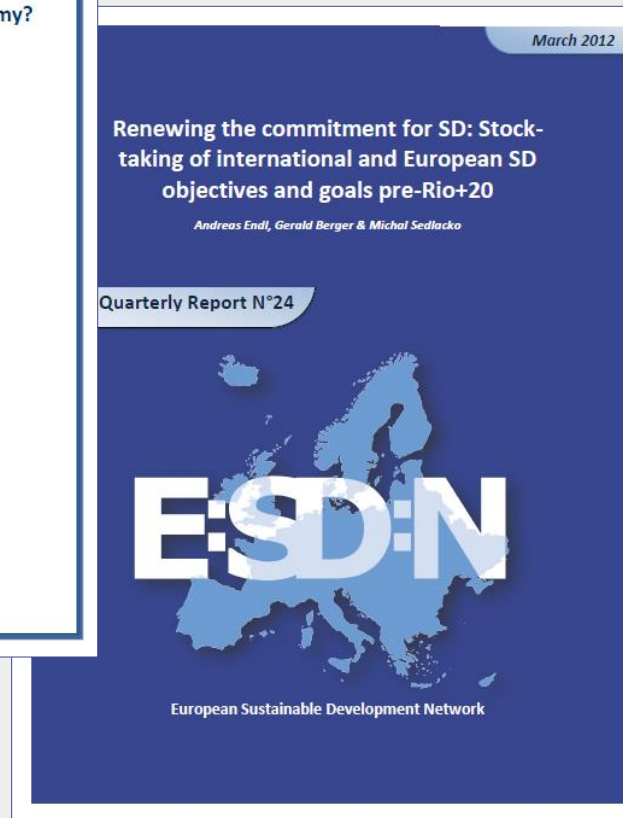
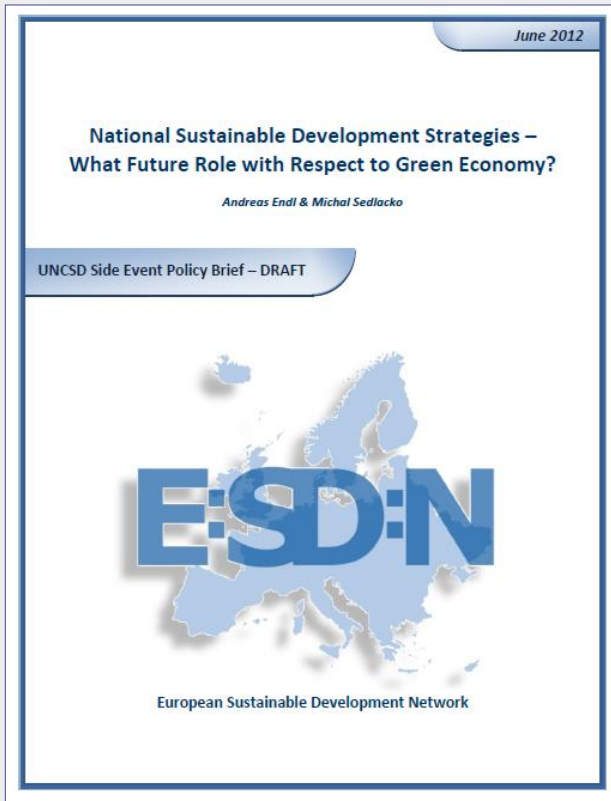
The information provided here is descriptive only and is drawn from the following sources:



- Annual ESDN conferences since 2002
- Early conferences covered SD strategies and governance issues in a more general way
- **Paris, 2008:** focus on SCP and CSR
- **Ghent, 2010:** green growth/green economy
- **Budapest, 2011:** European resource policies
- **Copenhagen, 2012:** Rio+20 and its implications for SD policy at EU and national level

- Since 2007: 1-2 ESDN workshops per year, each dedicated to a specific topic
- **Lissabon, 2007:** SD indicators
- **Madrid, 2010:** From green growth towards SD
- **Berlin, 2010:** Measuring welfare/wealth in the context of SD
- **Berlin, 2011:** European SD policy & governance in the context of recent EU policy strategies and Rio+20

ESDN publications (1)



- More than 30 quarterly reports published since 2006
- Examples with relevance for NETGREEN:
 - **December 2007:** Objectives and Indicators of Sustainable Development in Europe
 - **June 2009:** Horizontal Policy Integration and Sustainable Development
 - **December 2009:** Sustainable development and economic growth
 - **December 2010:** The 'Beyond GDP' Debate and Measuring Societal Progress in the Context of Sustainable Development
 - **April 2013:** The Future of the EU SDS in light of the Rio+20 outcomes

- About 15 case studies, published in irregular intervals
- On **specific topics** such as:
 - Linking economic growth and sustainable development
 - National/International approaches to measure wealth and well-being in the context of SD
 - The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Post-2015 Debate
- ... or on **best practices** from individual countries (e.g. Finland, Switzerland, Canada)

- NETGREEN indicators address policy makers at the level of directors/heads of units that work on SD/GE issues in the national administration
 - **SD issues** → still mainly (but not only) under the responsibility of environmental ministries (which also make up a major share of ESDN members)
 - **GE issues** → in many cases different ministries (e.g. economy, finance), which are not always familiar with the topic
 - In the ESDN: new ministries becoming involved because of work on **post-2015 agenda** and **SDGs**, e.g. ministries for economy, international affairs, social affairs
- users working with SD/GE indicators for the first time; need a well-explained set because it is not their usual area of work; context and framework need to be clearly specified***

- In the area of SD/GE: future work of policy makers will be strongly influenced by ongoing international activities (SDGs, UNEP, OECD) → **important for NETGREEN to show how it links up with these initiatives in order to increase its relevance**
- Clearly demonstrate the benefits policy makers can get out of using NETGREEN as compared with already existing indicator sets (such as Eurostat, UNEP, OECD) → **why should a policy maker use the NETGREEN platform instead of directly going to the Eurostat or the UNEP database?**

- **Recommendations – how to increase the relevance of NETGREEN for policy makers:**
 - Platform should be **easy to use!**
 - Show for each indicator how it is “related” with **ongoing international initiatives** (SDGs, UNEP, OECD)
 - Show which **policy goals/targets** can be monitored with the indicators (i.e. link up with EU policy strategies such as Europe 2020 + flagship initiatives or 7th EAP)
 - Define few(!) **headline indicators** representing GE, construct “**GE index**” → would clearly raise the interest of policy makers (and potentially even politicians)



- **How to link up with/support the ESDN:**
 - ESDN members usually interested in sharing experiences and best practices → **stocktaking of GE indicator sets across Europe and their similarities and differences**
 - Assess practicability/usability of the proposed NETGREEN indicator set → **discuss the proposed indicator set/the NETGREEN platform with a few countries (environmental ministries + others); pilot testing with some countries concerning feasibility/usefulness**