

## Federal- regional coordination on sustainable development in the context of the Belgian EU-presidency

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## Introduction

1. Belgian context
2. SD coordination mechanisms
3. SD in Belgian presidency



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## 1. Belgian context

- Federal state: Federal level + 3 regions and 3 communities
  - Regions and communities can pursue an autonomous foreign policy within their fields of competence.
  - Competences pertaining to sustainable Development are divided among the different regional and federal authorities
  - On the international scene, Belgium is speaking with one voice.
- Need for consultation and coordination



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## 2. SD Coordination Mechanisms

- BE representation is organised through Cooperation Agreements
- Division of roles + rotation system for representation of BE in the EU and international organizations
- Focus on SD
- Focus on issues relevant to EU-presidency context

2 main tracks:

1. EU: the Council of the European Union and the European Council
2. Multilateral meetings

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### 2.1. Preparing for the Council of the European Union and the European Council

- a) General
- b) Sectoral coordination and SD coordination
- c) Examples

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#### a) General

- DGE
  - DG European Affairs and Coordination of the FPS for Foreign Affairs
  - Organised prior to each Council meeting
  - Regional authorities always present
  - In close cooperation with the Belgian permanent representation at the EU
  - Belgian position, based on consensus between the different competent authorities
- Interministerial Conference on Foreign Policy
- Consultation Committee between federal state and R&C (chaired by prime minister)

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## b) Specific sectoral coordination and SD coordination

Sectoral coordination, prior to DGE

- Structural or ad hoc
- Allows for more intensive technical discussion among experts from the different authorities
- Output to be validated by DGE

→ Sectoral coordination on SD:

- > **CCIEP** (Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy) an/or
- > **ICSD** (inter-departmental Commission for Sustainable Development)

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## c) Examples

### • EU-SDS

- Evaluation of progress (2009) – Friends of the Presidency procedure under Swedish Presidency
- BE inputs prepared through **ICSD working group**, and validated through ad hoc DGE sustainable development.
- Key aim: input on evaluation of progress + move starting date for the (preparation of) comprehensive review of EU-SDS forward from 2011 to 2010.

### • Europe 2020

- Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- Touches on principles of sustainable development
- **CCIEP working group** prepares reactions relating to environmental and sustainable development elements in the Europe2020 strategy
- Key aim: safeguard sufficient focus on environmental and sustainability issues

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## 2.2. Preparing for the multilateral meetings

- a) EU coordination
- b) WPIEI agenda during BE presidency
- c) BE coordination

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### a) EU coordination

- EU is increasingly speaking with one voice in multilateral meetings (e.g. CSD)
- EU common position on Environment and SD prepared through WPIEI
  - Working group of the Council
  - Different configurations → SD: WPIEI global
  - Coordination among member states
  - Presided by country having the EU presidency
  - Lead countries assigned to take the lead in a particular CSD issue

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### b) WPIEI agenda during BE presidency

- Key issues relating to SD on the WPIEI agenda during the second half of 2010
  - Preparation for CSD19 (May 2011)
  - Preparation for PrepCom II of the UN Conference for Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (7-8 March 2011)

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### c) BE coordination

- BE position at WPIEI/global prepared through **COORMULTI SD and Environment\***
  - Systematic coordination meetings, set up within the FPS for Foreign Affairs, DGM
  - Aim of coordination and ensuring coherence of Belgian policy
  - Composed of representatives from the various federal and regional entities
  - Non-governmental stakeholders
- Interministerial Conference on Foreign Policy
- Consultation Committee between Federal State and R&C (chaired by prime minister)

\* There are different COORMULTI configurations possible related to the subject and international organization (e.g. NATO, OSCE, UNGA, FAO, IMF, OECD, ect....)

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### 3) SD in Belgian EU-presidency?

- BE presidency should not be seen in isolation:
  - BE is working in the framework of the trio-presidency, which covers the period from 01/01/2010 to 30/06/2011
  - Bulk of legislative work will be based on the work programme of the Commission for 2010.
  - Very limited scope to move starting date of the comprehensive review of the EU-SDS forward from 2011 to 2010.

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### → Five priorities in the presidency programme:

1. Current socio-economic situation in Europe:
  - Efforts to fight the economic crisis and to pursue the economic and financial transformation that should lead us towards economic recovery, sustainable growth and more jobs
  - Europe2020 strategy is a vital element in this context, the implementation of which should bring us closer to the target of a competitive and green knowledge economy.
2. Climate and environmental policy, and the aim of a low-carbon economy
3. Achieve progress in various social domains
4. Security, justice, asylum and home affairs
5. Europe's external dimension

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### SD initiatives\* in the BE EU presidency

- ESDN conference – “Towards an Economy compatible with Sustainable Development Principles: ‘Green Strategies’ in the context of Sustainable Development” (4-6 July)
- Informal SCP/IPP meeting – “integration of social and environmental policies” (6-7 October)
- Informal Dialogue on the themes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) (17 December)

→ List of all events (coming soon): [www.eutrio.be](http://www.eutrio.be)

\* initiatives/events with only environmental focus are not included

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