

NOTES ON THE E.U.- DOCUMENTS ON THE SDG AGENDA.

1. Com (216) 739 '*Next steps to a Sustainable European Future.*'

Although this document admits the need for a transition to a low-carbon, climate resilient, resource efficient and circular economy and the need to be a 'front runner' in this respect, the document is rather disappointing.

It continues to list the SDG's in terms of the existing ten priorities of the European Commission and – more or less- concludes that the EU is already on course.

Stronger still: it argues that the existing priority to provide for 'a new boost for jobs, growth and investment' would deliver on various SDG's!

So what about the above referred to transition?

Furthermore it concludes that the EU is a large importer of energy and therefore in terms of energy security vulnerable.

So what about a transition to low-carbon, resource efficient and climate resilient policies?

Instead of elaborating really NEW STEPS the document concludes that 'all SDGH's are addressed through current European policies!

2. '*Sustainability Now- a European vision for sustainability*' EPSC 2016.

This is a much more interesting document that challenges the policies already in place. Even though: it speaks of 'matching the 'planetary boundaries' with the 'social market economy'.

However, it acknowledges the need to build an 'inclusive society' in which economic growth is 'fairly distributed among citizens'.

It admits that the current model generates too much greenhouse gas, uses too much raw materials and results in a rapid loss of biodiversity. It is also characterized by a 'global financial system that is not sustainable'... and 'growing income disparities an unemployment'.

It continues to analyse how sustainability challenges are met in a number of sectoral policy fields which makes one wonder whether there is sufficient attention for the need for a more integrated approach and mainstreaming of sustainability in EU policies.

It notes that there is 'growing disenchantment of European citizens with the EU (policies)'

No wonder, because it acknowledges that *as large a percentage as 24% of the EU population are at risk of poverty and exclusion!*

It continues to state that the 'planet requires a different form of growth'....one that no more relies on fossil-fuel based energy, one that is circular and places great value on renewables, is socially inclusive an de-links growth and emissions....

It argues that there would be a comparative advantage for the EU in developing green technology, the 'first mover advantage'... (this may be particularly true now that the USA is under a Trump administration – kn).

This document even contains a section on 'universal basic income', although this could be elaborated more positively!

It also enters into the discussion of transforming the tax system: away from taxing labour towards taxing capital, energy, raw materials and consumption.

The document proposes to make sustainability the 'overarching policy objective of the EU'.

The shortcomings of GDP as a poor indicator are clearly highlighted.

The common agricultural policy should be transformed towards less industrial, less large-scale and more labour intensive policies and should cut down on the use of (artificial) fertilizers and pesticides. This may be done by adopting new farming methods developed by organic, precision and even urban farming...

In this context the export of agricultural produce by the Union should also be examined critically: does it strengthen or weaken the domestic production of food by developing countries? Is it compatible with the SDG's?

The responsible management of ocean ecosystems is also discussed and the designation of 'controlled sanctuaries'/protected marine areas is argued for

All in all this is a much more interesting document for our Reference Group to work with!

Perhaps we could consider responding to it?