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European
Environmental
Bureau

EU progress towards the SDGs and sustainable trade

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EU progress towards the SDGs

(the past 5 years)





Getting the indicators right

- Focus on the issues where we face the biggest sustainability challenges (rather than on easy wins).
- Pay attention to problems that affect a lot of people – inside and beyond the EU.
- Measure the EU's negative impact on the global commons and monitor negative spillover effects and externalities of European policies and practices in the world.
- Are valid, i.e. they are able to actually measure what they claim to measure (rather than creating illusions of sustainability).
- Are specific and time-bound by being linked to EU-wide targets (instead of trying to measure progress without clear goals set).



Getting the indicators right

- Make use of disaggregated data to monitor progress for different parts of society to ensure that no one is left behind by the policy responses adopted.
- Are selected and reviewed with meaningful involvement of civil society and the research community.
- Should also be obtained from sources other than statistical offices when data provided by civil society and research is able to close important gaps in SDG monitoring.



Missing indicators on trade

- Eurostat SDG monitoring lacks indicator on trade related impacts and spillover effects.
- SDSN has also developed the Spillover Index Score to measure international environmental and socio-economic impacts embodied in trade for each country.
- As expected, many European countries have a very unfavourable score.
- Current monitoring hides negative impacts through trade and does not allow to measure how sustainable our trade patterns are.



Trade related indicators

EU imports from developing countries by country income groups

The indicator is defined as the value (at current prices) of EU imports from developing countries.

What the indicator measures:

The more we import from poor countries the better global partners we are regardless of embedded labour exploitation, biodiversity threats, deforestation, pollution or raw material depletion. Imports with high cost externalisation (environmental and social costs) actually make our practices less sustainable and undermine sustainable development in third countries.

This indicator is misleading and should be taken out of the Eurostat SDG indicators.



Possible indicators on sustainable trade

Possible indicators:

- **CO2 emissions embodied in imports (SDSN)**
- **Deforestation embedded in imported materials and products**
- **Biodiversity threats in imported materials (SDSN)**
- **Volume of materials and products imported linked to exploitative working conditions**
(victims of modern slavery embodied in EU imports in SDSN report)
- **Raw material dependence**
- **Export of waste** (exports of plastic waste in SDSN report)
- **Export of goods banned in the EU for environmental or health reasons** (banned pesticides in SDSN report)
- ...



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Thanks for listening!

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The EEB gratefully acknowledges the financial support from the LIFE Programme of the European Union. This communication reflects the organizers' views and does not commit the donors.