

TRADE4SD

Fostering the positive linkages between trade and sustainable development

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Deliverable 5.3: Position paper on Building Policy Coherence: Food Systems Approach for Supporting SDGs in EU's International Agricultural Trade

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About TRADE4SD Project

Trade policy is a central factor in shaping global, regional and local development. It has an especially important part to play in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The starting point of the TRADE4SD project is that trade has the power to produce positive and sustainable outcomes when the policies, which define the rules of the game, are framed and designed in a way to promote access to markets, fair prices and standards of living for farmers, as well as alleviating rural poverty and ensuring sustainable farming practices. Addressing the relation between trade and SDGs requires an integrated approach to policy-making and inclusive governance.

The main objective of the TRADE4SD project is to contribute to build new opportunities for fostering the positive sustainability impacts of trade supported by improved design and framing of trade policy at national, EU and global level, including WTO modernisation, increased policy coherence at different domains including agricultural, energy, climate, environmental and nutritional policies.

To meet this objective, the project develops an integrated and systematic approach that combines quantitative models from different perspectives, and several qualitative methods recognising that SDGs and trade are highly context-related. On the one hand, a robust analysis of economic, social and environmental impacts is given by using diverse but integrated modelling techniques and qualitative case studies. On the other hand, a wide consultation process is implemented involving stakeholders both in the EU and in partner countries as well as those with a wide international scope of activity, providing opportunities for improved understanding, human capital building, knowledge transfer and dissemination of results. To this extent, the consortium involves, as co-producers of knowledge, a number of decision-making, research and stakeholder participants with different backgrounds who will use their networks to facilitate the civil society dialogue and build consensus on the subject of gains from trade in view of sustainability.

Project Consortium

No.	Participant Organisation Name	Country
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2	University of Kent (UNIKENT)	UK
3	Consiglio per la Ricerca in Agricoltura e l'Analisi dell'Economia Agraria (CREA)	IT
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5	The University of Sussex (UOS)	UK
6	University of Ghana (UG)	GH
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8	Centrum Analiz Społeczno-Ekonomicznych-Fundacja Naukowa (CASE)	PL
9	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	IT
10	Institut national de recherche pour l'agriculture, l'alimentation et l'environnement (INRAE)	FR
11	Confederazione Generale Dell'Agricoltura Italiana (CONFAGRICOLTURA)	IT
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List of abbreviations

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CSP	CAP Strategic Plan
DG	Directorate-General
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
DG SANTE	Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
DG TRADE	Directorate-General for Trade
EBAF	European Board on Agri-Food
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
F2F	Farm to Fork
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
MS	Member state
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
WP	Work Package
WTO	World Trade Organization

1 INTRODUCTION

The leading idea of Trade4SD is that trade has an important part to play in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Trade4SD academic literature review, which revealed more positive than negative outcomes of the interactions between agri-food trade and the SDGs, supports the starting point (Huan-Niemi et al., 2022). The Trade4SD premise is that trade has the power to produce positive outcomes, provided that trade related policies are designed in such a way that they can enhance the positive, and mitigate negative impacts of trade, while supporting the long-term sustainability of agri-food chains. As the world's biggest trading bloc, it is for the European Union (EU) to take special responsibility for the sustainability impact of trade, and even a leading role in initiating and designing approaches that offer practical solutions.

Compared to other major trading blocs, the EU is a complex construction of open, trade-dependent economies, with a single market for 27 independent and sovereign Member States that have delegated some of their decision-making powers to the shared institutions, accompanied by selected common policy areas. Although coordination between Member States lies in the foundation of the EU, such a complex organization inevitably challenges both efficiency and consistency. In essence, EU's consistency as a global political actor depends on its political unity, which is manifested formally in all subsequent Treaties, but also practically in the integration of different policy sectors. However, even in established common policy fields the "commonness" may vary in time, depending on EU's internal and external political fluctuations.

The EU has chosen policy coherence approach as a key pillar of its development cooperation and to take better account of those objectives when implementing other EU policies that affect developing countries. Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) was introduced in EU law already in 1992 (Treaty of Maastricht) and further reinforced in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty (see European Commission 2019). The European Consensus on Development reaffirmed EU's commitment to PCD and recognized it as a crucial element to the strategy to achieve the SDGs in partner countries. It foresees that PCD will be applied across all policies and all areas covered by the 2030 Agenda. (European Commission 2019).

As a signer of the UN Agenda 2030 in 2015, the EU has committed to promoting its systemwide implementation. The Agenda, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), represents the global framework for eradicating poverty and achieving worldwide sustainable development by 2030. Due to the interconnectedness of the SDGs, implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires a coherent and integrated approach that manages trade-offs and maximizes synergies. In the Green Deal EU presents its own strategy, consisting of packages of policy initiatives for achieving the SDGs in an integrated and coherent manner. Food systems are key in this regard as they affect all SDGs (European Commission et al. 2022).

Consequently, the Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F) is a central component of the Green Deal. Among the policy packages it is the one that aims to transform the EU's food system to make it more sustainable. It seeks to redesign the food value chain to improve sustainability at each

step, from production to consumption. Within the F2F-framework the EU promises to support the global transition to sustainable agri-food systems through its trade policies and international cooperation instruments. (European Commission 2020.)

In this academic Policy Position Paper, based on analyses made in Trade4SD and existing literature, we outline a specific policy proposal and present arguments in support of it. It is a contribution for facilitating informed policy making, not a political statement. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. As a background in Section 2, we briefly introduce the concepts of food systems and policy coherence and put forward our framework for policy coherence and sustainability in connection to EU's international agricultural trade. In section 3 we present our position on policy coherence in terms of EU's international agricultural trade contributing to SDGs. In section 4 we discuss evidence in favor of our position stance. Conclusion restates the key points and suggests resolutions based on the work in Trade4SD.

2 KEY CONCEPTS AND POLICY COHERENCE FRAMEWORK

In this chapter we briefly introduce how we understand the key concepts food systems and policy coherence and present our framework for discussing them in the connection of EU's international agricultural trade.

2.1 SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FOR HEALTHY DIETS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SDGs

As the world faces increasing challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, and growing food insecurity, there is growing recognition of the need for a systems approach to food among policymakers. As an approach it moves beyond isolated interventions, advocating for solutions that address the complexity of food systems as a whole (Bilali et al. 2018, Borchardt et al. 2024 Drewnowski et al. 2020).

The food system approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of food production and consumption processes, recognizing that changes in one area (e.g., agricultural practices) often have cascading effects on other sectors in society, beyond the food sector (e.g. health outcomes, energy, logistics, financial sector, environmental sustainability, social equity).

Willett et al. (2019) argue that food systems are central to addressing global environmental challenges. They highlight the need to transition to more sustainable diets (e.g., plant-based) and agricultural practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water, and protect biodiversity. Bilali et al. (2018) stress that the food system must simultaneously address issues of food security, nutrition, and sustainability. They call for integrated solutions that consider the entire food chain, from production to consumption, with an emphasis on reducing food waste and optimizing food systems for both people and the planet. The food systems approach is critical for achieving sustainability because it offers a comprehensive, integrated framework for addressing the complex, interlinked challenges that our food systems pose to the environment, society, and economy.

Building on the work of the FAO (FAO 2018), the food systems can be defined as encompassing all actors and activities involved in the "production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal (loss and waste) of food products." It encompasses all the stages that food goes through from farm to fork, and it includes both the natural resources (e.g., land, water, and biodiversity) and the human systems (e.g., social, economic, cultural, and policy dimensions) that influence these processes.

A food systems approach means that policy makers active in different areas (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, environment, public health) take a more holistic view on the set of objectives as well as on the set of possible policy levers and coordinate to avoid incoherent policies. According to the OECD, growing demand for a more holistic "food systems approach" to policy making is

based on the realization that there are potential synergies and trade-offs between food security and nutrition, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability. (OECD 2021.)

2.2 POLICY COHERENCE

Looking at the EU’s current operational environment, the recently published Draghi Report (2024) *The future of European competitiveness* makes a strong claim to coordinate policies to boost decarbonisation and competitiveness, and simultaneously increasing security. The *Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture* (2024) report calls for future coherent policies, synergies and compromise as political principles. In essence, this means that the further integration of sustainability into food production and trade policies also has to maintain EU’s competitiveness. At the same time, the world has entered the era of “slowbalisation”, suggesting that global value chain participation growth has started to decline (Jambor et. al, 2023).

Overall, we investigate policy coherence in an era which is characterized by geopolitics and both internal and external tensions in the EU. The systemic quality of the problems we face is no more linear: “recognize a problem, find a (technical or societal) solution, implement it, and move on”. The present challenges are rather of a very persistent nature (climate change, biodiversity loss, global social and economic inequality), which require holistic approaches that allow us to manage to live with them instead of trying to get rid of them.

In this policy position paper, we emphasize the *process nature* of policy coherence instead of listing which policy sectors or policies are incoherent. In the scale of EU policy making, tradeoffs are inevitable. When formulating single policy measures, it is important to understand these tradeoffs (see e.g. Gruère et al., 2018 for an examples of policy change dynamics and tradeoffs in implementing water policies in agriculture), but the final decision is not a technical one (OECD 2021). When no “silver bullet” is to be found, a systemic policy coherence framework may provide the EU policy makers more tools to proceed in a systematic, yet pragmatic way.

Policy coherence is a principle and a process by which government seeks to reduce conflicts and strengthen the cumulative effect of its actions between and within different policy areas in order to achieve the goals set. In this paper, we focus on EU policies and policy frameworks that are relevant to its international agricultural trade **and** have an impact on reaching SDG goals. In addition to the EU policy focus, we discuss sustainability impacts on non-EU countries.

Starting with a literature search² we identified 89 articles on "Policy Coherence" and "EU," focusing on how policies interact within the EU and their impact on global sustainability. Findings reinforce the importance of aligning goals across sectors and domains or governance levels (e.g. Nilsson et al., 2012; Muscat et al., 2021), outlined in our policy coherence framework (Figure 1) below. The rest of the paper is structured following the dimensions presented in this framework.

Regarding the horizontal and vertical axes, **vertical coherence** involves alignment across different governance levels (e.g., global, EU/regional to national or local levels), ensuring policy consistency across institutions and jurisdictions. In the case of international agricultural trade, consumption policies are mainly a matter of national legislation, whereas the agri-food supply side belongs the EU level. **Horizontal coherence** focuses on alignment between policy areas at the same level of governance, such as EU's trade policy and agricultural policy, or between policy frameworks, such as the F2F and the CAP. Within the Commission, interservice working groups have this role, e.g. the F2F work is organized under the lead of DG SANTE (Directorate General for Health and Food Safety), complemented in international aspects by DG INTPA (International Partnerships) and DG TRADE, as well as DG AGRI.

Effective policy coherence requires this kind of public sector innovations – new divisions of labour but also new tools, not only policy measures but also new ways of implementing and evaluating policies, as well as data for policy formation and sufficient legal frameworks. The success of policy coherence depends heavily on **organizational and institutional dynamics**, including leadership, communication practices, and organizational culture. Strong leadership and effective communication across sectors and governance levels are necessary to avoid misalignment and siloed thinking, which can undermine efforts to achieve coherent policies (Lenschow et al., 2018). Successful implementation is impossible in a complex political organization without coherent legal basis. When horizontal and vertical coherence unite, we can talk about a whole-of-government -approach.

Time dimension is crucial in this framework. For the first, policy coherence helps to promote sustainable development at all levels of society only in the long term, requiring consistent commitment. For the second, timing matters when different (sustainability and international agricultural trade related) initiatives are clustered together, since the major driver in EU administration is the election calendar, while political process sequencing and synchronization with international time slots also play a role. For the third, policies belonging to different sectors can be prepared in parallel, with a view to converge in time towards the same objective. For the fourth, policy coherent timing is at stake when the EU has to choose which partner country to prioritize in international agricultural trade agreements when a leverage point appears due to an international political momentum. Finally, time refers here also to the evolution of a certain policy dimension. As to achieving SDGs in international agricultural trade, we are witnessing the establishment of environmental sustainability as a critical element of the policy (see Jendrzewski et al. 2023), which leads to the formation and adoption of concrete policy measures such as the deforestation regulation. Simultaneously, such an evolution inevitably highlights the need to proceed in economic and social sustainability.

² Conducted in May 2023.

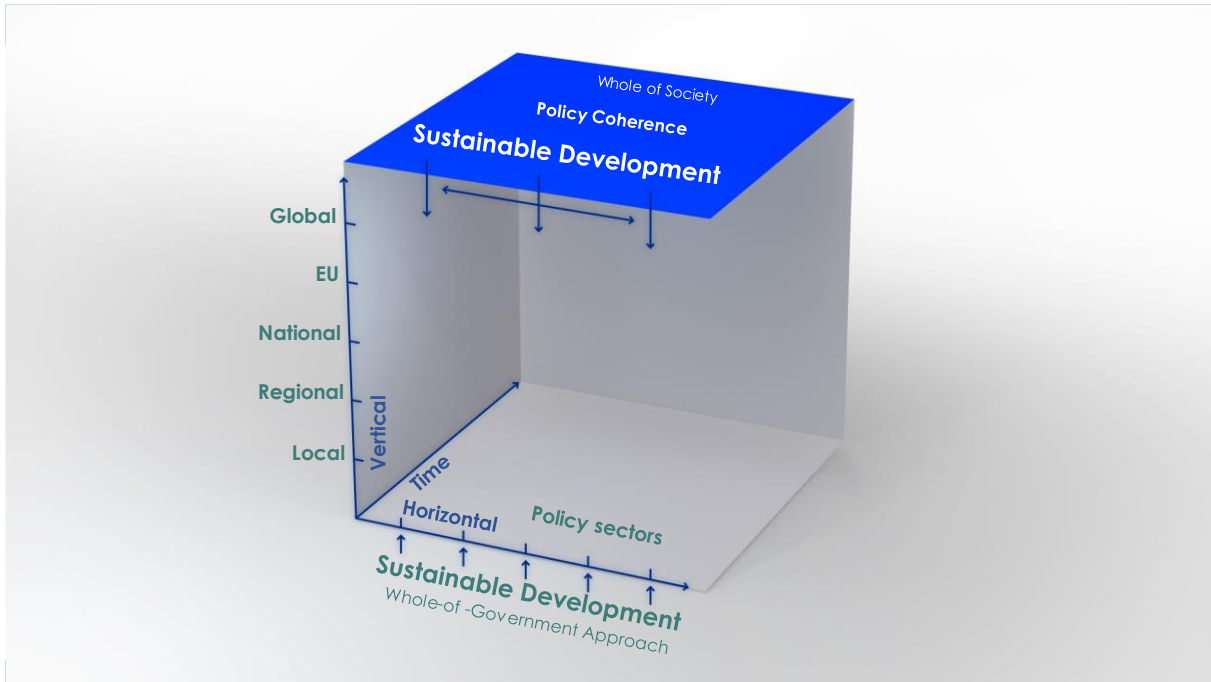


Figure 1. Framework for addressing policy coherence in sustainable development. The figure has been modified on the basis of Niemenmaa & Kivimaa.

In the literature review, authors also investigate the role of EU policies in promoting global development through trade partnerships and how EU's internal policies influence global sustainability efforts. Several policy coherence obstacles and enablers are identified in the literature. Obstacles include fragmented governance, conflicting policies, siloed thinking, limited resources and complex policy environment. We shall discuss these challenges and suggestions made by the experts in interviews and surveys (see also table 1 /chapter 6).

3 POSITION STATEMENT

*Policy coherence problems in promoting SDGs with the EU international agricultural trade are threefold: **horizontally** limitations of the EU food systems strategy (F2F), **vertically** both between the Commission and the Member States and other levels, and the insufficient coherence dynamics of the EU **policy processes**. Commitment to and continuous development of food systems and a whole-of-government approach, including sufficient legal basis for implementation, are keys for improvement.*

4 THE POSITION STATEMENT IN THE LIGHT OF TRADE4SD EVIDENCE AND DATA

This chapter discusses evidence for the position stated, based on Trade4SD analyses, following the logic of the framework presented above.

4.1 HORIZONTAL POLICY COHERENCE

Firstly, we were interested in what are the most important SDGs the EU has addressed in its policies, and how they have evolved in time. How coherent the EU is in addressing the SDGs via international agricultural trade? How are different policy domains involved in these activities? In collaboration with the Joint Research Centre, we conducted a mapping of policy coherence of around 3700 legal acts connected to “international agricultural trade”, including those dating back to pre-EU times (Appendix 3). In sum, the analysis shows that the EU has been building a sustainability framework for tens of years, thus it seems to have had a constant long-term approach to build on, already before signing the UN Agenda 2030.

According to this mapping, the mainly addressed SDGs in these legal acts, including regulations and directives during pre-EU times were SDG 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 15 (life on land). Looking at legal acts adopted after the European Parliament became a co-legislator with the 1993 Maastricht treaty, mainly addressed SDGs are 2, 3, 14 (life below water) and 15 – all connected to agrifood, provided that health refers also to nutrition.

In terms of new initiatives, many more were drafted during EU times and the establishment of the SDGs. In relation to SDG 2 (hunger), we saw an increase from 26 to 143, in relation to SDG 3 (hunger) from 17 to 156 and in relation to SDG 15 (life on land) from 26 to 145 if pre-EU is compared with EU times.

Comparing the Juncker and von der Leyen Commissions, we observe a more balanced addressing of SDGs under the latter with SDGs 3 (health and wellbeing), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 14 (life below water) and 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) mostly addressed. There were also more initiatives, proposals and communications under von der Leyen that address different SDGs but in relation to selected SDGs, more regulations and directives were passed under Juncker.

To analyse the alignment with and emphasis of specific SDGs in various EU policy fields and documents we also utilised the [SDG Mapper](#)³. For agriculture, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) regulations strongly focus on SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 15 (life on land), while the

³ We analysed key EU policy documents suggested by different DGs of the European Commission, including Agriculture and Rural Development, Environment, International Partnership, Mobility, Transport, Energy, Climate and Trade. Key policy documents including strategies and programs published by their own DG and by other institutions, and where the connection between international (agricultural) trade and the SDGs are most prominently addressed. See also Appendix 3.

F2F strategy also emphasizes these goals alongside SDG 13 (climate action). In the environment sector, policies combating deforestation are heavily weighted towards SDG 15, indicating a strong focus on life on land, but less balanced across other goals.

Trade policies show a significant alignment with SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), highlighting the importance of global cooperation and on economic factors. Climate policies, guided by the European Green Deal and related laws, predominantly emphasize SDG 13 (climate), reflecting the critical nature of climate action within these frameworks. International partnerships in agri-food systems from 2014-2020 predominantly target SDG 2, showcasing a major focus on eradicating hunger. Across these policy domains, consistent themes include strong focuses on SDGs 13, 15, and 2, reflecting again the EU's priorities in climate action, life on land, and hunger eradication, with variations in emphasis across different policy documents.

The EU emphasizes environmental sustainability, particularly through policies on climate action (SDG 13) and land protection (SDG 15). The integration of social and economic goals (SDG 2 for hunger, SDG 8 for work) alongside environmental ones shows the interconnectedness of these dimensions in achieving long-term sustainability as well as economic growth and social equity.

Overall, the main lines of horizontal division of labour seem pertinently organised. The analysis suggests a fairly well-rounded but somewhat prioritized approach to sustainability which have evolved over a long period of time under different Commissions and Parliaments. Environmental goals (climate and land) take precedence, but with social (hunger eradication) and economic aspects (work) also increasingly considered. Yet, some essential SDGs such as Gender (SDG 5), are seldom addressed. These findings are also in line with the policy matrix (Appendix 3).

Next, we took a closer look at the different policy domains involved in the international agricultural trade, and to EU's larger policy frameworks' ability to create horizontal policy coherence. The policy documents used in the mapping exercise informed the first Delphi round (Appendix 1 and 2). Here we invited the Trade4SD expert panel to state which policy approaches they consider coherent with international agricultural trade policy. The diversification of trade flows, investments in food value chains, digital solutions to promote sustainable agriculture and research and innovation in sustainable agriculture were seen as most effective and in coherence with trade policy (see Appendix 2). Yet, it is noteworthy that as to the future (until 2035), the respondents were less optimistic to see the EU progressing in food systems related policy approaches. Investments in food value chains as a policy approach dropped from the top 5 in current policy making to the bottom 5 in terms of expected progress and alongside the capacity of local producers and access to affordable and healthy food.

As to our Delphi analyses, trade partners underlined the policy coherence between EU's trade policy and its policy regarding international partnerships. Interviewees emphasized the importance of sustainability, health, and local capacity building in creating resilient and competitive agricultural practices. In line is the need for educating and incentivizing Ghanaian farmers for sustainable cocoa production and combining financial and non-monetary incentives for adopting green technologies. Importantly, interviewees also highlight the need for alignment

between trade policies and food system goals, ensuring that local production meets both domestic needs and international market standards.

An extra horizontal policy coherence layer is added when the relationship and impact of different sustainability dimensions are considered. Our own project results indicate that synergies and tradeoffs exist between policies addressing the three different dimensions of sustainability (Araujo Enciso et al., 2023). Ronzon and Sanjuán (2020) show that SDGs can be incoherent or causing trade-offs. A case in point are SDGs aiming at a lower dependence on fossil energies, promoting recycling (SDG11), as well as protection of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15), and SDGs dealing with biomass production and consumption SDGs 2 (hunger), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) and 12 (responsible consumption and production). Choosing between goals that cannot be maximized simultaneously requires deliberative political discussion on values.

Inclusion of SDGs in EU legislation gives a fairly satisfactory impression of the commitment to sustainability in different policy sectors. However, according both to academics and civil servants in the Commission, F2F as the EU food systems approach has limitations in channelling needed activities to a coherent whole. Schebesta and Candel (2020) list four main challenges: the unresolved ambiguity of food sustainability, the discrepancy between policy objectives and the specific legal actions proposed, and the vulnerable institutional embedding within the European Commission. A case in point of limited horizontal policy coherence is the fact that the supply side dominates the F2F, while consumption is less addressed. Interviewees from different DGs view the F2F strategy as innovative and forward-looking, especially in its comprehensive approach to the food systems, but face challenges in integrating food systems approach into existing structures and emphasize the need for more data-driven policymaking. The success of the strategy may furthermore be impaired by its vagueness. Actions are currently very broad and often presented without ideas for how to implement them.

4.2 VERTICAL POLICY COHERENCE

There is a similar competence and coordination challenge between the EU level and the member state government, and between the EU and trading partner countries. Schebesta and Candel (2020) point to multilevel governance arrangements and to the limited coordination with the EU's member states as one of the main challenges of policy coherence connected to promoting sustainability under the F2F. Moreover, of the holistic approach limitations of F2F is the vertical imbalance between supply side and consumption side, since members states are in the lead to make consumption policy.

A crucial issue is the implementation of the F2F goals via the CAP in member states. When analyzing the consistency and coherence between the CAP Strategic plans (CSPs) of the member states and the F2F Strategy ambitions embedded in the CAP, Mezzacapo (2024) points to the weaknesses of the “performance framework” model and lack of means to cut off financial flows to MSs that do not fulfill their commitments to the Green Deal and F2F. The performance framework obliges member state to establish results targets as indicators of uptake of given

schemes, but there is no implementation countercheck mechanism that would address the real impacts. Mezzacapo calls for the “Sustainable EU Food System” law – actually already promised in the F2F strategy – which could increase the chances of coherence and meaningful delivery of SDGs on the ground.

Turning to our own analyses, interviewees discussed various challenges relating to vertical policy coherence, including contradictions between environmental goals (e.g., CAP greening) and economic / productivity goals locally, diverse stakeholder interests and the combination of global trade and local sustainability concerns. The feeling of a lack of a unified policy framework makes it difficult to align local, national, and global strategies. Policy solutions should account for the specific needs and contexts of local stakeholders while aligning with broader EU and global goals. There is a need for better coordination and more local involvement in policy creation to ensure that policies at the EU and global levels are effective and acceptable locally.

Digitalization and technical / social innovation, co-creation (in local contexts) and reducing bureaucracy were seen as having potential to overcome some of those. Global trade changes and the shifting political landscape require flexible policies that can balance local sustainability needs with global economic pressures. Future trade agreements should focus on sustainability but must account for differences in local environmental regulations and practices. Technological advancements should be integrated into policy frameworks at all levels, with support for local actors in adopting these innovations.

Looking at vertical policy coherence in the field of international agricultural trade, it is essential to zoom in on the position and perception of the EU at a global level. In the Delphi survey, we invited respondent to rate what role the EU plays globally in relation to food systems and in addressing global challenges. Seventy-five percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that EU has taken a strong role globally as a norm maker, particularly in relation to food systems. Similarly, over eighty percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the EU has a leading role in addressing global challenges like climate change and environmental degradation (Appendix 2). Concerns were mentioned both in member states focus group discussions and in those conducted in Ghana and Vietnam. If the EU maintains its high environmental goals, it may need to increase trade-related restrictions and binding regulations on production in third countries, which is challenging from a trade perspective. Still, sustainability and responsibility in international trade require shared standards and rules, which the WTO should coordinate. The challenge for the developing countries is the lack of investment in local process industries that prevents them from joining global value chains, weakening the position of agricultural producers, and leading to dependency on foreign products. Furthermore, stricter responsibility requirements pose challenges for fair-trade producers, especially regarding traceability in supply chains and digital tools.

Ghanaian interviewees stressed the EU's role in supporting sustainable practices and environmental standards – yet, some pointed out that social fairness issues, such as child labor, should be better addressed. There is a need for cohesive and comprehensive policy approaches that align local production capabilities with international standards. Effective implementation is to be ensured and enforced through strong political and civil society engagement.

Vietnamese interviewees underlined that EU regulations promote sustainability and social equity, but Vietnam sometimes faces challenges in meeting these standards, especially in terms of child labor and labor conditions. EU policies foster sustainability but also create trade barriers due to changing regulations, which limit time for businesses to comply. Some pointed at a responsibility gap in the supply chain: traders often place the burden on producers, calling for more support for small farmers and better implementation of EU regulations. The market's focus on low prices is a hindrance to sustainable agriculture. Policies to promote sustainable development and a shift in consumer behavior toward higher-priced, eco-friendly products are needed.

In connection to challenges raised by the trade partner countries, Team Europe was mentioned as a novel approach by which to improve EU's vertical policy coherence also in international agricultural trade. Team Europe consists of the European Union, EU Member States — including their implementing agencies and public development banks — as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)⁴. It joins the European development forces to combine resources and expertise, and to implement the Global Gateway⁵ strategy to support partner countries to boost smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport sectors, and to strengthen health, education and research system. As such, it is EU's contribution to narrowing the global investment gap worldwide, with a human rights'-based approach.

4.3 COHERENCE IN EU'S INTERNAL POLICY COORDINATION AND PROCESSES

In the Commission focus group it came out that the work on policy coherence for sustainable development started about 20 years ago with the OECD, which work influenced the EU and vice versa. (Commission FG, 2nd round). The OECD has contributed with developed economic models that integrate environmental externalities, signaling a shift toward more sustainable and socially inclusive policies, with a particular emphasis on novel foresight policy approaches. In the EU, Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCD), a significant focus 15-20 years ago, has seen a decline in emphasis since then. Recently, the need for a revisit, especially in the context of evolving systemic approaches in the agri-food sector, has become more current.

Core areas of concern for policy coherence in the EU's policy making process in relation to international agricultural trade and food systems are how the latter is coherent across different policy domains, whether and how to enhance operational linkages with and between policy areas such as energy, climate, and what institutional design may support this. In the Delphi survey, only 40% of the respondents agreed with the claim that the EU's integrated policy frameworks for food systems are coherent in aligning policy objectives, setting common targets, and coordinating implementation efforts to ensure synergy across different policy domains. At the same time, the clear majority saw a need to enhance operational linkages between policy

⁴ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/team-europe-initiatives_en

⁵ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en

areas such as energy, climate, and animal welfare to ensure coherence for sustainable development. Furthermore, sixty percent agreed or fully agreed with the claim that enhanced coordination and collaboration calls for establishment of cross-cutting working groups or task forces focused on specific sustainability issues in international agricultural trade.

Almost sixty percent acknowledged that the EU has clear long-term ambitious visions, missions, and targets for setting specific targets for reductions in fertilizer use and greenhouse gas emissions and creating frameworks for designing missions and monitoring progress.

Respondents were hesitant whether politicians will be able to proceed with climate and biodiversity measures and consider many initiatives (see Appendix 2) as rather EU centric. According to some respondents, the CAP should stay in its original goals, whilst they would like to see farmers more involved in policy planning. Some urged for a more selective approach for trade policy, considering [open strategic autonomy](#), and called for approaches that foster a more sustainable and resilient food systems approach.

Looking into focus group interviews, interviewees from Finland stressed that several measures are necessary to improve internal EU coordination such as Vice-presidents of the Commission. They have been assigned to coordinate commissioners' work, especially in areas like supply security and safety, but their influence is limited if they do not have resources at their disposal to deal with. Effective information sharing and communication are essential to avoid incoherent policies. The Commission's model for preparing national programs could enhance coherence but also risks rigidity. Impact assessments are crucial but often superficial, especially in international agricultural trade. Better internal coordination within the Commission and between member states is needed, including involving environmental experts in sectoral discussions. New trade policy definitions, like the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the Deforestation Regulation, require more open discussion. A balance should be found between productivity-focused (American-Brazilian) and regulation-focused (EU) models to maintain global competitiveness.

Key suggestions from Hungary to enhance operational linkages and thus coherence included addressing contradictory policies. Effective measures were seen as interdependent, necessitating simultaneous implementation, like coupling trade liberalization with carbon tariffs. Concrete ideas included annual reports and workshops, expert delegation and rotation among policy areas, and incorporating a diverse range of experts from academia, institutions, and companies to represent varied perspectives. Improving the alignment of policy objectives, setting common targets, and coordinating implementation efforts requires additional steps. Shifting from a top-down to a bottom-up approach was suggested, as farmers often lack bargaining power. EU initiatives like the Green Deal and F2F are appealing but face implementation challenges. Efforts to reduce GHG emissions in the agrifood sector should, according to some interviewees, be based on clear positive outcomes from real impact assessments to avoid harming competitiveness. Long-term indicators in strategic documents should be realistic to ensure economic sustainability. A concrete proposal is the establishment of Europe-wide "living farm labs" for data generation, research, knowledge exchange, and testing policy ideas. Additionally, creating a "sustainability officer" position in all Directorate-Generals (DGs) might enhance coordination and implementation of SDG issues across different sectors.

In the Commission, there are already tools in use for strengthening policy coherence in policy processes. Interservice consultation, which takes place in working groups, is a case in point. It implies that there is collegial reporting and discussion, but it does not mean cocreation. (Commission FGs.)

Participatory approaches and inclusive platforms were repeatedly raised in the connection of policy coherence as examples of novel governance solutions. It echoes the idea that the more complex and wicked the problems get, the more carefully all stakeholders at all relevant levels should be heard, committed to decisions made, and involved in making the change happen. One signal in changing the policy making process toward this direction is the proposal of a European Board on Agri-Food (EBAF). It is envisioned as an advisory board to the Commission, bringing together EU institutions, agri-food value chain stakeholders, civil society organizations, and scientists to discuss jointly the different options and solutions to achieve sustainable agri-food systems in Europe. (IEEP 2024.) EBAF is one of the proposals that resulted from the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture in 2024. If established, it could embrace some of the SDG/international agricultural trade issues and facilitate stronger challenge management ability.

More data driven policy came up (e.g. in the Commission FGs) as an emerging novel policy making tactic. Although it may originally have more to do with efficiency, it includes elements which may enhance policy coherence and change the policy process by building a shared understanding of facts. A holistic food systems approach management requires a lot of assessment so that its different dimensions can be considered and monitored. The same applies for SDGs in international agricultural trade agreements, which need impact assessment. A case in point is the way how social conditionality is now introduced in the CAP with a data approach – simply starting to measure it and talking about it. In the international agricultural trade tables discussion on terms such as living income or living wage and indicators to measure them open inch by inch the black box of social sustainability. It is still a controversial issue to raise, but it is less arrogant than trying to tell what kind of social policy the trade partner countries should pursue. At the same time a more holistic food systems approach gains ground.

4.4 FEW COUNTERARGUMENTS, HESITATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Thinkable counterarguments for a systems approach in promoting policy coherence in the case of international agricultural trade and SDGs are few, and they are basically political. They could base either on neglecting the importance of sustainability dimension altogether, or on low priority given to SDGs in agriculture, at least beyond EU's own borders.

On the contrary, for example the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit was unequivocal about the need for a systemic approach to address food-related issues and the interlinkages with other developmental challenges. Despite the almost unanimous support to the principle, in the evaluation of EU's support to sustainable agri-food systems in partner countries 2014-2020, it is stated that although the F2F strategy is regarded to have the potential to guide a more coherent

European agenda for climate action and sustainability in policy and implementation, divergence in interests and values of key players at EU and global level has hampered the translation of Europe's ambitions relating to sustainable agri-food systems into a coherent external agenda that would guide programming and funding priorities. The evaluation concludes that a fully developed external dimension of the Farm to Fork Strategy is missing. (European Commission et al., 2022.)

In our Delphi process we identified a number of key enablers and obstacles for the EU to be aware of and consider if it was to overcome policy coherence challenges. The top three key enablers were the unity in EU and common policies, enhanced international cooperation and multilateralism and focusing on research and innovation advancements, whilst the top three key obstacles were different national interests, loss in competitiveness and geopolitical conflicts (Appendix 2).

The analysis of focus group interviews from Finland, Ghana, Hungary and Vietnam, where various policy approaches and concrete new policy options for improving policy coherence for reaching the SDGs were discussed, confirmed survey results. Three topics, where similar perceptions across continents exist, are highlighted below (see also Appendix 2):

1. **Integrating and advancing digitalisation** in and between trade and other sectoral policies was acknowledged in all focus group interviews (see Appendix 2) and Delphi survey alike as were complexities and difficulties in doing so. Digitalization is needed, a.o. for supply chain management increasingly requiring data for market visibility, product traceability, and supporting sustainable production. Interviewees from Vietnam stressed in this connection traceability, transparency, preventing deforestation, and meeting EU aquaculture regulations on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
2. All of the interview discussions pinpointed the **need for access to finance** in order to enhance international trade related sustainable agricultural practises in developing countries. This was not considered as a top of the list in 1st Delphi round. The lack of investment in local process industries in third countries prevents them from joining global value chains, weakening the position of agricultural producers. It was also mentioned that investments are rarely directed at primary production in developing countries. Equipping local producers with necessary skills and technical know-how to improve their production efficiency and competitiveness in trade were underlined. This could be supported by improving the access to finance for smallholder farmers and cooperatives, support direct loans, and develop specific policies and support programs for advancement.
3. **Compliance with Environmental Regulations:** The EU stakeholders acknowledged the need for competence building and capabilities enhancement in developing countries to meet the environmental standards. The Ghanaian and Vietnamese considered it important to invest in environmentally sound production. This would require investments and access to finance for local producers and the food chain.

5 CONCLUSION: KEY POINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

We are dealing with a complex policy coherence issue. However, the EU has already before the UN Agenda 2030 taken strategic and regulatory steps towards sustainability in agriculture and trade. There is currently a momentum for revisiting the policy coherence of EU’s agricultural trade in terms of its impact on the SDGs.

Our position paper statement was that there is a need for a systemic approach, and that international agricultural trade’s impact on the SDGs should be informed by a food systems approach in the EU. The EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategies potentially provide a unifying framework to bring together different DGs on food systems (European Commission 2022, 34). Although F2F is the first continent-wide strategy adopting such a food systems approach (European Commission et al. 2022), at present its holistic framework is limited, and there is a need for a “F2F 2.0 version”.

The EU food systems should be developed with a long-term determination towards a comprehensive whole-of-government approach, able to act in parallel selectively with diverse policy sectors and decision-making levels, depending on the topic and timing. This requires public sector innovation. Increased use of foresight, creating indicators and collecting data for impact assessment. Ensuring robust, evidence-based policy assessment and proofing are critical steps to overcome existing obstacles.

For building policy coherence and a food systems approach for supporting SDGs in EU’s international agricultural trade, it is essential to enhance coordination mechanisms, harmonize policy frameworks including a sufficient legal basis, and engage diverse stakeholders. Deliberative dialogues and wider participation facilitate policy coherence.

In summary, we combine obstacles and enablers identified in our literature review (chapter 2) with key findings from our analysis of policy coherence, informed by a mixed methods approach, including a survey, Delphi round interviews and policy document mappings (Appendix 1). The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Obstacles and enablers of policy coherence and TRADE4SD suggestions to overcome obstacles

Obstacles	Enablers	TRADE4SD suggestions to overcome obstacles in policy coherence as to EU’s international agricultural trade
<p>Fragmented governance: lack of integration between different governance levels and sectors often leads to incoherent policies.</p>	<p>Strong and effective leadership: drives policy coherence by ensuring clear direction and commitment across sectors.</p>	<p>Enhanced coordination mechanisms: Establish cross-cutting working groups or task forces focused on specific sustainability issues. Promote better internal coordination within the European Commission and between member states by involving environmental experts in sectoral discussions. Digital solutions: Implement digital platforms for better coordination and information sharing</p>

		among different governance levels and sectors. Increased use of Sustainability Indicators, Sustainability Assessment and more robust Sustainability Proofing in the Commission to oversee and ensure policy coherence and alignment with sustainability goals.
Conflicting policies: across sectors or levels that are inconsistent with one another (food consumption policy belonging to MSs responsibility, supply side to CAP) can undermine coherence. SDGs can be incoherent or cause trade-offs.	Integrated frameworks: policies are aligned across sectors, using a holistic approach, facilitate coherence.	Harmonized policy frameworks that align sectoral policies with overarching sustainability goals. Use tools like the SDG Mapper to ensure alignment with specific SDGs. Policy reconciliation: Conduct regular policy reviews and stakeholder consultations to identify and resolve conflicts between policies. Evidence-based policy processes based on robust evidence, thorough assessments, and sustainability proofing to ensure alignment and coherence. Whole-of-government holistic approach.
Siloed thinking: narrow, sector-specific focus can limit collaboration (formal division of labor hides the common interest in int.ag.trade of e.g. DG Energy or DG Mobility) between departments or organizations, making policy coherence more difficult.	Stakeholder engagement: involving all relevant stakeholders in the policy development process ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, enhancing coherence.	Stakeholder engagement: Encourage the involvement of diverse stakeholders in policy development. Use foresight methods / Delphi / Horizon scanning etc. to gather input from various sectors and regions. Establish “living farm labs” for data generation, research, knowledge exchange, and testing policy ideas. Interdisciplinary training programs for policymakers to foster a broader understanding of interconnected issues and improve cross-sectoral collaboration.
Limited resources: lack of financial or human resources (partner countries unable to implement e.g. environmental standards set on agricultural products) for coordination efforts can hinder the implementation of coherent policies.	Adequate resources: e.g. financial, human, and institutional are critical to support the coordination of policies.	Resource allocation: Increase investments in sustainable agricultural practices and capacity building in partner countries. Ensure that financial and human resources are allocated effectively to support coordination efforts. Use financial and non-monetary incentives for adopting green technologies. Access to finance to be improved for smallholder farmers and cooperatives by supporting direct loans and developing specific policies and support programs.
Complex policy environment: overlapping and complex nature of	Monitoring & evaluation: regular M&E of policy impacts to ensure that policies remain aligned	Simplified and clear policy directions, including reporting requirements while maintaining essential data collection. Promote clear and consistent policy directions

<p>policies can create challenges for alignment.</p>	<p>with overarching goals and can be adjusted as needed to maintain coherence.</p>	<p>to reduce uncertainty for stakeholders. Establish the position of “sustainability officer” in all Directorate-Generals (DGs) to enhance coordination and implementation of SDG issues. Comprehensive policy mapping of existing policies to identify overlaps and gaps. Use this mapping to streamline and integrate policies more effectively. Digitalization integrated and advanced in trade and other sectoral policies to support sustainable production, market visibility, product traceability, and compliance with environmental regulations. Foresight activities to anticipate future challenges and opportunities, ensuring policies are forward-looking and adaptable.</p>
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APPENDICES

1. Methodology used in policy analysis
2. Key results from the two-round Delphi study
3. Policy matrix and SDG mapper results

APPENDIX 1. Trade4SD’s WP5 process and methodology

1. Introduction – a mixed method approach

To explore the rather complex field of policy coherence (or a lack of) of a range of current EU policies, policy options and their potential, political feasibility and acceptability, we applied multiple research and data collection strategies and methods (Figure 1).

Figure 1. WP 5 data collection strategies and methods



This included a literature search and analysis including that of key policy documents in line with the topic and after consulting various EU services. We also utilized the JRC’s SDG Mapper tool, organized a national expert workshop in Finland, a focus group interview with staff from different DGs from the European Commission and prior to our two-round Delphi study. The first-round survey as such was discussed and tested before launching. Numerous focus group interviews were organized as a second-round analysis after the Delphi survey.

We shall briefly describe the steps below.

2. Literature search

Literature search for “Policy Coherence” and “EU” was conducted in Web of Science (8.5.2023). Keywords used were “Policy Coherence” and “EU”, and we identified 89 articles. The D5.1. team had a closer look into 22 articles. Key themes addressed by research include: 1) Policy coherence across agri-food & bioeconomy policy domains in the EU; 2) How can policy address local-to-global governance levels within a wider commitment to food sustainability; 3) EU’s Development & Trade Agendas for Global Development Partnerships; 4) EU policy coherence & impact on global sustainability.

3. Identifying and analyzing key policy documents

We identified and analysed key policy documents produced by various EU institutions. For that end, we contacted several DGs of the European Commission, including Agriculture and

Rural Development, Environment, International Partnership, Mobility, Transport, Energy, Clima and Trade. We invited them to send us key policy documents including strategies and programs published by their own DG and by other institutions, where the connection between international (agricultural) trade and the SDGs are most prominently addressed.

4. SDG Mapping 1 - assessing the SDG relevance of key policy

The [SDG Mapper](#) was utilized to assess the SDG relevance of key policy documents and by identifying:

- the main SDG detected
- the key SDG targets addressed
- key indicators according to the respective target relevance within the documents

The analysis of various EU policy fields using the SDG Mapper highlights the alignment and emphasis of these policies with specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and allowed us to create a policy matrix – presented in Appendix 3 in more detail.

5. Preparatory Focus Group interview with civil servants from the European Commission

An online and preparatory Focus Group interview was conducted with members from different Commission services – DG Agri, DG IntPa and DG Trade – working at the interface of international (agricultural) trade, agricultural policy and sustainable development. The motivation was to sharing initial interpretations, hearing positions on coherence (or a lack of) between different current EU policies as to their impact on SDGs, ways forward to increase and improve operational linkages.

6. SDG Mapping 2 - Mapping policy coherence with SDG mapper in collaboration with the Joint Research Centre

The starting point were 6000 legal acts related to “Agriculture”, condensed to 3700 legal acts connected to “international agricultural trade” (incl. Regulations & Directives dating back to the 1960s) in EUR-LEX / linked to SDG Mapper.

SDG mapper is the widest tool to examine EU’s activities, and it has never been utilised before in this extent as to international agricultural trade.

Policy coherence charts have been developed together with the Joint Research Centre. In focus were a.o. the Juncker and von der Leyen Commissions. For regulations and directives, both by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission were studied.

Initial results are presented in appendix 3.



This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme under grant agreement No 101000551 – TRADE4SD

7. Stakeholder events and workshops with sister project

a. Two stakeholder events to discuss the PRI results

In task 5.1 two stakeholder events were organised to discuss the PRI results: on the EU level (10.9.2023) and another on the national level in Finland (20.9.2023). These events gave us insights especially to the procedures how the DGs organise internally their work towards policy coherence.

b. Joint expert workshop with the MATS-project

We organised a joint expert workshop together with the MATS-project colleagues on policy coherence (November 2023) as part of an internal TRADE4SD partner workshop on policy coherence. The approaches complement each other, as MATS puts more emphasis on trade policy issues and mechanisms, whereas we focus on the internal policy coherence in the EU.

8. 1st Delphi round

a. Survey preparation

We developed an expert matrix to have a well-balanced “pool” of experts. The first Delphi round survey was “piloted” internally, i.e. a workshop for all partners and to collect feedback and adjust survey was conducted. Delphi guidelines and a Background Paper for partners were developed. The survey was also piloted.

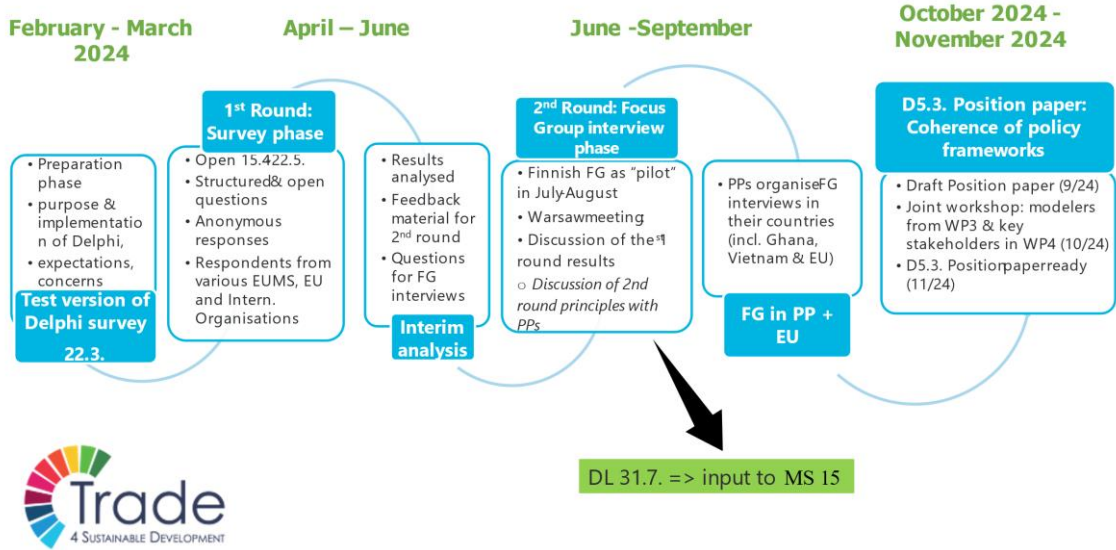
b. Running the survey

Figure 2 shows the overall timeline of task 5.3. and for 2024 – from the launch of the first Delphi round to the finalisation of D5.3.



Figure 2. Task 5.3 Delphi timeline for Trade4SD in 2024

Task 5.3 Delphi timeline for Trade4SD



The first round of the Delphi process was conducted as a survey, inviting experts to share their views on key EU policy options to increase sustainability in agri-food systems and the coherence of various policy initiatives with trade policy.

A survey link and the Background Paper was sent out to the “expert panel” (survey respondents) also with the support of some project partners on 15.4.2024. National, EU and international experts including from EU, OECD, FAO were targeted. The survey was open for one month. Questions included those on effectiveness of EU initiatives, policies and tools developed in recent years to boost sustainability in international agricultural trade, the EU’s role in agricultural trade, EU as a global player, coherence of EU policies and sustainability of international agricultural trade, the enablers for the EU to realise its policy objectives and the obstacles to be removed.

TRADE4SD Delphi expert panels were composed of high-level experts from the public sector and different governance levels, from the private sector, i.e. businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as NGOs and associations. They have both practical and professional experience able to think across sectors and between policy areas. We received 37 answers. Figure 3 shows the prime areas of expertise (respondents were able to give more than one option), the institution they work for and where it is located. Furthermore, respondents were invited to share information about gender and age.



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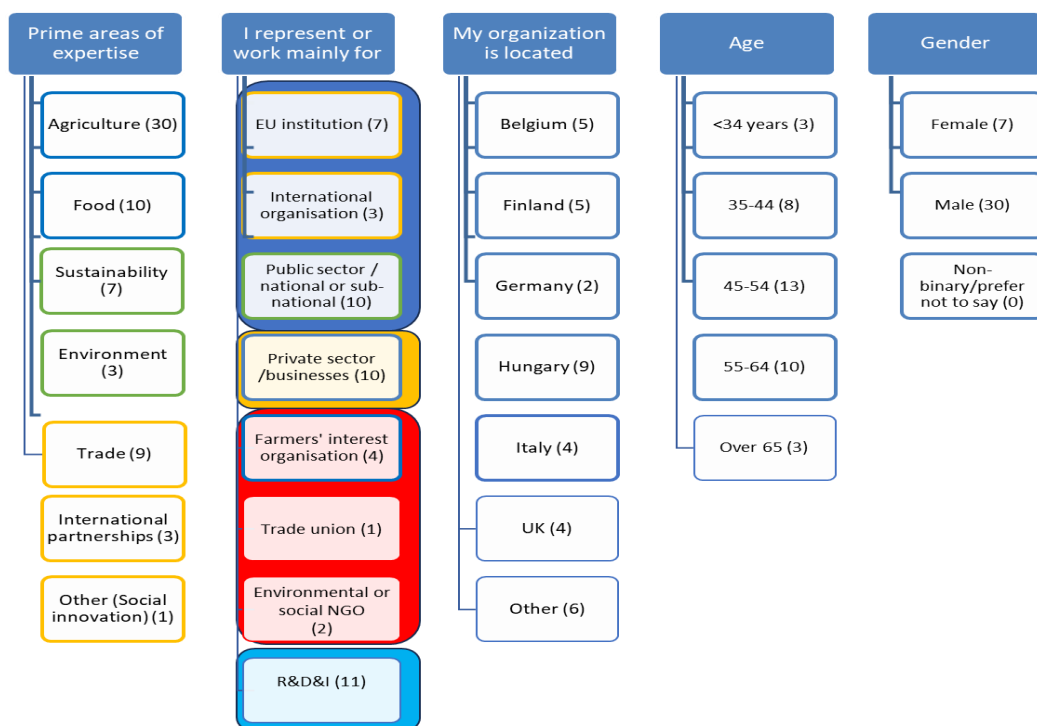


Figure 3. First round survey respondents

Results are presented in D5.3 and appendix 2.

9. 2nd round Delphi – Focus Group interviews

The results, motivation, aim, and process of the second round were discussed at the TRADE4SD Project Meeting, held from June 12-14, 2024, in Warsaw, together with project partners and steering group members.

Based on the first-round Delphi results, we formulated relevant and more in-depth questions for discussion with the focus group interviewees. Draft questions were discussed and developed together with project partners before the interviews in their respective countries.

Focus group questions for the EU DGs and the EU member states were similar regarding key topics but questions were adopted to the special contexts, when needed. For the Vietnam and Ghana focus groups, we arranged two online meetings to:

- Discuss the results from the first round.
- Formulate relevant questions for the focus groups.

These online meetings were needed because we have been analyzing EU policies promoting sustainability in agricultural trade from an internal, EU perspective. Hence, it was valuable to gain views from trade policy experts outside of the EU, such as those from Vietnam and Ghana.



In summary, the WP5 team conduct five focus group interviews between August and October 2024 and as follows:

- **EU member state (national):** Focus group interview in Finland was carried out by Luke
- **EU member state (national):** Focus group interview in Hungary was carried out by Corvinus University
- **EU level:** Focus group with policy experts from various Directorate-Generals - Agri, Intra, Trade was carried out by Luke on 2.10.2024 in Brussels
- **International level:** Focus group in Vietnam was carried out by UESCM. Furthermore, UESCM carried out individual interviews.
- **International level:** Focus group in Ghana was carried out by ISSER.

Thus, in addition to the EU level and through different Directorate Generals of the Commission, WP5 team conduct interviews in the EU member states of Finland and Hungary. Focus group interviews conducted in Ghana and Vietnam provided critical insights from countries outside of the EU and thus from international levels of governance.

The focus group interviews consisted of 4 to 6 key policy experts and/or policy analysts specializing in international trade and sustainability. The length of the focus group meetings varied between one and a half to three hours. Some of the meetings were organized as face-to-face meetings, others as recorded online meetings.

Results are presented in D5.3 and appendix 2.



APPENDIX 2. Key results from WP 5 Delphi rounds

by Pasi Rikkonen and Michael Kull (LUKE)

1. Key results from the 1st Delphi round

1.1 Three main conclusions

1. The results highlighted the importance of digital transition – it was also considered that the EU will progress with this up until 2035. Success in doing so is the key for the future of the EU's agriculture and food competitiveness. For the progress in this field, education for the market participants, and support for the farmers are needed.

2. Improved resilience to climate change and biodiversity loss were not seen as effective nor in coherence with trade policy today. However, looking into the future, it was considered that the EU will progress improving resilience to climate change and climate-friendly farming practises.

3. There seems to be a change in prioritization of key policy approaches from today to the future. The EU concentrated on climate issues and green transition topics in 2018-2020. Between 2021-2024 the key focus has been in securing the societies (Corona, war in the Ukraine). Based on the expert results, the importance of the resilience building to climate change and climate-friendly agriculture will make a return up until 2035.

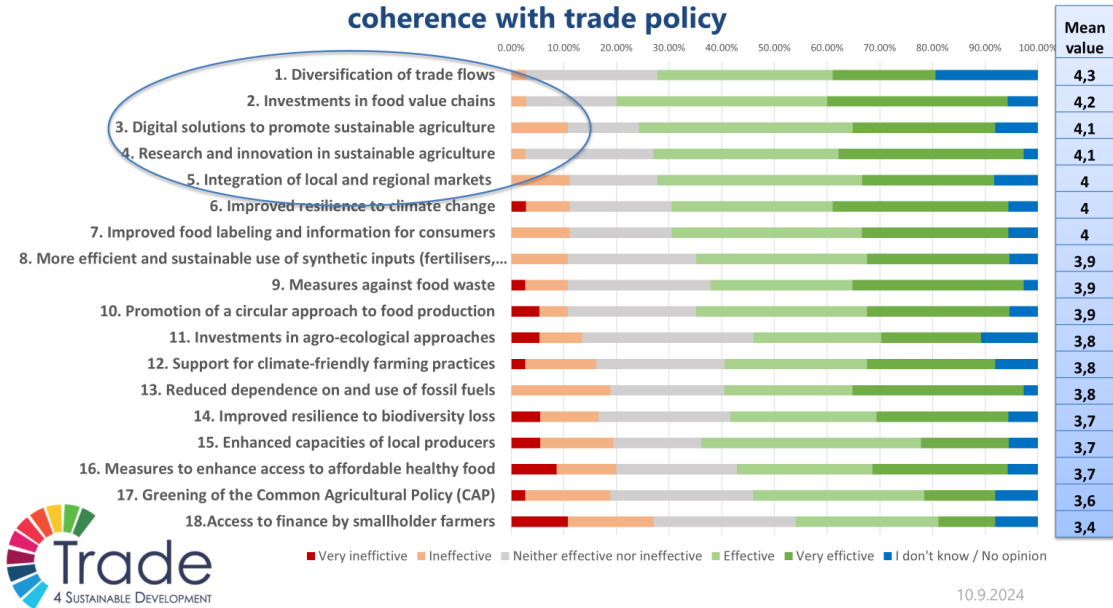
1.2. The impact on and coherence with international trade policy of selected policy approaches

- How effective are these today? How likely it is that the EU will progress with these policy approaches in the future until 2035?

We listed 18 key policy approaches,¹ and asked whether these are both effective and in coherence with trade policy (combined effect). Diversification of trade flows, investments in food value chains, digital solutions to promote sustainable agriculture and research and innovation in sustainable agriculture were seen as most effective and in coherence with trade policy (mean values ranging from 4.3 to 4.1) (Figure 2.1.).

¹ We screened numerous policy documents as suggested by different policy experts from different DGs, analysed them and confirmed our key points in a preparatory FG interview. Reconfirmation took place with Trade4SD and other colleagues prior to launching the survey.

Figure 2.1. Combined effect: How policy approaches were seen as effective and in coherence with trade policy



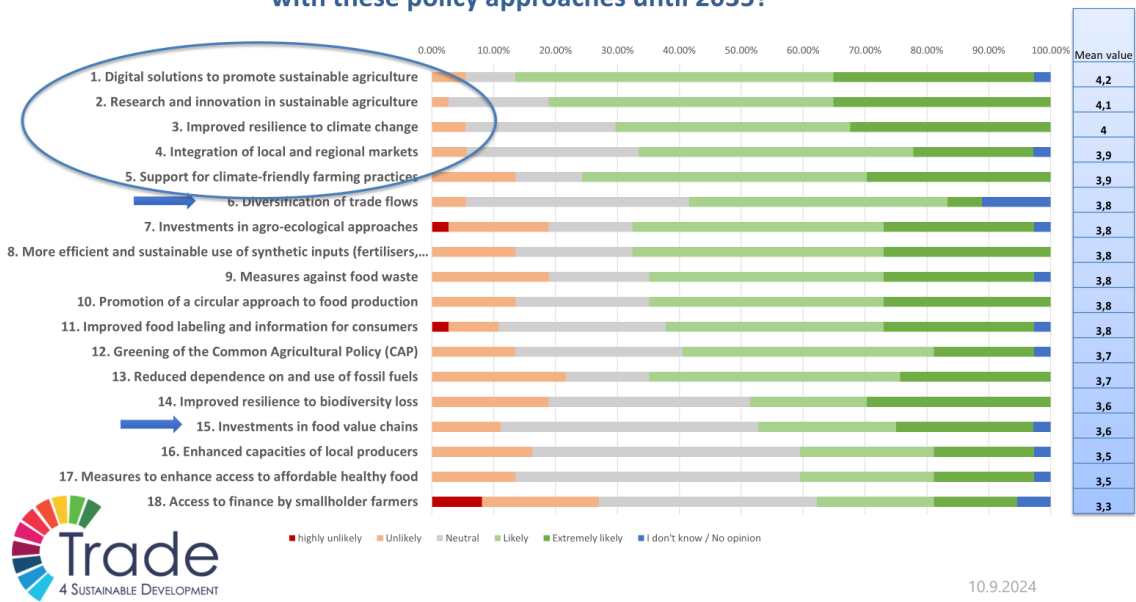
Respondents were hesitant, whether politicians proceed with climate and biodiversity measures and considered many of the initiatives mentioned as rather EU centric. At the same time, according to the respondents, the CAP should stay in its original goals, whilst they'd like to see farmers involved in policy planning more intensively.

Asked about the likelihood of the EU progressing with these policy approaches until 2035, the top-3 answers were digital solutions to promote sustainable agriculture, research and innovation in sustainable agriculture and improved resilience to climate change (mean values between 4.2 and 4). Whilst respondents are confident on the progress of the policy approaches in most (or all) of these policy areas, some of them stressed that the CAP and other policies will not substantially modify their approach. Some also urged for a more selective approach for trade policy, considering open strategic autonomy, and requirements for more sustainable and resilient food systems (Figure 2.2.).



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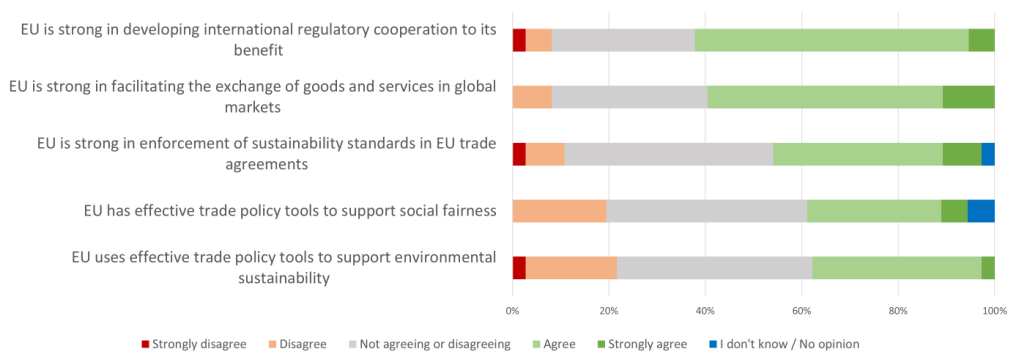
Figure 2.2. How about the future? How likely do you think that the EU will progress with these policy approaches until 2035?



1.3. EU's role in agricultural trade

The EU's role in agricultural trade: around 60% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the EU is strong in developing international regulatory cooperation to its benefit and in facilitating the exchange of goods and services in global markets. There was some disagreement about social fairness and environmental sustainability - some respondents agreeing, others disagreeing, while many neither agreeing nor disagreeing) (Figure 2.3.).

Figure 2.3. Statements about EU's role in agricultural trade

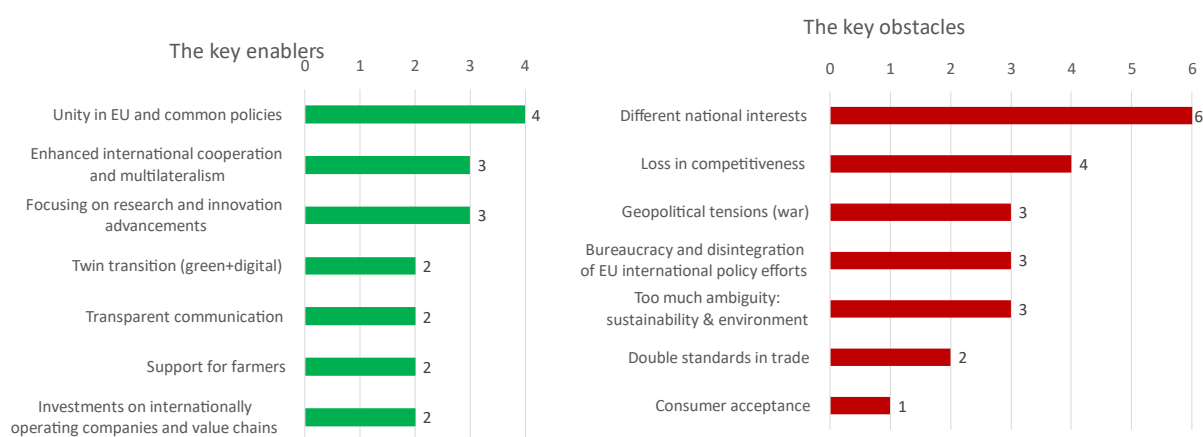


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1.4. Enablers and barriers for the EU to realise its policy objectives

In an open question, we asked respondents to state what they perceive as enablers for the EU to realise its policy objectives and what as key obstacles to be removed. Respondents were able to list several enablers and obstacles. Their answers were then grouped by their similarity, and Figure 2.4 shows the formed categories and number of mentions in each topic. The key enabler was unity in EU and common policies whilst the key obstacle – in line with the enabler – different national interests.

Figure 2.4. Enablers and obstacles for the EU to realise its policy objectives?



12.9.2024

1.5. The EU's internal coordination

One of the questions invited the respondents to state how much they agree or disagree with selected statements about the EU's internal coordination.

Almost eighty percent agreed or fully agreed with the claim that there is a need to enhance operational linkages between policy areas such as energy, climate, and animal welfare to ensure coherence for sustainable development (average score 4.1).

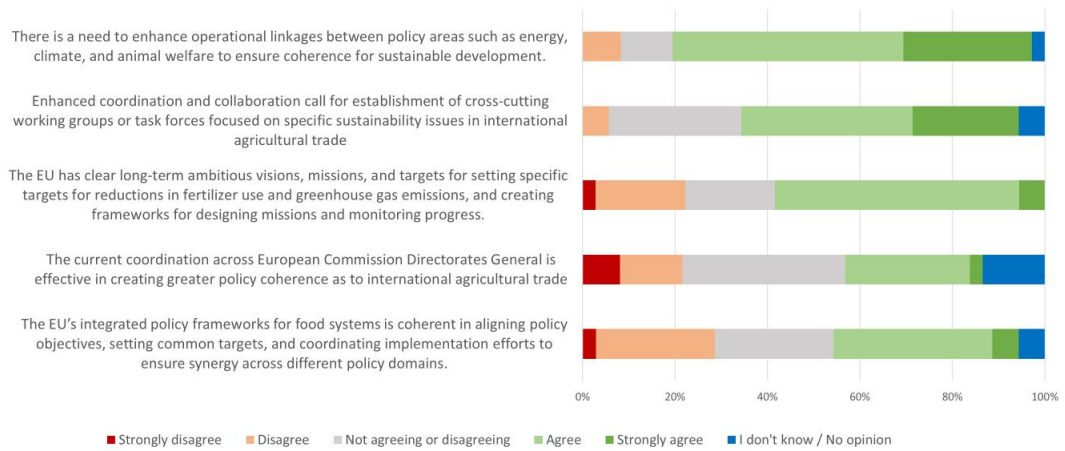
Sixty percent agreed or fully agreed with the claim that enhanced coordination and collaboration calls for establishment of cross-cutting working groups or task forces focused on specific sustainability issues in international agricultural trade.

The lowest average score (3.3) was regarding the claim that the EU's integrated policy frameworks for food systems is coherent in aligning policy objectives, setting common targets, and coordinating implementation efforts to ensure synergy across different policy domains (Figure 2.5.).



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Figure 2.5. Statements about EU's internal coordination



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2. Key results from the from the 2nd round of the Delphi study

by Michael Kull, Pasi Rikkonen, Hilikka Vihinen (Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke); Attila Jambor, Aron Torok (Corvinus University of Budapest); Ralph Armah, Emmanuel Abbey (University of Ghana) & Viet Hoang (University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City)

Based on the first-round Delphi results, in-depth questions for discussion with the focus group interviewees were developed. Draft questions were discussed and developed together with project partners before the interviews in their respective countries.

Focus group questions for the EU DGs and the EU member states were similar regarding key topics but questions were adopted to the special contexts, when needed.

Themes for the Focus Group Interviews with Hungary Finland were 1) the impact and coherence of key policy approaches to trade policy today and in the future, 2. enablers and barriers for the EU to realise its policy objectives and 3. the EU's internal coordination. With the Commission we also discussed the EU as a global player. Interview themes in Ghana and Vietnam were 1) the impact and coherence of key policy approaches to trade policy today and in the future, 2) the EU's role in agricultural trade and 3) the EU as a global player.

Table 2.1 is summary of new policy options and approaches to increase policy coherence which were discussed by interviewees in Focus Group interviews in the Trade4SD partner countries.

Table 2.1. New policy options and approaches to increase policy coherence - based on Focus Group interviews in Trade4SD partner countries

Policy Approach	Why Important
Integrating digitalization	Complex boundaries between trade, policies, and digitalization require coherence.
Strategic autonomy	Aligning policies to boost EU resilience amid crises.
Reducing uncontrolled migration	Creating jobs in origin countries to reduce migration to the EU.
Digital solutions for market integration	Essential for supply chain management and product traceability.
Compliance with environmental regulations	Ensures developing countries meet international standards.
Access to finance	Investment in local processing industries is crucial for reducing dependency on foreign products.
Capacity building for traceability	Stricter requirements challenge fair-trade producers, especially in developing countries.
Promoting generational transfer	Vital for maintaining farming productivity and interest among younger generations.
Protection against unsustainable imports	Prevents the import of unsustainably produced agricultural products.
Monitoring agricultural trade	Trade impact assessments often lack depth and concrete results.
Enhancement of local producers	Improving production efficiency and competitiveness.



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Policy Approach	Why Important
Investment in food value chains	Enhances product quality and competitiveness in trade.
Comprehensive approach to sustainable production	Integrating sustainable inputs for environmental sustainability.
Addressing climate and environmental challenges	Promotes sustainable practices, reduces emissions, and tackles deforestation.
Enhancing food access and affordability	Addresses health impacts of ultra-processed food imports and meets health and export standards.
Stronger bilateral efforts	Lowers trade barriers and supports market integration through agreements.
Increased EU coordination	Enhances policy coherence for effective trade and sustainability agreements.
Local stakeholder consultation	Incorporates diverse perspectives for efficient trade agreements.
Combining digital, climate, and efficiency issues	Creates coherent policies like climate-smart agriculture.
Focus on value chain	Ensures comprehensive integration and effective implementation of trade agreements.
Redesigning trade agreements for sustainability	Promotes holistic sustainable development across economic, environmental, and social dimensions.
Reducing bureaucracy	Simplifies trade processes, making them more accessible.
Ensuring compliance	Avoids export barriers and promotes sustainable practices through adherence to regulations.
Food safety standards	Ensures market access and consumer safety.
Climate change adaptation	Crucial for future policies alongside digital solutions.
Research and innovation (R&I)	Secondary importance to digital solutions and climate adaptation.
Reducing CO2 emissions	Develops low-emission areas and carbon exchange markets.
Greening agricultural policy	Aligns policies with environmental goals.
Preventing food waste	Requires effective education and measures, especially in trade with Vietnam.
Sustainable standards and logistics	Aligns national sustainability with importing countries' standards and promotes green logistics.
Systematic policy approach	Harmonizes with EU standards, addressing multiple stakeholders and policy areas.
Carbon certificates	Develops a market for small carbon credits, benefiting cooperatives and small companies.
Combining agriculture and forestry	Encourages sustainable farming in protected forest areas.
Financing sustainable practices	Improves access to finance for smallholder farmers and cooperatives.



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Key Conclusions:

1. **Integrating and advancing digitalisation** in and between trade and other sectoral policies was acknowledged in all focus group interviews (see Appendix 3) and Delphi survey alike as were complexities and difficulties in doing so. Digitalization is needed, a.o. for supply chain management increasingly requiring data for market visibility, product traceability, and supporting sustainable production. Interviewees from Vietnam stressed in this connection traceability (coffee, wood, cocoa), transparency, preventing deforestation, and meeting EU aquaculture regulations on IUU.

2. All of the interviews pinpointed the **need for access to finance** in order to enhance sustainable agricultural practises in developing countries. This was not considered as a top of the list in 1st Delphi round. The lack of investment in local process industries in third countries prevents them from joining global value chains, weakening the position of agricultural producers. It was also mentioned that investments are rarely directed at primary production in developing countries. Equipping local producers with necessary skills and technical know-how to improve their production efficiency and competitiveness in trade. This could be supported by improving the access to finance for smallholder farmers and cooperatives, support direct loans, and develop specific policies and support programs for advancement.

3. **Compliance with Environmental Regulations** were lifted EU MS acknowledged the need for competence building and capabilities enhancement for developing countries to meet the environmental standards. Ghana and Vietnam considered it important to invest in environmentally sound production. This would require investments and access to finance for local producers and the food chain.



APPENDIX 3. Mapping Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in EU policies and legal documents

1. SDG mapping 1 – Towards a simplified Trade4SD Matrix

For this analysis the EU’s “SDG Mapper” was utilised. This tool developed by the Joint Research Council serves to map the SDGs in any document and explore the Goals and targets. SDG Goals and the percentage of corresponding keywords detected in the text are calculated as the ratio of keywords in one Goal to the total number of keywords detected. See [SDGMapper | KnowSDGs \(europa.eu\)](#).

The analysis of various EU policy fields using the [SDG Mapper](#) highlights the alignment and emphasis of these policies with specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For agriculture, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) regulations strongly focus on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 15 (Life on Land), while the Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy also emphasizes these goals alongside SDG 13 (Climate Action). In the environment sector, policies combating deforestation are heavily weighted towards SDG 15, indicating a strong focus on life on land, but less balanced across other goals. Trade policies show a significant alignment with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), highlighting the importance of global cooperation and on economic factors. Climate policies, guided by the European Green Deal and related laws, predominantly emphasize SDG 13, reflecting the critical nature of climate action within these frameworks. International partnerships in agri-food systems from 2014-2020 predominantly target SDG 2, showcasing a major focus on eradicating hunger. Lastly, the bioeconomy strategy, while sharing several goals with the Green Deal, places a notable emphasis on SDG 15 and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Across these policy domains, consistent themes include strong focuses on SDGs 13, 15, and 2, reflecting the EU's priorities in climate action, life on land, and hunger eradication, with variations in emphasis across different policy documents.

EU Policy Field	Policy documents analysed	Impact / reference to SDGs	Consistency w. EU Green Deal ¹ principles	Consistency w. Farm to Fork principles
Agriculture CAP Regulation	<p>The new CAP covers 3 regulations: REGULATION 2021/2116. On the financing, management and monitoring of the CAP.</p> <p>REGULATION 2021/2115. Establishing rules on support for national CAP strategic plans.</p> <p>REGULATION 2021/2117. Amending EU Regulations 1308/2013 on the common organisation of the agricultural markets; 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products; 251/2014 on geographical indications for aromatised wine products; and 228/2013 laying down measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the EU.</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 = Zero Hunger (26%) 15 = Life on Land (22%) 13 = Climate Action (17%) 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (6%) 8 = Decent work & econ. growth (6%) 	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 15 = Life on Land (11%) 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) <p>Strong on SDG 13 and rather balanced as regards the other 4 goals in top 5.</p> <p>SDG 2 mainly addressed in CAP regulations and not in top 5 of GD communication. Shared goals in top 5: 15, 13 and 9.</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 13 = Climate Action (9%) 15 = Life on Land (9%) 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%) <p>Both CAP regulation and F2F has SDG 2 most strongly addressed, yet stronger in F2F. Both have SDGs 2, 15 and 13 in their top-5 list.</p>
Farm to Fork	<p>3 documents utilised: 1) COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION_F2F Strategy 2) F2F Action Plan 3) ANNEX to the COMMUNICATION</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs in F2F</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 13 = Climate Action (9%) 15 = Life on Land (9%) 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%) 	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 15 = Life on Land (11%) 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) <p>Strong on SDG 13 and rather balanced as regards the other 4 goals in top 5. Both F2F and GD refer to SDGs 12, 13 and 15.</p>	
Environment	<i>Policy for the fight against deforestation bc it is closely</i>	Top 5 SDGs:	Top 5 SDGs	Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork

¹ We used here as a “framing document” the COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS. The European Green Deal. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640> and its ANNEX. Note that there is also [European Green Deal - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640) => ‘Fit for 55’ package aims to translate the ambitions of the Green Deal into law. This includes different laws and regulations, including Just Transition Fund, climate law, industrial policy etc.



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	<p>related to international agriculture trade by enhancing the trade in deforestation free products => Impact assessment on demand side measures to address deforestation https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-regulation-deforestation-free-products_en</p> <p>Mapped Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the making available on the Union market as well as export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation + 2) Annex + COMMISSION SWD: IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT minimising the risk of deforestation and forest degradation associated with products placed on the EU market (PT1 & 2) and The final report on EU policy on forest products and deforestation - Impact assessment on demand-side measures to address deforestation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 15 = Life on Land (83%) 2. 13 Climate Action (5%) 3. 12 Responsible consumption & production 2 (3%) 4. 2 Zero Hunger (2%) 5. 16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions (2 %) <p>Very strong focus on SDG 15 / rather imbalanced as to the top 5 distribution.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) <p>Strong on SDG 13 and rather balanced as regards the other 4 goals in top 5. Shared goals in top 5 list are 15, 13 and 12.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%) <p>Policy action for the fight against deforestation is strongly focused on SDG 15, which is in the top 5 of F2F, too. Both have also SDGs 2, 12, 13 in their top-5 list.</p>
<p>Trade</p>	<p>Trade Policy Review: Sustainability and climate (europa.eu) => Trade Policy Review - An Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy + Annex</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs (Trade Pol. Review):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (41 %) 2. 8 Decent work & econ. growth (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (11) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (6%) 5. 15 = Life on Land (4%) <p>Strong focus on SDG 17</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) <p>Strong on SDG 13 and rather balanced as regards the other 4 goals in top 5. Shared goals in top 5: 13, 15 and 9. SDG 13 most referenced in GD communication and third most referenced in Trade policy review and annex. SDG 17 only appears in Trade policy review and annex.</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%)



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Trade	EU AID FOR TRADE PROGRESS REPORT 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 8 = Decent work & econ. growth (39%) 2. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (24%) 3. 2 = Zero Hunger (5.9%) 4. 13 = Climate Action (5.7%) 5. 15 = Life on Land (5.5%) <p>Strong focus on SDG 8 and SDG 17, other goals in the progress report have a percentage of corresponding keywords detected to the goals below 6.</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) <p>Only two shared goals in top-5 list: SDG 13 and SDG 15.</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%) <p>4 goals are shared (17, 2, 13, 15) albeit different weight is given. The top goal from the Aid for trade progress report – goal 8 – is not in the top-5 of the F2F.</p>
Trade	Trade Policy Review - An Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy + Annex and EU AID FOR TRADE PROGRESS REPORT 2022, COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE Trade, growth and development Tailoring trade and investment policy for those countries most in need together (COM(2012) 22 final) and COM(2012) 22 final/2 together	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 8 = Decent work & econ. growth (36%) 2. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (26%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (6%) 4. 2 = Zero Hunger (5%) 5. 15 = Life on Land (5%) 	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) <p>Only two shared goals in top-5 list: SDG 13 and SDG 15.</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%) <p>4 goals are shared (17, 2, 13, 15) albeit different weight is given. The top goal in the trade documents – SDG 8 – is not in the top-5 of the F2F.</p>
Climate	Based on the UN Convention on Climate Change, the supplementary Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement. based on the UN Convention on Climate Change, the supplementary Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement.	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 Climate Action (78%) 2. SDG 7 Affordable & clean energy (5%) 3. SDG 15 Life on Land (5%) 	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%)



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	European Green Deal = sets out the means for achieving climate neutrality. European Climate Law (europa.eu) and Climate Pact proposal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. SDG 1 No poverty (2%) 5. SDG 8 Decent work & econ. growth (2%) (Climate Law)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) Both Climate Law and GD refer mostly to SDG 13. Other shared goals in the top-5 list are 15 and 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%). Only 2 shared goals in the top-5 list: 13 and 15.
International Partnerships	EU INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS: 2014-2020	Top 3 SDGs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 2 = Zero Hunger (53%) 2. SDG 13 Climate Action (9%) 3. SDG 15 Life on Land (5%) 4. SDG 5 Gender Equality (5%) 5. SDG 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (5%) Very strong focus on SDG 2; more than half of keywords detected corresponding to that goal.	Top 5 SDGs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) 	Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%)
International Partnerships	Council Conclusions on Team Europe response to global food insecurity (June 2022)	Top 5 SDGs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 2 = Zero Hunger (53%) 2. SDG 13 Climate Action (10%) 3. SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals (10%) 4. SDG 7 No poverty (7%) 5. SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities (7%) Very strong focus on SDG 2 with more than half of all keywords detected corresponding to that goal	Top 5 SDGs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) Two shared goals in the top-5 list only, which are 13 and 7	Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%) Both F2F and the Council conclusions document have SDG 2 as most referred to goal. Other shared goals in the top-5 list are 13 and 15.
International Partnerships	EU support to sustainable agri-food systems in partner countries 2014-2020 (October 2022)	Top 5 SDGs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 2 Zero Hunger (48%) 2. SDG 13 Climate Action (11%) 3. SDG 1 No poverty (9%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (6%) 5. SDG 15 Life on Land (4%) Strong focus on SDG 2 with almost half of all keywords	Top 5 SDGs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 	Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%)



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		detected corresponding to that goal.	5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%)	
International Partnerships	EU INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS: 2014-2020, Council Conclusions on Team Europe response to global food insecurity (June 2022) and EU support to sustainable agri-food systems in partner countries 2014-2020 (October 2022) together	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 2 Zero Hunger (50%) 2. SDG 13 Climate Action (10%) 3. SDG 1 No poverty (7%) 4. SDG 9 Industry, Innovation & Infra (5%) 5. SDG 15 Life on Land (4%) <p>Strong focus on SDG 2 with half of all keywords detected corresponding to that goal.</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) <p>Whilst SDG 2 is in the main focus of the International Partnership documents, it is not in the top-5 list of the Green Deal documents. SDG 13 is the most referred to goal in the GD and second most referred to in the partnership documents. Other shared goals are 9 and 15.</p>	<p>Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 Zero Hunger (39%) 2. SDG 12 Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%) <p>Both F2F and the International Partnership documents have SDG 2 as most referred to goal. Other shared goals in the top-5 list are 13 and 15.</p>
Green Deal	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS The European Green Deal https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640 + ANNEX	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 3. 15 = Life on Land (11%) 4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%) 5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%) <p>Strong on SDG 13 and rather balanced as regards the other 4</p>		<p>Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%) 3. 13 = Climate Action (9%) 4. 15 = Life on Land (9%) 5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%) <p>Both F2F and GD refer to SDGs 12, 13 and 15.</p>
Bioeconomy Strategy	A sustainable bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment Updated Bioeconomy Strategy	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 15 = Life on Land (22%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (17%) 	<p>Top 5 SDGs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SDG 13 = Climate Action (38%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (11%) 	<p>Top 5 SDGs in Farm to Fork</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2 = Zero Hunger (39%) 2. 12 = Responsible consumption & production (18%)



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		<p>3. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (13.6%)</p> <p>4. 13 = Climate Action (13%)</p> <p>5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (8%)</p> <p>SDG 15 & SDG 12 mainly identified in BES. Rather balanced between SDG 9, 13 & 7.</p>	<p>3. 15 = Life on Land (11%)</p> <p>4. 9 = Industry, Innovation & Infra (11%)</p> <p>5. 7 = Affordable & clean energy (9%)</p> <p>Bioeconomy strategy and GD share all top-5 goals, albeit different weight is identified in both.</p>	<p>3. 13 = Climate Action (9%)</p> <p>4. 15 = Life on Land (9%)</p> <p>5. 17 = Partnerships for the Goals (4%)</p> <p>Shared goals in the top-5 list are 12, 13 and 15.</p>
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2. SDG Mapping 2 - Selected results

2.1. What and how

In 2023, the Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) initiated a comprehensive analysis focused on policy coherence, specifically within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This collaborative effort between the WP5 team and JRC involved a series of numerous online meetings aimed at scanning EU legal documents.

The starting point of this extensive review was an impressive corpus of 6000 legal acts related to agriculture. Through meticulous examination, this number was refined to 3700 legal acts that are intricately linked to international agricultural trade. These documents, which include both regulations and directives dating back to the 1960s, are meticulously catalogued in EUR-LEX and connected to the SDG Mapper for a more precise analysis.

The scanning of regulations, directives, and initiatives for alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) involves a detailed examination based on authorship and temporal categories. The legal acts under scrutiny include regulations and directives authored by the Council, the European Parliament (EP), and the European Commission. Additionally, communications and proposals are considered in their pre-legislative stages before they become binding laws.

These legal documents are further categorized temporally to reflect significant legislative milestones. The pre-EU category encompasses all legal acts adopted before the EP became a co-legislator. The EU category includes all legal acts adopted after the EP assumed co-legislative powers with the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. Furthermore, specific attention is given to the legislative output of the Juncker Commission and the previous Von der Leyen Commission, providing a comprehensive temporal framework for analysis.

2.2. Selected results

The analysis primarily addresses several key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a distinct focus on different periods. During the pre-EU era, the main SDGs targeted were 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and 15 (Life on Land). In the subsequent EU period, the focus shifted slightly to emphasize SDGs 2, 3, 14 (Life Below Water), and 15. (Figure 2.1.) Notably, there has been a significant increase in initiatives during the EU era, coinciding with the establishment of the SDGs. For instance, initiatives addressing SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) increased from 26 in



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the pre-EU period to 143 in the EU period. Similarly, those targeting SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) rose from 17 to 156, and those focusing on SDG 15 (Life on Land) grew from 26 to 145. This substantial growth reflects the EU's enhanced commitment to these critical areas.

Regulation & Directives Council & EP: Pre -EU (1993 – left side) & EU (right side)



Figure 2.1. Regulation & Directives from the Council and EP: Pre-EU & EU

Several key observations emerge from the analysis of policy coherence regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under different European Commission administrations. Under the Von der Leyen (vdL) Commission, there is a more balanced addressing of various SDGs compared to the Juncker Commission. Notably, SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), 14 (Life Below Water), and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) have been predominantly addressed. Furthermore, the vdL Commission has initiated a greater number of proposals, communications, and initiatives that encompass a broader range of SDGs. However, in relation to certain SDGs, there were more regulations and directives issued during the Juncker Commission. Specifically, the relationship to SDG 14 was strongest under Juncker, while SDG 3 has become the second most addressed under vdL (Figure 2.2. and 2.3).



Communications & proposals: Juncker (2014-19 – left side) & von der Leyen Commissions (2019-2024 – right side)



Figure 2.2. Communications & proposals: Juncker & von der Leyen Commissions

Regulation & Directives Council EP: Juncker & von der Leyen



Figure 2.3. Regulation & Directives: Juncker & von der Leyen Commissions

Some careful explanations can be attributed to these trends. The vdL Commission has placed SDGs at the core of its policymaking, integrating them into the European Semester, which aligns economic and fiscal policy coordination with sustainability objectives. Additionally, the heightened concern among Europeans in 2019, particularly regarding climate change and the green transition, influenced the prioritization of SDGs prior to the EU elections and the establishment of the then new Commission. The Better Regulation agenda has also played a role, ensuring that any new policy proposal considers its connections to the SDGs. The notable increase in initiatives related to SDG 3 under the vdL Commission can be also attributed to the legislative response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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