

# **Synergies between the Sustainable Development Goals and the National Recovery and Resilience Plans – Best Practices from Local and Regional Authorities**



**European Committee  
of the Regions**

# Integration of SDGs: overview

The EU has gradually included the SDGs into the European Semester but, despite the progress made:

- Lack of a **comprehensive strategy** addressing the gaps to the EU's achievement of the SDGs;
- Weaknesses of the SDG indicator set and **monitoring methodology**;
- **Procedures even more complex and time-consuming** with the enlargement of the Semester's scope;
- **SDGs not mentioned in the guidance** provided by the European Commission to Member States for **drafting their NRRPs**;
- Very **limited consideration for the territorial dimension** in the design of the NRRPs;
- **Insufficient consideration for LRAs** in the implementation of the NRRPs;
- **Persisting challenges** limiting the application of the **SDGs at local level**.
- **Widened persisting differences** in SDG performance **across and within EU Member States**

## Overview of EU progress towards the SDGs over the past five years (2022)

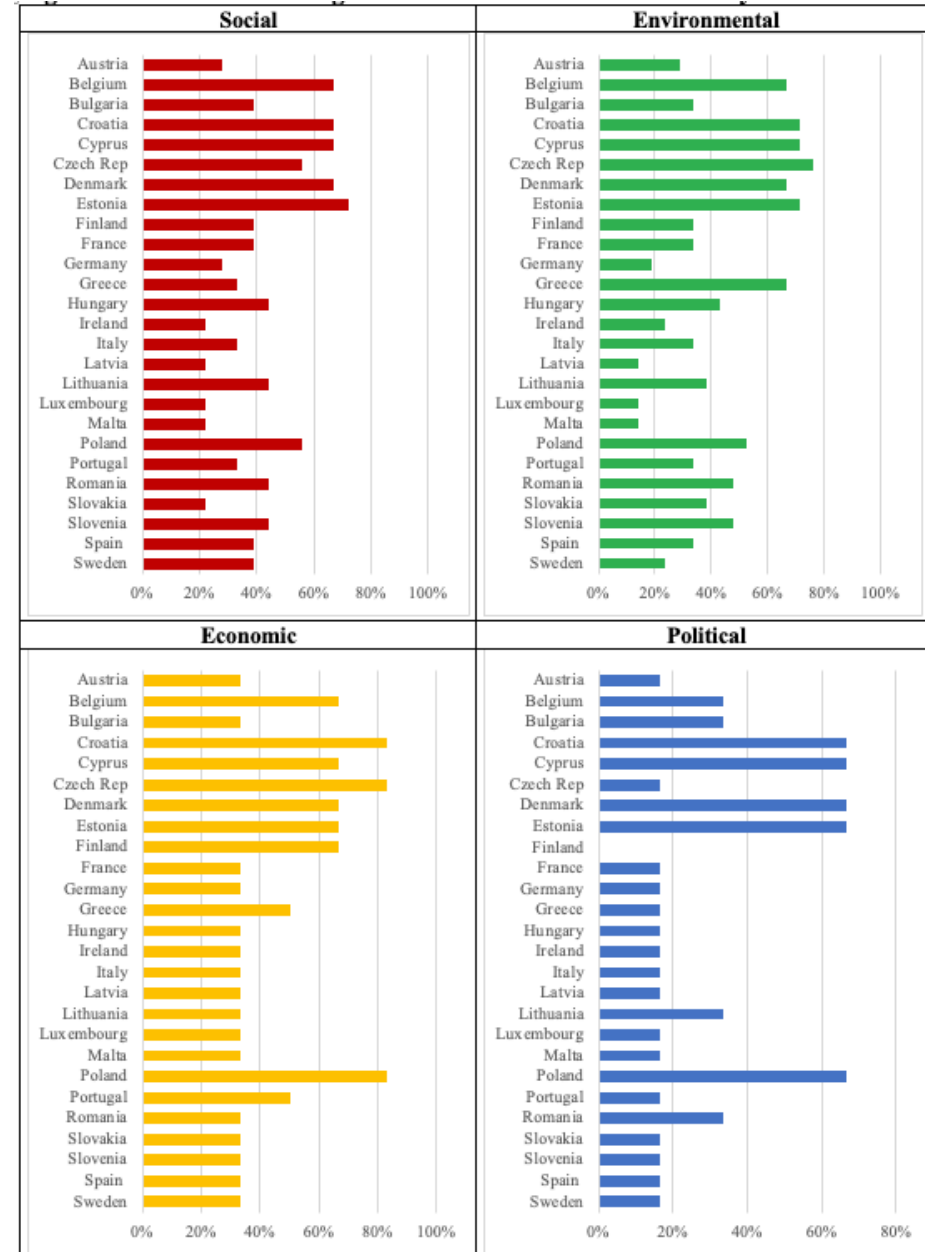


Source: reproduced from *Sustainable development in the European Union - Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context - 2022 Edition*, May 2022, p.10

# *Integration of SDGs: key study findings, national level*

- Overall, there is a lack of integration of the SDGs into the 26 NRRPs analysed;
- The SDGs do not seem to be perceived in the NRRPs as a coherent framework for sustainable recovery at the national level;
- The majority of Member States merely mention the SDGs implicitly with very few Member States explicitly and clearly linking NRRP components to the SDGs;
- The overall level of integration is rather low, with the highest score reached in the economic SDGs (but below 50%) and the lowest in the two political SDGs (28%), showing little interest in the NRRPs to improve the role and the functioning of LRAs and foster cooperation and coordination across different levels of government;
- The use of SDG indicators in the NRRPs is limited to very few Member States, and for only a few SDGs, limiting both comparability between the plans as well as effective monitoring of their contribution to progress towards the SDGs.

The level of integration of the SDGs in the NRRPs by cluster



## *Integration of SDGs: key lessons from LRAs*

Five case studies analysed:

- Flanders and Ghent municipality (Belgium),
- Tallin (Estonia),
- Region Provence Alpes Cote d'Azur (France),
- Baden Wurttemberg and Stuttgart and Mannheim municipalities (Germany),
- Azores (Portugal).



- **Setting-up clear objectives and targets and a strategy based on a long-term policy vision;**
- **Actively involving stakeholders;**
- **Adopting an effective bottom-up approach;**
- **Establishing an efficient governance structure;**
- **Developing a dedicated budget;**
- **Setting-up a well-structured monitoring system;**
- **Aligning local, national and regional strategies.**

Moreover, **several measures in the five NRRPs could support and finance** the implementation of projects and interventions at local level in line with the **local SDG strategies.**

## *Recommendations*

- The EC should continue to **improve integration of the SDGs in the European Semester** and develop a **structured SDG implementation strategy**
- A **stronger alignment between the EU's governance systems** in economic, social and environmental matters
- **Better LRAs inclusion in the Semester governance**
- Establishing a body for **structured stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the SDGs**
- The EC should consider **extending the SDGs beyond the cohesion policy funds**
- The **monitoring system needs to be reinforced**
- Member States are called on to **adopt SDG indicators to monitor the implementation of the NRRPs**
- Member States need to **actively involve LRAs in the implementation phases of the NRRPs**
- The EC and CoR could organise a **joint forum on the implementation of the RRF** to monitor the involvement of LRAs within the NRRPs
- Introduce an **EU sustainability award** to stimulate LRAs to adopt and implement SDG strategies
- LRAs should **use the SDG framework** as an explicit and formal reference **for budget procedures**
- LRAs should establish **knowledge partnerships and collaboration** with the scientific community, civil society and private sector
- **Direct incentives for financial and technical support** for LRAs should be set-up (at EU and national level)