

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR A

DEMOCRATIC

SOCIAL **EUROPEAN SEMESTER**

SUSTAINABLE

Introducing Europe 2020 and the European Semester

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Enabling civil society to participate in the shaping of EU policies and to contribute to progress on the Targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy concerns us all!

What this presentation will tell you:

- **Introduction – the policy framework**
 - **What is Europe 2020?**
- **What is the Stability and Growth Pact?**
 - **What is the European Semester?**
 - **Why is it important to get involved?**
 - **What will the Toolkit tell you?**
 - **Questions?**

Introduction – the policy framework



There are two main parallel processes guiding the European Union's development at this point in time:

**The Europe 2020
Strategy**

**The Stability & Growth
Pact**



Both processes are coordinated in a framework called the
European Semester.

This presentation will give you a quick introduction to both processes, as well as their coordinating framework.

What is Europe 2020?



The EU's Strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth (2010-2020). Replacement of the Lisbon Strategy. Sets a development vision for the decade.

- 5 headline targets:
 - **EMPLOYMENT:** 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed
 - **POVERTY:** at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion
 - **EDUCATION:** Reducing early school leaving below 10%; at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education
 - **CLIMATE:** greenhouse gas emissions 20%; 20% of energy from renewables; 20% increase in energy efficiency
 - **R & D:** 3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in R&D
- + legal obligation (enshrined in the Treaty) to mainstream **EQUALITY, INCLUDING GENDER EQUALITY**, in all policies.

What is the Stability and Growth Pact?



Unified framework for the coordination of fiscal and macroeconomic policies in the European Union

- **Macroeconomic and Fiscal** surveillance – preventative arm & corrective arm.
- **Objectives:** the general government deficit must not exceed 3% of GDP, public debt must not exceed 60% of GDP + long-term sustainability of public finances
- **National budgets** for countries in the Eurozone need to be approved by the **European Commission**

Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure

- Parallel process, based on a Scoreboard of macroeconomic and (since 2013) social indicators, and “triggers” (when indicators are not met).

What is the European Semester? (I)



The main coordination tool and process for *thematic surveillance* (Europe 2020 targets) and *macroeconomic / fiscal surveillance* (Stability and Growth Pact).

- **Annual Growth Survey:** yearly document, prepared by the European Commission, launching the yearly European Semester; sets out broad EU economic priorities for the year to come and for Europe 2020 – to be taken into account by Member States when preparing national plans.
- **Alert Mechanism Report:** yearly document, prepared by the European Commission in the same time as the AGS, based on the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure.
- **National Reform Programmes / Stability or Convergence Reports** (see next slide for full details).
- **Country Specific Recommendations:** once Member States submit NRPs and SCRs (based on guidance in the AGS and AMR), the European Commission reviews them, and then issues Country-Specific Recommendations (CSR) for each Member State.



What is the European Semester? (II)

- **National Reform Programmes (for Europe 2020)** – Each Member State sets national targets for the 5 objectives, and presents yearly plans on how they will reach them – in **April** of every year. These plans build on AGS priorities and are subsequently assessed by the European Commission, which formulates specific recommendations to each country. **Non-compliance with Commission recommendations, or failure to achieve the targets, does not entail sanctions, only political pressure.**
- **Stability / Convergence Reports (for the Stability and Growth Pact)** - Each Member State sets a national medium-term objective. Member States of the Eurozone each submit a Stability Programme; non-Eurozone Member States each submit a Convergence Programme – in the same time as the NRP (**April**). Plans describe how the country plans on ensuring the objectives, building on AGS priorities and are subsequently assessed by the European Commission, which formulates specific recommendations to each country. **Non-compliance with Commission recommendations, or failure to achieve the targets, entail sanctions, such as the loss of EU funds.**

What is the European Semester – at a glance



WHEN?	EUROPE 2020 (thematic surveillance)	STABILITY AND GROWTH PACT & MACROECONOMIC IMBALANCES PROCEDURE (macroeconomic & fiscal surveillance)
November	Annual Growth Survey (EC)	
		Alert Mechanism Report (EC)
April	National Reform Programmes (MS)	Stability / Convergence Report (MS)
June/July	Country Specific Recommendations (EC)	
October		Eurozone budget appraisal

Why is it important to get involved?



- These processes are key – they define a **development framework for the European Union**, setting out a **vision for the future** of Europe and for a **sustainable exit from the crisis**.
- Europe 2020 objectives are **direct drivers for EU funding opportunities** (eg Structural Funds) => it brings clear benefits to national organisations to engage.
- **Economic objectives are prioritized to the detriment of social, equality, and environmental ones**, and also accompanied by binding agreements and sanctions, which the latter objectives do not feature.
- Clear commitments to **structured dialogue with stakeholders**, including civil society, have been made, and they are supposed to be key partners in delivery - **yet this is not happening**.

WE NEED TO BRING BACK SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES ON THE PRIORITY AGENDA, AND STRENGTHEN THE DEMOCRACY AND LEGITIMACY OF THE PROCESS!

What will the Toolkit tell you?



- **Introduction** – Why should we engage with these processes, and what is the Semester Alliance.
- **What is Europe 2020, what is the Stability and Growth Pact, what is the European Semester, what is the Mid-Term Review** – the processes are explained in detail, with hyperlinks to more information.
- **Practical tips for engaging at the national level**, complete with good practices from the Alliance members, as well as timeline and checklist.
- **Key messages for all areas** (macroeconomic, social, employment, environmental, equality, participation), as well as useful quotes from European documents, **and policy hooks**.
- **Useful Annexes (online only): Who to contact** (all the useful contacts you may need at the national and EU level); **Template letter** (how to ask your Government for structured dialogue and meaningful participation); **List of all useful documents** quoted in the text (complete with hyperlinks); **Glossary** (EU jargon and acronyms explained); **Full stakeholder engagement quotes** (from European documents).

Thank you for your attention!



Questions?
Ask them now!

Follow-up Questions?
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