



## 9th Civil Society Forum for Sustainability

### The future of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals alongside the EU strategy for 2024-2029

***Date: 4 - 5 November 2024  
(Brussels)***

More than 70 participants gathered to discuss and to exchange ideas, assess the future of the European Green Deal and discuss the Sustainable Development Goals alongside the EU strategy for 2024 - 2029. During the two days of the Forum, nine thematic civil society workshops were held, where participants heard from a variety of inspiring speakers from academia and civil society, and worked together to develop policy recommendations for the new European Commission and European Parliament.



Alongside the workshops on emerging issues for civil society, a final dialogue was held with civil society organisations to reflect on their ideas at the end of the two days of discussions. The input from civil society organisations was compiled in the final policy brief '**Civil Society's Strategic Role in the 2024-2029 Mandate**'. This policy brief is a collective effort among many CSOs to name a few; Global Action Against Poverty, Educating Girls and Young Women for Development, Counter Balance, European Network of Social Integration Enterprises and Women's UN Report Network. Based on this policy brief, an [op-ed article "Is a fair transition possible in a Europe focused on competitiveness, security, and defence?"](#) was published on the [EUobserver website](#) for further visibility and promotion.



Regarding the gender balance of the ninth forum, 290 participants were registered, of whom 177 identified as female, 106 as male and six as non-binary, while one preferred not to indicate. Furthermore, based on the 18 responses received, the participants found the structure and content of the forum to be appropriate. The responses also indicated that 90% of the participants are interested in attending the CSFs, should the forums continue. This underscores that the continuation of the CSF is not only about bringing CSOs together into dialogue, but represents a commitment to advance on inclusive, democratic, and effective policymaking processes.

## Civil Society Forum for Sustainability - Shaping the European Green Deal

### Civil Society's Strategic Role in the 2024-2029 Mandate

4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> of November

Elzenhof, Av. de la Couronne 12, 1050 Ixelles, Brussels

SOLIDAR, SDG Watch Europe and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) are excited to invite you to the next in-person edition of the Civil Society Forum for Sustainability. *The Civil Society Forum for Sustainability – Shaping the European Green Deal* is co-organised by SOLIDAR, SDG Watch Europe, the EEB and consortium partners within the framework of the [REAL DEAL](#) project. The Real Deal is a Horizon 2020 funded research project focused on reshaping citizens' and stakeholders' participation and deliberative democracy in the framework of the European Green Deal (EGD).

The **ninth edition of the Civil Society Forum** will serve as a strategic gathering and meeting, providing a crucial space for civil society organisations and participants to exchange ideas, assess the future of the European Green Deal (EGD) and discuss the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) alongside the EU strategy for 2024-2029. As Europe strives to become climate neutral by 2050, this forum will bring together civil society representatives and distinguished guest speakers to engage participants in thought-provoking discussions on the future of the EGD and its global dimensions.

The Civil Society Forum presents an opportunity to engage in inclusive dialogues, foster networks and collaborations with civil society organisations and experts, and actively contribute to holding the EU and its Member States accountable for sustainability commitments.

#### Thematic Workshops:

Throughout the Forum, participants will have the opportunity to participate in a series of innovative and engaging workshops led by civil society representatives. These workshops are designed to facilitate provocative discussions and allow participants to share their experiences and learn from each other.

The workshops will cover a range of critical topics, including but not limited to:

- *The future of deliberative democracy and public participation under the new Commission*
- *Civil society mobilisation on economic justice in 2025*
- *Development finance & debt*
- *Gender, ecofeminism, health and the European Green Deal*
- *A wellbeing economy: from ideas into transformative actions*
- *De-colonisation of de-carbonisation*
- *Strengthening citizens' participation in the EU's energy transition*
- *Equality and poverty from EU and global perspectives*
- *Intergenerational justice for the green transition*

As the new mandate and the priorities of the European Commission and Parliament (2024-2029) are being set, this forum provides an invaluable opportunity for participants to shape civil society's strategic outcomes for the 2024-2029 mandate. By participating in these discussions, you can help bring critical issues to the attention of policymakers, CSOs and the wider public in Europe and beyond.

The 9th edition of the Civil Society Forum for Sustainability aims to create a dynamic environment where people, CSOs, and experts can come together to strategise, share insights, and build pathways towards a sustainable and inclusive future. The programme is structured to provide a balanced mix of high-level discussions, thematic workshops, and opportunities for networking and collaboration.

The results of the discussions are geared towards injecting fresh momentum into the strategic advocacy actions of the network as the 2024-2029 mandate gets underway, with the results collectively compiled in a document summarising the contributions of the Forum.



## Programme

Day 1: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024

<i>Civil Society's Strategic Role in the 2024-2029 Mandate</i>	
Time	Agenda Item
09.00-12.00	<b>SDG Watch Europe AGA</b> Earth Room, EEB Office, Rue des Deux Eglises 14-16, Brussels
12.00 – 13.00	<b>Lunch</b>
13.00-13.30	<b>Registration and welcome coffee</b> Elzenhof, Av. de la Couronne 12, 1050 Ixelles, Brussels
13:30-15:15	<b>Opening remarks: SOLIDAR &amp; EEB</b> <b>Interventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Summit of the Future – where is the global agenda at?</li> <li>• New EU leadership – European priorities post 2024 elections</li> <li>• Initial discussion on the state of play and possible strategic interventions for civil society in shaping the future of the European Green Deal and the implementation of the Agenda 2030</li> <li>• <b>Speakers: Patrizia Heidegger, EEB, Mikael Leyi, SOLIDAR, Ingo Ritz, GCAP</b></li> <li>• <b>Moderator: Hanna Gunnarsson, WECF</b></li> </ul>
15.15-15:30	<b>Break</b>
15.30-17.00	<b>Parallel workshop sessions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender health rights and the EGD</li> <li>• Equality and poverty from EU and global perspectives</li> <li>• A Wellbeing Economy: From ideas into transformative actions</li> </ul>
18.00	<b>Informal networking or social event</b> Rethinking European Homes Exhibition, STAM Europa, Rue d'Arlon 104, Brussels

Day 2: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024, Elzenhof, Av. de la Couronne 12, 1050 Ixelles, Brussels

<i>Civil society's Strategic Role in the 2024-2029 Mandate</i>	
Time	Programme
09.00 – 09.45	<b>Welcome coffee, opening words and welcome by organisers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Global Citizenship Education: Rilli Lappalainen, Bridge 47</b></li> </ul>
09.45 – 11:15	<b>Parallel workshop sessions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De-colonisation of decarbonisation</li> <li>• Civil society mobilisation on economic justice in 2025</li> <li>• Intergenerational justice for the green transition</li> </ul>
11.15 – 11.30	<b>Break</b>
11.30 – 13:00	<b>Parallel workshop sessions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future of deliberative democracy</li> <li>• Development finance &amp; debt</li> <li>• Strengthening citizens' participation in the EU's energy transition</li> </ul>
13:00 – 14.30	<b>Networking lunch</b>
14.30 - 16.00	<b>Plenary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic interventions emerging and short reports from rapporteurs of the workshops</li> </ul>
16.00 - 16.15	<b>Break</b>
16.15 - 17.00	<b>Conclusions and closure</b>





## Concept notes of the workshops

### Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November – Workshops

#### 1. Gender, ecofeminism, health and the European Green Deal

Organised by Women's UN Report Network (WUNRN)

*Women's healthcare requires much more attention in the post-COVID era, particularly following the Roe vs. Wade reversal. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1-5 are hindered by gender inequality, and almost all SDGs require gender balance to stay on track. A UNFPA report indicates that since 2016, there has been no progress in women's health, particularly reproductive health, due to deep-rooted inequalities related to poverty, disability, race, and lack of access. Critical issues like FGM, child marriage, and gender-based violence are worsening due to legislative gaps, financial cuts, and polarized views. Additionally, climate change, conflict, and displacement have decreased women's access to healthcare. This interactive workshop will explore enhancing policy through discourse, process, and practice, examining how gender health is shaped by narratives and creating inclusive, intersectional policies that involve all sections of society in reaching the SDGs.*

#### 2. Workshop on equality and poverty from EU and global perspectives

Organised by SOLIDAR

*Social protection is essential in combating poverty and inequality and plays a crucial role in supporting climate action and a just transition. The ITUC proposes a New Social Contract to ensure universal social protection, decent jobs with living wages, and accountability in business operations, which would help mitigate climate change's negative impacts. In Europe, while social protection is central to the European social model, many marginalised groups still face barriers to accessing adequate wages, pensions, and social security. The 2023 High-Level Group report on social protection outlined 21 recommendations to strengthen these systems in response to challenges like demographic shifts, technological advancements, and the green transition, aiming to better protect societies within and beyond the EU. This workshop will try to highlight both the European and the Global perspectives on the importance of ensuring universal social protection, to manage the transition to more green and sustainable economies, while guaranteeing social justice and inclusion for all.*

#### 3. A Wellbeing Economy: From ideas into transformative actions

Organised by Nyt Europa

*In this interactive workshop, participants will discuss how to translate Wellbeing Economy principles into advocacy strategies, identifying challenges and opportunities for collaboration. The aim is to generate concrete recommendations for advancing a sustainable transition based on the Wellbeing Economy framework. A Wellbeing Economy prioritises human and planetary wellbeing in economic decision-making, offering a path to a green and just transition that leaves no one behind. It connects sustainability challenges with economic structures, providing civil society opportunities to collaborate on the European Green Deal (EGD), SDGs, and the Green and Just Transition.*

## Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November – Workshops

### 1. De-colonisation and de-carbonisation

Organised by EEB & CAN Europe

*Countries in the Global South have historically contributed very little to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Still today, Africa, contributes only about 3-4% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually, despite being home to around 17% of the global population. While more than half of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to electricity today, high-emitting countries and regions, including the EU, are looking at Africa as a potential provider for renewable energy, in particular solar energy and green hydrogen. While hailed by some as Africa's opportunity to industrialise, the continent may also stay locked in as a cheap supplier of resources to the Global North, while Africans and African businesses do not have sufficient access to affordable green energy. The decarbonisation of Europe risks continuing past and current power imbalances. The workshop will explore how we can decolonialise decarbonisation in the EU and be true partners to countries in the Global South in their effort to develop sustainably.*

### 2. Civil society mobilisation on economic justice in 2025

Organised by Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)

*This workshop will focus on plans for public mobilisation in 2025 to advocate for economic justice amid the worst-ever global debt crisis, which has led to massive cuts in social spending and hindered investments in climate action. Many countries are spending more on debt servicing than on health and education, while the International Financial Architecture continues to protect lenders' interests and reinforce austerity measures. With several key summits in 2025, including the Financing for Development 4 Conference in Spain, the World Social Summit in Qatar, COP30 in Brazil, and the G20 Summit in South Africa, there is a significant opportunity to campaign for reforms in debt and tax justice, and to push for fair governance to finance climate and social spending. The workshop will explore how these plans can be implemented across different European countries, gathering input from participants on effective mobilisation strategies and identifying the support needed from European networks.*

### 3. Intergenerational justice for the green transition

Organised by FOND Romania & ENSIE

*The objective of this workshop is to explore the push and pull factors related to youth and just transition communities, through interaction and non-formal education methods. One of the major challenges of the former coal-dependent communities, for example, in countries such as Romania, is their youth leaving to more attractive cities for studies and a steady job. Although on paper there are various strategies meant to lead these communities to (more) sustainable development, in practice the young people need coherent public policies to keep them connected to their communities. Participants will brainstorm constructive conclusions on how to ensure intergenerational justice for Just Transition in order to lead to possible future collaborations.*

#### 4. **The future of deliberative democracy and public participation under the new Commission** Organised by European Environmental Bureau (EEB) & European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)

*The Civil Society Forum in June focused on the future of **citizen deliberation** and the **European Green Deal**, with discussions held across five learning spaces: social Justice, environmental, global, economic, and participatory dimensions. Key recommendations from the forum emphasized the need for policy coherence for sustainable development, ensuring alignment across EU laws, trade agreements, and big tech regulations, as well as a framework for redistributing resources to green sectors and funding for civil society organisations. On a global scale, the EU should lead by allocating funds for the 2030 Agenda and ensuring transparency in trade agreements with the involvement of CSOs. The participatory dimension focused on establishing clear accountability mechanisms for addressing the needs of marginalized groups, as well as promoting inclusive participation of vulnerable communities in the green transition, with structured dialogue between policymakers and CSOs. This workshop will focus on how a democratic society looks like in the future of participatory democracy and which role could civil society organisations have in their relations with the European Commission.*

#### 5. **Development finance and debt** Organised by Counter Balance

*Launched in 2021, the Global Gateway aims to make use of funds intended for international development to bolster European businesses and the EU's global standing through strategic investments – a plan reaffirmed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's proposal for a 'new economic foreign policy' in the Political Guidelines and in Mario Draghi's call to further upgrade the Global Gateway. The workshop will discuss the findings of recent research on the Global Gateway with civil society representatives and examine the future of EU international development cooperation.*

#### 6. **Strengthening participation in the EU's energy transition** Organised by Green European Foundation & Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union

*Europe's transition to a fully renewable energy system promises not only to combat the climate crisis but also to decentralise and democratise electricity supply while creating local jobs. However, the recent fossil gas price crisis has fuelled inflation and energy poverty, raising questions about how citizens can benefit more from the EU's energy transition and how costs and benefits can be fairly allocated. In this workshop, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union and the Green European Foundation will develop and discuss with participants concrete proposals for strengthening participation in the EU's energy transition. The content of this workshop builds on discussions between a group of over 30 energy and social policy experts from very diverse backgrounds as part of our Knowledge Community. The group has just developed a series of briefs with recommendations on fair participation in the energy transition for the EU's new policy cycle. The workshop participants will be encouraged to discuss and challenge these recommendations.*