



Press release

First European-wide Sustainable Development Week

The ESDW is a **European-wide initiative** aiming at stimulating and increasing the visibility of activities, projects and events that **promote sustainable development**.

Andrä Rupprechter, Austrian Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management: ‘For several years, the French, German and Austrian national Sustainable Development Weeks have been raising awareness, participation and multi-stakeholder engagement for sustainable solutions at a local level. I am very pleased that these efforts, building on the mechanisms of the European Sustainable Development Network, will now expand all over Europe. The European Sustainable Development Week ensures that European citizens can take an active part in shaping the concept of sustainability in a bottom up approach. I am delighted that so many projects can be regarded as Best-Practice models and contribute to our common, sustainable future.’

The ESDW builds upon existing national sustainable development weeks and acts as an umbrella for new European wide projects. Public authorities, individual citizens, businesses, educational institutions, museums, foundations, civil society organizations, etc. can register their projects. All the activities and events will be displayed on the **ESDW website** (www.esdw.eu), in order to give organizers of innovative activities the opportunity to promote their initiatives.

Currently, **more than 1500 initiatives in 18 countries** have been registered as part of the ESDW. The contributions range from the creation of the first ‘Ecological resilient community’ in Croatia on the island Brac, ‘Food Waste Workshops’ in Austria, ‘Repair Cafes’ in the Netherlands and Belgium or a ‘Rural Development Parliament’ in Latvia and many more.

Activities include exhibitions, markets, film screenings, community activities, sustainable business initiatives and education projects.

Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission

‘As the First Vice-President responsible for sustainable development, I would like to express the Commission's full support for this first European Sustainable Development Week.

The Commission's key policies to boost growth, jobs and investment can only be successful when we take a sustainable approach to tackling our economic, social and environmental challenges. We must develop policies in an integrated way, taking into account also the global dimension. Increasing the competitiveness and resilience of European economies means turning away from our dependence on finite resources and moving towards renewable energies and reparable or recyclable products. Our investment policies must support a further modernisation of European society by accelerating the transition to a low carbon economy and a more sustainable consumption of natural resources in a circular economy. This will be good for our health and our wealth.

Let this sustainable development week be the first of many in which we all work together in Europe to turn our ambitious agenda into reality.'

Lutz Ribbe, President of the Sustainable Development Observatory of the European Economic and Social Committee: 'Sustainable development is a challenge which needs not only the commitment of political actors, but requires also a very strong and active role for civil society at all levels, including businesses, trade unions, farmers, consumers and NGOs. As the representation of civil society organisations at the European Union we fully support the initiative for a European Sustainable Development Week. All around Europe local communities, citizens and businesses as well as non-profit organisations have developed excellent innovative projects. The European Sustainable Development Week will give these champions more visibility, connect them in networks and encourage them to go ahead'

The **registration** for projects **is still open**. For **more information**, check out the ESDW website (www.esdw.eu), and find us on Twitter (@ESDW_2015) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanSustainableDevelopmentWeek>).