

COMPANIES OF THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT ACROSS EUROPE MAKE TANGIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS BUT STILL LACK OPERATIONAL ACTIONS TO ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

RELEASE OF THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2030 AGENDA

New-York, 25 September 2026 – On the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly, UN Global Compact Networks Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and Türkiye are releasing the second edition of the European Private Sector SDGs Stocktake. Drawing on 136 data points from 5,793 UN Global Compact participant companies across 21 European countries, the study makes it possible, for the first time, to estimate the private sector's level of contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. The overall average contribution score of 58.2 out of 100 suggests a positive level of contribution to sustainable development, with room for improvement on specific issues.

KEY FINDINGS

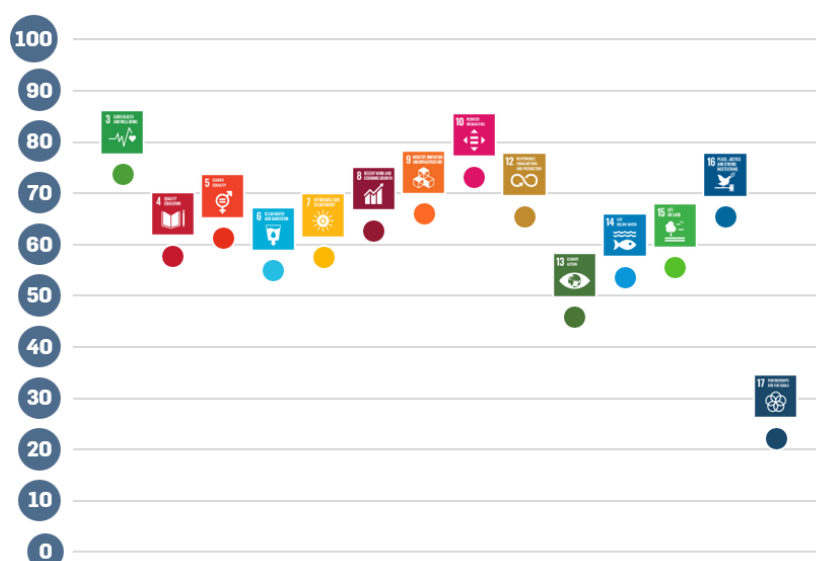
■ **European UN Global Compact participant companies make a tangible contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, with an overall average contribution score of 58.2 out of 100.**

For each analysed SDG target, a contribution score from 0 to 100 was calculated using a set of indicators, with 0 meaning no contribution at all and 100 the highest possible level of contribution. The scores reveal that while differences between countries are relatively small, the level of contribution remains uneven across the Goals. SDG 3 on health records the highest contribution score (73.6).

■ **Companies' contribution is higher on SDGs related to social issues than the ones related to the environment. Anti-corruption is well integrated by UNGC companies in Europe.**

This difference may reflect longer-standing regulations in Europe on social issues, as well as a greater number of operational indicators for measuring environment-related SDGs, which require a higher level of maturity in terms of sustainability.

SDGS CONTRIBUTION SCORES OF EUROPEAN UNGC COMPANIES



PRESS RELEASE

■ European industrial participant companies tend to embed environmental practices more deeply.

Overall, contribution to climate change (SDG 13) remains moderate among European participant companies, with an average score of 45.8. Only 28.1% of responding companies have developed a climate adaptation plan. The indicators show that industrial companies tend to contribute more to SDG 13 on climate and SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production than service-sector companies, suggesting that more direct exposure creates a stronger incentive to act.

■ The contribution scores by country show a degree of homogeneity in Europe.

The highest overall contribution scores have been calculated for companies from Greece (67.3), Türkiye (63.9) and Italy (62.8), as opposed to lower scores in Poland and Denmark (51.7) and Switzerland & Liechtenstein (54.6). Most countries fall within ± 2.9 points around the European average overall score. This suggests that companies in Europe now operate within broadly shared sustainability frameworks, with similar levels of regulations and expectations.

■ Most companies have now taken policy commitments and implemented internal prevention measures, but it remains difficult for most to translate these commitments into operational actions.

This is particularly the case for SMEs, which account for 56% of the responding companies. Employee training on sustainability also remains an area where progress is needed, given that its wide-scale adoption is essential to the implementation of the SDGs.

■ The efficiency of sustainability actions is still not systematically measured for all areas.

Among the companies that have implemented sustainability measures related to social issues, only half have measured their progress. This is however significantly more common for measures related to the environment, despite 20% of companies still not tracking their efficiency. Sustainability training (SDG 4) also leaves room for improvement as less than 40% of companies offer such training to their employees on social and environmental issues.

■ Multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships show room for improvement among European companies participating in the UN Global Compact.

This is shown by a low contribution score on SDG 17 (22.1), and can be explained by the voluntary nature of such partnerships. Public-private partnerships present a real opportunity for further progress and to drive a measurable impact in all sustainable development areas, notably in technological progress and financing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the European Global Compact Country Networks that contributed to this study issue four recommendations to the European private sector:

- **Increase progress measurement in all sustainability areas**, to efficiently measure impact and ensure alignment with Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Adaptation to climate change should become a priority for all sectors in Europe**, to ensure the long-term viability of business models.
- **Engage in more multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships**, such as cross-sector alliances, multi-stakeholder cooperation on innovative sustainable projects, or public-private finance mechanisms for supporting sustainable development.
- **Increase sustainability training opportunities for all employees and suppliers**, to ensure that sustainable impact can be positively delivered through the entire value chain.

PRESS RELEASE

The UN Global Compact and its Country Networks in Europe continue to carry out their mandate by supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by companies of all sizes and operating in all business sectors, through a comprehensive value proposition, tailored to all levels of sustainability maturity.

METHODOLOGY

The study was built from the 2025 Communication on Progress (CoP) of 5,793 UN Global Compact participant companies in Europe, using 136 data points.

The study covers 21 European countries where the UN Global Compact has a Country Network: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland & Liechtenstein*, Türkiye and the United Kingdom. As sample sizes vary across countries, margins of error have been indicated on the publication.

**Both countries belong to the same UN Global Compact Country Network.*

The CoP indicators were mapped to the SDG targets, drawing on the work of the Global Reporting Initiative as a starting point. The CoP questionnaire does not provide indicators enabling companies' contribution to SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 2 on zero hunger and SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities to be measured. These three Goals were therefore removed from the scope of the study. For the remaining 14 Goals, the CoP data allow contribution to be measured on at least one target.

To calculate the contribution score for each target and each Goal, the CoP indicators were weighted and aggregated. A contribution score ranges from 0 to 100, where 0 is the lowest and 100 the highest.

The calculated score reflects the level of contribution to the SDGs by European UN Global Compact participant companies, not the extent to which those companies have achieved the Goals.

ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

As a special initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, the **UN Global Compact** is a call to companies worldwide to align their operations and strategies with Ten Principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Our vision is clear: to mobilize business to transform sustainability ambition into action at the scale the world demands. With more than 25,000 participants and a presence in over 100 countries through 5 Regional Hubs and more than 70 Country Networks and expansion territories, the UN Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative.

For more information, follow @globalcompact on social media and visit our website at unglobalcompact.org.

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