

**‘SDGs - a historic opportunity, but all levels, including local communities,  
must be empowered to make a difference...’**

ECOLISE, a European association of 34 NGOs<sup>1</sup> operating in 25 countries in Europe, acting on climate change and sustainable development, welcomes the SDGs but underlines the need for these to be translated into legally-binding targets with appropriate financing instruments and an agreed monitoring process.

ECOLISE calls on the EU and its Member States to take a lead in turning these principles and actions into truly binding targets, as is hoped will happen at Paris on Climate change. If this happens, then a genuinely transformative process could be engaged. This needs political will and leadership, it needs institutional structures mandated to oversee the process and call governments to account for non-performance, and it needs substantial funds to drive the process over the forthcoming 15 years.

ECOLISE believes that the real drivers of this change process have to be local communities, which have demonstrated in projects and programmes across Europe how genuine sustainability can be achieved. Local communities have to be involved at every stage of the development process, from conception, to implementation to evaluation, in a transparent, participatory way. It is they that have the creative energy, innovation, and interest in developing systems and technologies that work for them.

ECOLISE understands, however, that as with all intergovernmental agreements, the success or lack of it will be due to the political support governments give to implementation. Here a key role for social movements will be to continually remind governments of their commitments. These governments will change a number of times in the next 15 years and succeeding governments must be educated and reminded of what has been signed up to.

Commenting on the culmination of the SDG process, ECOLISE President Claudián Dobos said: ‘Whilst we wholeheartedly welcome the efforts of the UN Secretary General and others to achieve global goals and actions on sustainable development, experience has shown that without legally binding rules it may be too little, too late – and risk becoming empty rhetoric. We hope the EU and its Member States can take a lead in making SDGs truly transformative, empowering local communities to drive the process. ECOLISE, and its constituent organisations, have, over decades, developed hundreds of concrete examples of sustainability and resilience working in practice to end poverty, reduce inequality, tackle climate change and end environmental degradation. We are ready to share our experiences and work in partnership with governments, local authorities, the business sector, civil society and all other stakeholders to make the SDGs work, for the future of Europe, the planet and future generations.’

More information on the SDGs:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>

More information on ECOLISE: <http://www.ecolise.eu>

Contact: [info@ecolise.eu](mailto:info@ecolise.eu)

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ecolise.eu/?page\\_id=169](http://www.ecolise.eu/?page_id=169)