

# National Councils for Sustainable Development – an appropriate tool of common use?

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**Abstract:** In terms of current issues of sustainable development, the European Union (EU) recently promoted the importance of National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCS) as an operative and effective tool for the implementation of sustainable development (SD). Since they can provide independent advice and foster dialogue with civil society and stakeholders on SD, NCS seem to be an appropriate tool at the governmental level. However, an overview of NCS throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) gives a very diverse picture. The NCS differ considerably in their definition, composition, independence and resources, as well as in the impact of their work. Taking into consideration positive experiences with effective NCS in some Member States, the following questions can be raised: What characteristics should NCS have? Also, is there a common use of NCS in CEE? For this purpose, this paper analyses the NCS in several CEE countries and subsequently aims at outlining the similarities and differences between particular NCS, including their extent and approach, in order to explain variation in their national performance. The EU recommends a set of features that NCS should possess in order to operate as an effective tool for governments to implement SD.

*Keywords:* Sustainable development, national councils for sustainable development, Central and Eastern Europe, stakeholder involvement

## 1. Introduction

The renewed European Union Strategy on Sustainable Development (2006: 29) declares that: "Member States should consider strengthening, or where they do not yet exist, setting up multi-stakeholder national advisory councils on sustainable development to stimulate informed debate, assist in the preparation of National Sustainable Development Strategies and/or contribute to national and EU progress reviews. National sustainable development councils are meant to

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increase the involvement of civil society in sustainable development matters and contribute to better linking different policies and policy levels, also by using their network of European Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC).”

Moreover, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) recently promoted the importance of National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSD) as an operative and effective tool for the implementation of sustainable development (SD). These NCSD organizations were created in many countries as a response to the Rio Earth Summit Meeting in 1992 and as a support mechanism for the implementation of Agenda 21, which has been seen as an action plan for achieving sustainable development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ (Boyer, 2000: 157).

In April 2007, the EESC decided to draw up a statement on the Role of NCSD (EESC, 2007). Therefore, the Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, which was responsible for preparing the committee's work on this subject, adopted an self-initiated opinion on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November, 2007. The four main tasks of NCSD are identified therein (EESC, 2007: 3):

1. Assist government bodies drafting sustainable development (SD) strategies and issue reports on specific policies;
2. Monitor the progress in implementing SD strategies;
3. Consult with civil society by including civil society representatives as council members and foster dialogue between civil society and government;
4. Encourage dialogue and debates on SD by interacting with other NCSD.

However, an overview of NCSD throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) gives a very diverse picture on these tasks. The NCSD differ considerably in their definition, composition, independence and resources, as well as in the impact of their work. Therefore, this paper analyses NCSD in CEE and subsequently aims at outlining the similarities and differences of particular NCSD, including their extent and approach, in order to explain variation in their national performance.

Based upon the four main tasks of NCSD identified above, the following four features can be derived, characterizing NCSD as an effective tool for governments to implement SD (EESC, 2007):

1. Composition: NCSD should include representatives from all main sectors of civil society, in order to pool experience;

2. Impact: NCSD should participate in the decision-making process to establish national sustainable development strategies;
3. Monitoring: NCSD should supervise the implementation of national sustainable development strategies;
4. Dialogue: NCSD should interact with other NCSD, *e.g.*, within the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Council (EEAC) network.

The structure of the paper reflects these four features by examining them, as well as assessing their functionality and applicability in the cases of Poland (PL), Romania (RO) and the Czech Republic (CZ) in comparison with Germany (DE), in order to answer the following questions: What characteristics do NCSD in CEE have? Is there a common use of NCSD in CEE?

Based upon its findings and recommendations, the paper will contribute to the ongoing discussion about common tools for the effective implementation of sustainable development in Europe.

## **2. Foundation and Composition of NCSD**

Most NCSD were established as a response to the Rio Declaration (1992) and on the recommendation of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UN CSD) to establish advisory bodies for the implementation of SD at national level. In this context, in Romania the National Centre for Sustainable Development (Centrul National pentru Dezvoltare Durabila) was established in May 1997 under the aegis of the Romanian Academy, with financial support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), as well as in cooperation with the Black Sea University Foundation as a public utility institution. It eventually became an independent Romanian nongovernmental institution and is now an official advisory body to the Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development.

In the cases of Germany and the Czech Republic, the government coordination bodies in terms of SD are called "councils" and were established by the government in April 2001 and July 2003, respectively.

The Polish government acted similarly in September 2002 by constituting an advisory body to the government on the environment and sustainable development (see Ministry of the

Environment, 2002). However, this body has been inactive since its foundation, as up to the present day the members have only met once. Hence, the analysis of the Polish equivalent to a NCSD has to be conducted - particularly with regard to its composition, remit and working methods - on the basis of the document of establishment as the only proof for its existence (Ministry of the Environment, 2002).

Throughout the European Union, the size and form of NCSD vary considerably. However, two distinct patterns of the composition of NCSD can be identified: embedded vs. independent councils.

In Poland the established body consists of representatives of almost all the ministries, comprising the Minister of the Environment as chairman, the Minister of Infrastructure as Deputy Director, together with various representatives from governmental administration. Additionally, stakeholders from science, business and local governments have been included. In this respect, the Polish case is quite similar to the Hungarian in its composition, with the exception of representatives from the private sector. Such types of NCSD, which are led by the government, are called “embedded councils” (Niestroy, 2007: 16). This “embedded” pattern indicates a great dependence on the government and is more or less a government coordination body with stakeholder involvement. Hence, maintaining a balance between different groups of stakeholders can be problematic.

Considering the fact that in Poland the embedded council is chaired by the Minister of the Environment and at the same time his tasks are carried out by the Ministry of the Environment, the following thesis can be assumed: the ministry on behalf of the Minister of Environment acts in place of the NCSD and is responsible for tasks previously planned for the NCSD.

The German Council for Sustainable Development (Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung, RNE) and the Czech Government Council on Sustainable Development (Rada vlády pro udržitelný rozvoj, RVUR) today consist of 14 and 26 members, respectively, representing environmental, economic and social concerns.

Nowadays, the German RNE is headed by Mr. Volker Hauff, a former Federal Minister for Research and Technology and former Federal Minister of Transport along with the Deputy Chairman Mr. Klaus Töpfer, a former Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety, but includes no member of the current German government. Moreover, the RNE represents society in a limited way, as the members are people in public life: German

politicians, selected from larger stakeholder organisations and/or on the basis of personal qualifications (Niestroy, 2005: 145). They act as individuals on the basis of pluralism of ideas and there is no majority voting, rather the council is based on finding a consensus. Therefore, the RNE can be called an “independent council”, as the government is not directly involved in the composition and rather seen as a ‘critical friend’, with whom a close dialogue is a priority in their work (Niestroy, 2007: 16). Most independent councils comprise representatives of civil society (business, trade unions, NGOs and research institutes) and some others also include representatives from various government departments and/or regional and local governments, as is the case in the Czech Republic.

The Czech NCSD is linked and led by the Prime Minister. Such overlap with the governmental level often aims to provide more stability and to give these kinds of NCSD the opportunity to address SD at a high political level and to keep it constantly on the agenda. According to the present statute of the Czech RVUR, the Prime Minister holds the office of the chairman of the council. The Minister of the Environment acts as an executive vice-chairman and the two vice-chairmen of the NCSD are the Minister of Industry and Trade and the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. The other members are representatives of central and local government authorities, social partners, NGOs, science and business.

Beside these two patterns of NCSD, embedded and independent, a third model can be observed in CEE. As is the case for Bulgaria and Romania, advisory bodies for the implementation of SD at national level are established with the financial and conceptual support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The Romanian equivalent of a NCSD is a nongovernmental body headed by an executive director, Mr. Calin Georgescu. As it will be indicated in the next section, the Romanian National Centre for Sustainable Development acts through approximately 10 staff members and has obtained acceptance, as well as assumed responsibility, through its leadership in the preparation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted by the Romanian government in 1999.

Moreover, it also played an important role in the process of preparing the revised National Sustainable Development Strategy in 2008. This revised strategy is the result of a joint project of the Romanian Government, including the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as the National Centre

for Sustainable Development.<sup>1</sup> This directly leads to the next section, which will evaluate the impact of the work of NCSD.

### 3. Impact of NCSD on the Shaping of Sustainable Development Strategies

Evaluating the impact of the work of NCSD is complex due to their varied range of tasks and composition. Therefore, this paper will rather focus on the examination of the impact on the decision-making process of shaping national sustainable development strategies (NSDS).

The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) played an important role in establishing the NSDS (see Bundesregierung, 2002). One of its main tasks was to provide the government with advice on SD policies in general and to prepare contributions to the German NSDS in particular. For example, it pointed out that in the first drafts of the government aimed at setting up a NSDS there were some key problems in terms of a state-centred, national and rather rigid approach. It recommended a rather more societal ownership, increasing the importance of the international dimension, including the EU, and working with well defined (quantitative) objectives, indicators and timetables (Niestroy, 2005: 141). The progress report of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) was published by the German Government at the end of 2008. During the preparation period, the RNE played an active role and *e.g.* participated in the consultation meeting of the Bundeskanzleramtes in June 2008 (RNE, 2004: 1).

In Germany the leading role in the SD-process has been given to the chancellor, so the NSDS falls under her guidance and competence, as well as having a strong federal perspective. Although the NSDS has to take place at all political levels, it does not contain any measures that interfere with 'Länder' competence. In this context, the government asked the RNE to organise societal dialogue on critical topics with all levels and relevant actors (Niestroy, 2005: 142). Although parliamentarians had been interested in becoming members of the RNE, the NCSD remained independent from party politics (Niestroy, 2005: 140). One of the main results of the RNE can be seen in the raising of public awareness regarding sustainable development in Germany. But so far the impact has been limited to the interested public (Niestroy, 2005: 147).

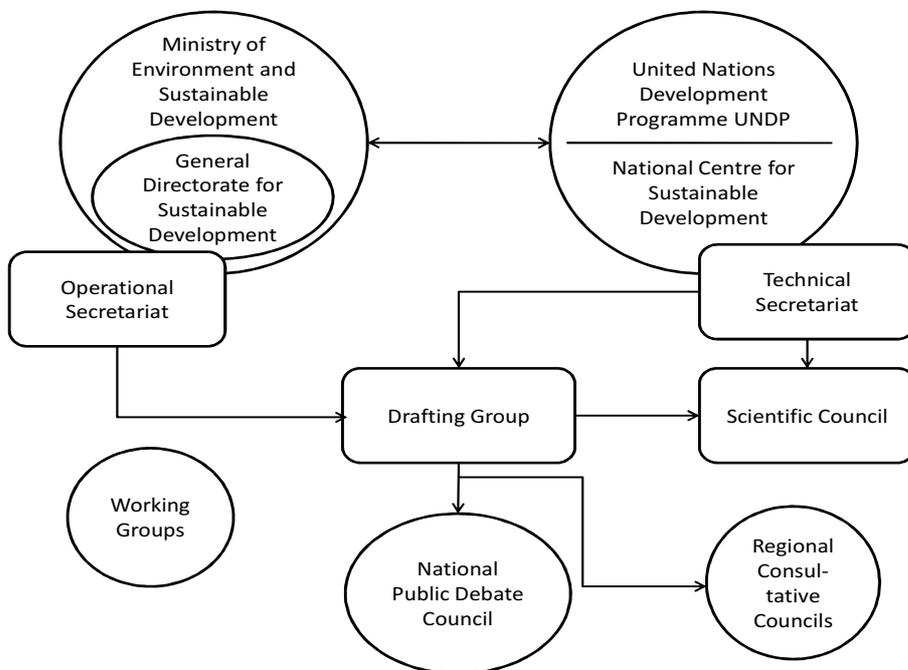
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<sup>1</sup> The revision of the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the joint work of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the National Centre for Sustainable Development were approved by Government Decision HG No. 1216 of 4 October 2007, published in the Official Gazette of Romania No. 737 of 31 October 2007.

The RNE is constantly trying to increase its influence on the political environment. It claims to include state bodies, figures from the sciences, as well as from civil society. In this context, it claims to include the German Bundestag, the Ministerpräsidenten of the Länder, as well as local communities in the consultation process (RNE, 2004: 7).

Taking into consideration these positive experiences with the RNE in Germany, the NCSD in the Czech Republic and Romania have a comparably important impact on the elaboration of their respective National Sustainable Development Strategies.

**Figure 1. The institutional revision process of the Romanian NSDS.**



Source: Fraunhofer MOEZ based on (Government of Romania, 2008: 7-9).

The first Romanian NSDS (Working Group, 1999) was elaborated, finalised and promoted by a working group established by a governmental decision in 1999 with major participation from the National Centre for Sustainable Development, as well as certain members of civil society, under the umbrella of the Romanian Academy supported by UNDP. In 2008, the National Centre for Sustainable Development was involved, together with the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) (Fig. 1) in the revision of the NSDS

following an agreement between UNDP and MESD. The preparation of the revised NSDS is an obligation that Romania has undertaken as an EU-Member State and thus follows the guidelines of the European Sustainable Development Strategy. The new NSDS was established through a process of public debate at national, as well as regional, level. In this context, the National Centre for Sustainable Development acted as a national contact point, in order to facilitate the collection of written comments and contributions from the public.

The Romanian government gave final approval to the National Sustainable Development Strategy Romania 2013-2020-2030 on 12th of November 2008. Also, the Czech Government Council on Sustainable Development (RVUR) has solely coordinated, in accordance with a government resolution, the work on the drafting of the Czech Republic's Strategy for Sustainable Development (see Czech Government Council on Sustainable Development, 2004). It considered the final draft in November 2004 and recommended it to the chairman of the council, the Prime Minister, for presentation to the government for adoption. In its session of December 8, 2004, the Czech government gave final acceptance of the NSDS according to resolution No 1242. Since January 2007 the RVUR has been working on revising the NSDS. The first draft was considered and presented for broad public discussion at the annual Forum on Sustainable Development in May 2007.

Despite these three positive examples, where NCSDS have a strong impact on the decision-making process of shaping NSDS, the Polish SD strategy "Poland 2025" (see Ministry of the Environment, 1999) was in fact elaborated by the Ministry of the Environment.

Regarding the aforementioned founding document (Ministry of the Environment, 2002) of the inactive advisory body, the following objectives should be implemented: examining the compatibility between governmental policies and the principles for sustainable development, as well as carrying out analysis and forwarding proposals for the successful implementation and development of SD and involvement of civil society. As opposed to the other countries examined, in Poland the Ministry of the Environment, particularly the Department of Global Environmental Issues and Climate Change, is the main stakeholder, whose tasks are to design the NSDS and to create regulations to implement and ensure environmental sustainability at national level.

The following conclusion can be drawn from these four case studies: if a NCSDS has a strong mandate, as well as good access to government departments, it is regularly consulted on

policy formation and a large number of the recommendations made by the NCSD will be incorporated into government policies, especially with regard to NSDS. Therefore, it can be assumed, that the composition of NCSD is not crucial to the impact of their work. Purely independent councils (Germany), those linked to the government (the Czech Republic) and nongovernmental institutions acting as NCSD (Romania) can be operative and effective tools for the implementation of sustainable development.

#### **4. Monitoring the Implementation of Sustainable Development through NCSD**

Monitoring is an integral part of the renewed European Union Sustainable Development Strategy and has to be identified as one of the four main tasks of NCSD (European Economic and Social Committee, 2007: 3). Therefore, a set of indicators has been developed by the European Commission, in cooperation with member states, through the Eurostat working group on Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI), in order to evaluate the implementation of SD.

To measure the progress of SD in the fields of economics, the environment and society, in its NSDS the German government defined 21 indicators in accordance with the set of indicators of the Eurostat working group on SDI (Bundesregierung, 2002: 89, 326). These indicators are regularly surveyed by the Federal Office for Statistics. In this context, the German government prepared its first progress report in 2004 (Bundesregierung, 2004) as a form of monitoring the NSDS, including results of the consultation process between the NCSD and the government. Furthermore, the report includes the council's conclusions regarding the discussion 'Sustainability and Society' (see Bundesregierung, 2004; RNE, 2004). Moreover, in 2006 the German RNE published two challenger reports discussing the use of these indicators (cp. Pfister, 2006; Zieschank, 2006).

This kind of indicator-based monitoring report was set up in the Czech Republic as well. The first interim report (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, 2006) on the Czech Republic's strategy for SD, published in 2006, is based on a set of indicators defined by the three pillars of the strategy - economic, environmental and social - and complemented by three additional areas stated in the strategy: R&D and education, the European and international context, together with good governance. Moreover, this interim report explicitly mentions the bodies which are responsible for their monitoring. In contrast to this first report, the Czech

RVUR (2007) published a second progress report on the Czech NSDS in 2007, which is far more detailed and corresponds in its structure exactly with the NSDS from 2004. Each section of this progress report starts with an overall characterisation of the subject area, then reviews the individual indicators and concludes with a summary of indicators and responsible bodies.

Although the Romanian National Centre for Sustainable Development has played an important role in shaping the NSDS, in terms of monitoring its capacities are limited. This is due to the fact that the first Romanian NSDS lacks a set of indicators and measurements (Working Group, 1999), as used in Germany and the Czech Republic, to review and monitor the implementation of sustainable development. To solve this problem, the National Institute of Statistics planned to define a number of indicators based on experience gained in the European Union other European countries. Therefore, the National Institute of Statistics actively participated in the meetings of the Joint Working Group for Sustainable Development (WGSSD), initiated by UNECE, OECD and Eurostat.

In terms of the revised National Sustainable Development Strategy, the strategy itself recommends the institution of two new governmental bodies. First of all, an Interagency Committee for Sustainable Development shall be established at the executive level, under the direct authority of the Prime Minister. This proposed Interagency Committee shall present an annual report on the implementation of the Strategy to the Romanian Parliament, based on the monitoring using the sustainable development indicators that were agreed at EU level and the specific indicators as adapted to Romanian conditions. Moreover, the Interagency Committee shall be designated a focal point in the relations with the European Commission and other EU institutions regarding the implementation of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy at national level.

Secondly, in terms of implementation, monitoring and reporting, a Consultative Council for Sustainable Development at national level, with a permanent secretariat shall be instituted as well. The Consultative Council, set up by a parliamentary decision, shall have complete autonomy from the executive branch of the government, but shall be supported financially from the state budget.

As financial and organizational support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to the Romanian National Centre for Sustainable Development will run out at the end of 2008, it is supposed that the NCSD will be merged with the future Consultative Council. This can

be justified by the fact that this future council shall include representatives of the Romanian scientific and academic community, civil society, persons of recognized authority and relevant competence. Moreover, the Consultative Council shall operate under the aegis of the Romanian Academy as well.

The core mission of this future Consultative Council shall be to monitor the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy and on the basis of this to present an annual report to the Romanian parliament, complementing the report to be presented by the Interagency Committee. This annual report shall contain the council's own evaluation of the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy and recommendations for further action.

Nevertheless, in Poland the Ministry of the Environment, in contrast to the above mentioned NCSD, is accountable for maintaining sustainability as a key national priority, together with elaborating and implementing the NSDS. For this purpose, the Centre for Environmental Protection was established by the ministry in 2005. Furthermore, the Polish NSDS (Ministry of the Environment, 1999), which was set up in 1999, has been suspended and both the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry for Regional Development have been authorised to design a new strategy, which will be better adapted to the challenges facing Poland.

Based on these facts, it is evident that no serious efforts have been made by the Polish NCSD to fulfil its tasks, as given in the Prime Minister's directive from September 2002. Moreover, the Polish NCSD exists only in 'written form'. Instead, the Ministry of the Environment and not the NCSD is the main policy maker announcing and monitoring activities related to sustainability. The ministry drafts environmental laws, coordinates the regulatory framework and adapts appropriate instruments to shape the policy on sustainable development. The reason for such a state of affairs is the lack of the following: a clear mandate with explicitly defined aims and responsibilities, a fixed budget, as well as a long-term vision for the concept of the Polish NCSD.

## **5. Dialogue between NCSD**

As previously mentioned, the European Economic and Social Committee (EECS) encourages the NCSD (2007: 1) to pool experience, exchange best practice and maintain an open

dialogue between councils all over Europe, particularly through the network of European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC). At present around 30 advisory councils for environmental policy and SD participate in the EEAC network, among them Central and Eastern European members, such as the Hungarian National Council on the Environment (OKT) and the Slovenian Council for Environmental Protection (CERPS).

Also, the German Council for SD (RNE) is a member of the EEAC network and has established strong relations at European level; *e.g.*, the REN is represented in the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN), an informal network of public administrators and other experts dealing with SD strategies in Europe. In this context, the REN was asked by the German government to host the 2007 ESDN Conference “European Sustainability Berlin 07” during the German EU Presidency.

The Czech Government Council on Sustainable Development is also represented in the ESDN, as well as being an associate member of the EEAC network. The Romanian National Centre for Sustainable Development does not interact with the EEAC network, but is the official Romanian partner in the UN Council for Sustainable Development and in the UNEP national committee for Romania, as well as having special consultative status with the United Nations Department for Social and Economic Affairs.

However, as the revised National Sustainable Development Strategy has proposed the establishment of two new governmental bodies, the Interagency Committee for Sustainable Development shall ensure the representation of Romania in the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) at executive level in the EU. Secondly, the Romanian Government is seeking membership for the future Consultative Council in the network of the European Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC).<sup>2</sup>

As there is no active NCSO in Poland, the State Environmental Council of Poland (PROS) has represented Poland as an observer in the EEAC network since 2002. The members of PROS are appointed and recalled by the Minister of the Environment and act on behalf of this ministry. Therefore, PROS has an advisory function regarding environmental and sustainable development policies in Poland and pronounces opinions in the field of environmental protection.

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<sup>2</sup> See National Sustainable Development Strategy Romania 2013-2020-2030; pp.141-143. Available at: <http://strategia.ncsd.ro/docs/snnd-v6-en.pdf>. Accessed 12 November 2008.

## 6. Summary and conclusion

National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSD) can be an operative and effective tool for governments to implement sustainable development. In certain cases, these councils have provided independent advice and have fostered dialogue with civil society and stakeholders on sustainability issues. However, an overview of several NCSD throughout the European Union and particularly in Central and Eastern Europe exhibits a very diverse picture. While some states have rather inactive councils, such as Poland (PL), those that are active, such as those in Germany (DE), the Czech Republic (CZ) and Romania (RO), differ considerably in their composition: both embedded councils and various types of independent councils were observed in this study.

Moreover, the analysed NCSD differ greatly in the impact of their work. In some cases NCSD (DE, CZ, RO) have given early and strong input into national sustainable development strategies, while others (PL) have displayed very little involvement, if any at all. The well-established NCSD interact regularly with stakeholders, organise public events and meetings of experts on a regular basis and produce progress reports on the implementation of sustainable development.

The active NCSD (DE, CZ, RO) have shown that they have potential in providing value-adding services to the policy-making processes, in order to implement sustainable development, in spite of their varied composition. Hence, there is no best practice model of NCSD that currently stands out in Central and Eastern Europe.

Following the positive experiences with "strong" NCSD observed in this study, such as in Germany and the Czech Republic, the EESC calls (EESC, 2007: 1) on all member states to strengthen their councils or create operative and effective councils where they do not yet exist. Based upon the results of this paper, the following three recommendations on key political aspects of NCSD can be made: (1) NCSD tend to have more credibility and impact if they include representatives from different sectors of civil society; NCSD can and should make a valuable contribution in the shaping of national sustainable development strategies, as well as in monitoring their implementation; NCSD can strengthen the EEAC network through the exchange of ideas and best practice and for this reason they create a strong European voice for sustainable development.

Even though these recommendations could be implemented on a country-by-country basis, a practical question still remains – will this be enough to make every NCSD in the EU effective enough? Unfortunately, the answer at this current moment is “probably not”. Of course there is certainly much that a country could and should accomplish on its own, but the results will still remain diverse and uncoordinated throughout the EU. As the final recommendation in this paper, it is proposed that the EU Commission and the EESC should act as main drivers for a concerted and effective approach to implementing SD strategies in every EU member state, especially in the new EU states in CEE. In accordance with measures from the EU Commission, it would require every NCSD to fulfil certain essential aspects of ensuring sustainability, including dialogue with civil society and all stakeholders, as well as the creation of effective SD strategies for the future.

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### *Narodowe Rady ds. Zrównoważonego Rozwoju – właściwe narzędzie powszechnego użytku?*

#### *Streszczenie*

W kontekście bieżących kwestii dotyczących zrównoważonego rozwoju, Unia Europejska (UE) podkreśla ostatnio znaczenie Narodowych Rad ds. Zrównoważonego Rozwoju (NRZR; ang.: *National Councils for Sustainable Development – NCSD*) jako skutecznego i efektywnego instrumentu służącego wdrażaniu zrównoważonego rozwoju (ZR). Odkąd mogą one udzielać niezależnych porad i sprzyjać dialogowi pomiędzy społeczeństwem a interesariuszami na temat ZR, NRZR zdają się jawić jako właściwe narzędzie na szczeblu rządowym. Mimo to przegląd ich działalności w krajach Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej daje różnorodny obraz. NRZR znacząco różnią się między sobą pod kątem definicji, składu, stopnia niezależności oraz dostępnych zasobów, jak też efektów działania. Biorąc od uwagę pozytywne doświadczenia związane ze skutecznymi NRZR w niektórych państwach członkowskich, można postawić następujące pytanie: Jakie cechy powinny posiadać NRZR? Czy NRZR są powszechnie wykorzystywane w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej? W tym celu w poniższym artykule przeanalizowano NRZR w kilku państwach Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej poprzez wskazanie podobieństw oraz różnic

pomiędzy poszczególnymi NRZR, włączając w to ich zasięg oraz podejście, aby wyjaśnić rozbieżności w ich osiągnięciach w skali krajowej. UE rekomenduje zestaw cech i właściwości, którymi powinny charakteryzować się NRZR w celu funkcjonowania jako efektywne narzędzie rządowe podczas dążenia do osiągnięcia zrównoważonego rozwoju.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zrównoważony rozwój, narodowe rady ds. zrównoważonego rozwoju, Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia, zaangażowanie interesariuszy.