

Show us your Foresight!

A European perspective



Henriette Gleau
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Who are we?

SGI Europe members are **enterprises and associations providing Services of General Interest (SGIs)** from across Europe both public and private at national, regional and local level whatever their legal ownership status.

Cross-sectoral European Organisation covering energy, transport, housing, water, waste management, telecommunication but also education, hospitals etc.

Wienenergie is our member through the SGI Europe Austrian Section led by Verband der öffentlichen Wirtschaft und Gemeinwirtschaft Österreichs (VÖWG).

Present at the heart of the EU

Along with BusinessEurope and ETUC, SGI Europe is one of the three **European general cross industry social partners**. SGI Europe is an actor in the European social dialogue– negotiating with trade unions – with social partners and representatives of the EU institutions.

Lobbying for public services

SGI Europe, with its general secretariat in Brussels, represents the interests of its members before the European institutions.

We support on a regular basis the European Commission, as well as the European Council and the European Parliament, on any legislative proposal having an impact on Services of General Interest and their place in the Internal Market.

The importance of public services in Europe

SGI Europe also carries out projects promoting the importance of modern public services in Europe.

Whether supported by the European Commission or carried out independently, SGI Europe intends to bring a new light on services of general interest, their modernisation and their central role in citizens' lives.



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The European Foresight Programme

Overview

- **In the European Commission, Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič is in charge of strategic foresight.** Part of Vice-President's mission is to lead the efforts to embed strategic foresight at the heart of EU policymaking. The Secretariat-General and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) lead the implementation of the mandate. The Commission's Strategic Foresight Network aims to ensure long-term policy coordination between all Directorates-General. The Commission is building close foresight cooperation and alliances with other EU institutions, notably in the context of the [European Strategy and Policy Analysis System \(ESPAS\)](#). It also works with international partners, and develops partnerships that draw on Member States' public foresight capabilities through the [EU-wide Foresight Network](#).
- On 8th September 2020, the Commission published its [First Foresight Report 'Charting the course towards a more resilient Europe'](#) discussed the first structural lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis, and explained how foresight can help strengthen Europe's long-term resilience in an era of fundamental and rapid change.
- It did so by analysing the EU's resilience **across four dimensions: social and economic, geopolitical, green and digital.** The report introduced [resilience dashboards](#) that act as monitoring tools for policymakers.
- On 9th September, the [2021 Foresight Report 'The EU's capacity and freedom to act'](#) and it focused on a forward-looking and multidisciplinary perspective on important trends that will affect the EU towards 2050, including: climate change and other challenges, technological transformations, pressure on democracy and values, as well as shifts in the global order and demography. It has also identified 10 areas where the EU can strengthen its capacity and freedom to act.
- Additionally, the EU-wide Foresight Network also established the "[Ministers for the Future](#)", designated by each Member State at the invitation of Vice-President Šefčovič, meet informally at least once a year. This work feeds into EU strategic programming.
- **NEXT:** 2022 Strategic Foresight Report will focus on the Dual challenge of the Green and the Digital Transition.

SGI Europe's position on Foresight and Sustainable Planning

Summary

- SGI Europe has always promoted and focused on the long-term strategy for its members on the EU level, **looking beyond the GDP growth strategy** and place resilience (maintenance, security of supply), sustainability planning (adaptation and mitigation) as well as the social aspects (upskilling and reskilling, training and information for old and young) at the heart of its EU policy making.
- The ongoing work stemming from the Strategic Foresight Report (SFR) comes timely and will play a significant role in **addressing mega-trends such as climate change, COVID-19 crisis and the energy price crisis** and connecting EU policies to build up the resilience needed in the future.
- The **principles of foresight should become a guiding roadmap for EU policymaking**. However, additional efforts will be needed to reach that objective. SGI Europe is committed to raising foresight awareness on the ground, and it expects the same commitment from the EU institutions and Member States.
- The **Resilience Dashboards should become a cornerstone to build Europe's resilience** with a **holistic approach** including social, environmental, and economic dimensions. The Dashboards should be a key instrument, complementing the EU socio-economic framework and the EU Semester, the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, the initiative of the EU Green Deal and bringing to life **the "Beyond GDP" approach** to assess people's wellbeing.
 - **The pandemic has also reignited the debate on the kind of economic growth we pursue, what actually matters for human wellbeing in a world of limited resources, and on the need for new, more accurate, metrics to measure prosperity and well being beyond GDP growth.**

Why SGIs matter across all four dimensions

- SGIs are not only vital to keep everyday infrastructures and daily supply chains functioning, but their added-value lays on the fact that they are indispensable across all the four dimensions.
- For instance, health and education systems (particularly in the most distressed areas) are essential to strengthen the **social-economic** fabric of the EU.
- Water, energy, transport, and waste management utilities, with their infrastructures, represent the backbone of the **green dimension**.
- When it comes to the **digital dimension**, public preparedness and related investments are essential to counter the growing challenge of cyberattacks, upskilling employees for the digital economy and improving performances and services of public (central and local) administrations.
- Lastly, the **geopolitical standing** of the EU is also dependent on the quality of SGIs. Unsurprisingly, Member States at the periphery of Europe (specifically in its south and east) – which have suffered the most by years of under investments in adequate SGIs – have proved to be the easiest to be courted by foreign powers like Russia and China. Accordingly, SGIs could therefore play a buffering role in those peripheral regions by showcasing the importance and relevance of the EU in those regions.

Foresight in the Energy Sector

In all four Dimensions

In all four Dimension, SGI Europe has identified important aspects for the Energy Sector that needed to be stressed in the EU Policy making process, which should be respected also in the finalisation of the **Fit For 55 Package of the EU Green Deal**, if the EU wants to be able to make resilient and sustainable long-term planning a reality that is just and fair to all EU citizens:

- **Social and Economic Dimension:** The meaning to invest in the social infrastructure in the energy sector is vital for the energy transition. Re-skilling the workforce in the fossil fuel industry, upskilling young folks towards sustainable energy supply will be vital. SGI Europe particularly insists on the relevance of the indicator on the share of adults taking part in Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) as it is a key measure of the important role of vocational education and training (VET) as a contributor to human capital development and personal development, which in turn fosters productivity, innovation, excellence as well as democratic citizenship, and promotes EU values.
 - **Climate policies cannot be deployed in a context of growing inequality.** In fact, to realise a just and green transition, SGI Europe calls for more contribution towards an effective and sustainable support mechanism to **guarantee access to all essential services**, to mitigate the adverse impact of the green transition, including through European funds and the sharing of best practices and mutual learning activities;
- **Green Dimension:** SGI Europe has stressed in particular the issue **to look beyond the mitigation strategies** to reduce CO₂ emission and expand to more adaptation measures of the infrastructure and the overall vitality of the environment such as air, soil and water. The resilience of the infrastructures to environmental damage is already a big issue and SGIs are at the forefront in building up and protecting its sectors that should be further highlighted in the Dashboards and in EU energy policies.
- **Geopolitical Dimension:** SGI Europe calls for a **smart mix of industrial, research and trade policies with international partnerships** to build sustainable and diverse supply of decarbonised energy sources. SGI Europe would like to note here to also add and recognise the supportive role of the circular economy concept beyond recycling materials and further enhance this concept (for example **Waste to Energy**) as a central element to boost resource efficiency.
- **Digital Dimension:** The **twin challenge to a green and digitalised energy transition** gains more of importance. Smart energy supply will be essential for energy efficiency standards but also reaching remote places. Public infrastructures play a key role in bridging the rural and urban divide in terms of connectivity and bringing essential access to services to all areas to ensure equal access.

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Thank You For Your Attention!

Stay in touch

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