



## COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT

Brussels, 31st of May 2021

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO) reaffirms also for this term its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our Association has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an Association like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Lise Fuhr

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lise Fuhr".

## **1. Introduction**

The European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (hereinafter ETNO) with this document submits its third Communication on Engagement with the UN Global Compact.

This document provides a brief overview of ETNO's sustainability commitments and achievements, as well as updates, if needed. More detailed information can be found on the Association's web site [www.etno.eu](http://www.etno.eu).

## **2. About ETNO**

ETNO has been the voice of Europe's telecommunication network operators since 1992 and has become the principal policy group for European electronic communications network operators. Its 40 members and observers from Europe and beyond are the backbone of Europe's digital progress. They are the main drivers of broadband and are committed to its continual growth in Europe.

ETNO members are pan-European operators that also hold new entrant positions outside their national markets. ETNO brings together the main investors in innovative and high-quality e-communications platforms and services, representing 70% of total sector investment in Europe.

ETNO closely contributes to shaping the best regulatory and commercial environment for its members to continue rolling out innovative and high quality services and platforms for the benefit of European consumers and businesses.

## **3. ETNO's commitment to Sustainability and to Global Compact Principles**

ETNO does not only represent the above however. The Ten Principles of the Global Compact are embedded in the way ETNO member companies operate worldwide, be they Global Compact participants or not.

ETNO has a long history of commitment to sustainability: the Association launched the voluntary Environmental Charter of European Telecom Operators in 1996. The Charter is made up of a set of commitments on environmental protection and responsible use of natural resources and is also a commitment to investigate the role of telecommunications in driving environmental

sustainability. In 2004 – the year when ETNO joined the Global Compact - the scope of the Charter was broadened, additional social commitments were included and it became ETNO's Sustainability Charter. In 2012 the Association launched its Corporate Responsibility Charter, reflecting most of the Ten Principles, and open for subscription to ETNO members and non-members. In 2017 ETNO created a guidance document for all the members on SDG's (see section 5). ETNO supports the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC in their aspiration to limit global warming to 1.5 degree since the beginning and also decided to support the Green Deal in the EU and the European Green Digital Coalition.

ETNO member companies are convinced of the importance of decoupling economic growth from the use of natural resources and, in particular, of the need to reduce pollution, manage energy effectively and contribute to the global fight against climate change. They are convinced that high health and safety standards in the workplace, fair treatment, respect of human rights, proper work-life balance and the creation of opportunities for professional growth are basic pre-requisites that can enhance the well-being and productivity of their workforce. They aim to ensure that such principles be applied globally across the whole value chain.

ETNO was one of the founding members - and is still an active member - of the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI, [www.gesi.org](http://www.gesi.org)), having a seat on the Board of Directors. Created in 2001, GeSI is a strategic partnership which brings together international organisations and companies active in the ICT sector that are committed to creating and promoting technologies and practices that foster economic, environmental and social sustainability, while driving economic growth and productivity. Currently GeSI's activities are particularly focused on enhancing and promoting the contribution of the ICT sector to reducing global GHG emissions - in line with the COP21 agreement, investigating ways and developing tools to guarantee and assess the respect of human rights across the ICT value chain, and developing methodologies and tools to assess ICT product and service sustainability. ICT as high important element for the achievement of the SDGs is especially driven by the global "Digital with Purpose" movement which was launched in 2021 and is supported by ETNO as member of GeSI.

#### **4. Actions in support of the Global Compact**

ETNO's Working Groups (WGs) cover a broad range of topics directly relevant to the business of telecom operators. Among them, ETNO has its **Sustainable Development Working Group**, whose two primary objectives are to:

- Drive and support the ETNO association, its members and various other supporting stakeholders to get maximum benefit from taking a pro-active approach to the management of **sustainability** (environmentally, economically and ethically) **and corporate responsibility issues**, and
- Share information, knowledge and best practices to ensure that ETNO member companies and other supporting companies are able to operate within an adequate, fair and justified legal framework as far as **sustainability matters** are concerned.

In addition to that, the Working Group supports the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by raising awareness on the importance of digitalisation and its benefits for the achievement of the SDGs as well as on the mutual benefit for business and sustainability.

Among its objectives, the Working Group will investigate and highlight the links between the sustainable growth of the economy in the EU and the Digital Single Market, identifying, in particular, the areas where the potential offered by the use of ICTs can and should be exploited, and how. In this regard the Working Group is highly engaged in accompanying and advising EU authorities related to the development of the EU Green Deal. - For this purpose ETNO has established a Task Force which is linked to the Working Group to specifically focus on the initiatives around the EU Green Deal.

Two further Task Forces linked to the Working Group are specifically engaged in Sustainable Finance and Energy Efficiency topics.

In the context of human rights, ETNO signed a **collaboration with the Council of Europe on respecting human rights** and the rule of law on the Internet. The objective is to build a new platform for dialogue between governments and the tech industry on respect for human rights and rule of law online. Of political importance is also the spread of democratic values and future of the Internet and its governance.

To continue with, ETNO member companies have a long record of commitment to environmental and sustainability standards.

In March 2021, 13 European telecom CEOs (of which 11 are ETNO members/observers) became founding members of the European Green Digital Coalition, and pledged their companies would be climate neutral by 2040 at the latest to accelerate the European Commission's green ambitions.

## **5. The Sustainable Development Goals Guidance Document of the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association**

### **About us**

The ETNO Sustainable Development Working Group will from now on focus its activities based on the agreed Document on ICTs and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This document is conceived as a “guidance document”, aimed at all ETNO members, that would explain what the SDGs are about and what they mean for the sector, in terms of responsibilities and business opportunities, including the link with the Digital Agenda for Europe; a document that should not only help raise awareness on the SDGs within and outside the Association. It is especially the ETNO SDGs agenda for 2030 and replaced the ETNO Corporate Responsibility Charter in 2018.

### **Our Vision and approach**

Sustainable development is a global strategic goal, which seeks to achieve economic growth and promote a fair and just society while preserving the natural environment and the world's scarce, non-renewable resources for future generations. It is our belief that given our position and our impact on the economy, society and technology, we can play an important role in making this happen. Corporate Responsibility also needs to be understood in the context of sustainable development:

- Corporate Responsibility is the business contribution to making sustainable development happen, through the proactive management of a company's environmental, social and economic impact;
- The guidance **Document on ICTs and the SDGs** embodies our commitment to sustainable development via a sustainable provision of ICT based solutions with significant environmental, social and economic benefits. We maintain a particular focus on enabling the reduction of the environmental impact of other industry sectors and society at large and on improving citizens' quality of life which is reflected in the 17 global SDGs;
- a determined effort to integrate our business activities in our environmental, social, and economic responsibility by minimising, where practicable, any negative impact these activities may have.



We believe, as do our customers, employees, shareholders and governments, that today's world demands close attention to business principles and ethics, employee relations, the respect of human rights, environmental management, community investment and general working conditions, within a company and regarding its upstream suppliers and business partners. Therefore, considering the different stakeholders and the whole value chain, for our industry the SDGs are the most appropriate basis for future improvements and achievements.