Date: 22/01/2018 17:43:30



Public consultation on institutional investors and asset managers' duties regarding sustainability

Fields marked with * are mandatory	Fi	elds	marked	with '	are	mandatory	/
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Introduction

At the end of 2015, governments from around the world chose a more sustainable path for our planet and our economy by adopting the Paris agreement on climate change and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Sustainability has since long been at the heart of the European project. The EU is committed to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Next steps for a sustainable European future European action for sustainability' {SWD(2016) 390 final}).

The EU wants its financial system to be aligned with its sustainability objectives. The commitment to incorporating sustainability elements into EU financial services policies and cross cutting initiatives is ingrained in the Mid-Term Review of the Capital Markets Union Action Plan (Mid-Term Review of the Capital Markets Union Action Plan - COM(2017) 292 final).

To develop the overall vision of sustainable finance that this requires, the Commission decided last year to appoint a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) on sustainable finance under the chairmanship of Christian Thimann. This group is supporting the Commission to develop an overarching and comprehensive EU strategy on sustainable finance.

On 13 July 2017, the HLEG published its interim report which provided a comprehensive vision on sustainable finance. It identified two imperatives for Europe's financial system. "The first is to strengthen financial stability and asset pricing, by improving the assessment and management of long term risks and intangible factors of value creation. The second is to improve the contribution of the financial sector to sustainable and inclusive growth by financing long-term needs and accelerating the shift to a sustainable economy".

In its interim report (<u>EU High-Level Expert Group on Sustainable Finance</u>, 'Financing a sustainable <u>European economy' Interim report</u>, <u>July 2017</u>), the HLEG proposed eight early recommendations for policy action on sustainable finance. The third recommendation focused on establishing a "fiduciary duty" that encompasses sustainability. The HLEG suggested clarifying that the duties of institutional investors and asset managers explicitly integrate material environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors and long term sustainability.

Given the maturity and the interest of the HLEG recommendation, the Commission has decided to start work on an impact assessment to assess whether and how a clarification of the duties of institutional investors and asset managers in terms of sustainability could contribute to a more efficient allocation of capital, and to sustainable and inclusive growth.

The duties of care, loyalty and prudence are embedded in the EU's financial framework governing obligations that institutional investors and asset managers owe to their end-investors/scheme members. These duties are the foundation of investment process.

The implementation of these duties implies fulfillment of various obligations for asset managers and institutional investors that include, for instance, the duty to act in the best interest of beneficiaries /investors, with due care, skill and diligence in performing their activities, including the identification and management of conflict of interests. They are also required to act honestly, and ensure adequate and proportionate performance of their activities.

Although these duties are embedded in the EU financial legal framework, it appears unclear that they require institutional investors and asset managers to assess the materiality of sustainability risks (i.e risks relating to environmental, social and governance issues). Market practices indicate that institutional investors and asset managers generally understand these duties as requiring a focus on maximising short-term financial returns and disregard long-term effects on performance due to sustainability factors and risks. This can lead to misallocation of capital and might give rise to concerns about financial stability since markets can be vulnerable to abrupt corrections, such as those associated with the delayed transition to low carbon economies.

This consultation will help the Commission gather and analyse the necessary evidence to determine possible action to improve the assessment and integration of sustainability factors in the relevant investment entities' decision-making process.

Please note: In order to ensure a fair and transparent consultation process only responses received through our online questionnaire will be taken into account and included in the report summarising the responses. Should you have a problem completing this questionnaire or if you require particular assistance, please contact fisma-investors-duties-sustainability@ec.europa.eu.

More information:

- on this consultation
- on the protection of personal data regime for this consultation

Glossary

Relevant investment entities: entities managing assets entrusted to them

Sustainability factors: for the purpose of this consultation, sustainability factors refer to environmental, social and governance issues as defined by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (*UNEP Inquiry, Definitions and Concepts: Background Note, 2016*). The exact scope of sustainability factors to be addressed is also the object of this consultation.

Environmental issues relate to the quality and functioning of the natural environment and natural systems including biodiversity loss; greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, energy efficiency, natural resource depletion or pollution; waste management; ozone depletion; changes in land use; ocean acidification and changes to the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles

Social issues relate to rights, well-being and interests of people and communities including human rights, labour standards, health and safety, relations with local communities, activities in conflict zones, health and access to medicine, consumer protection; and controversial weapons.

Governance issues relate to the management of investee entities. Issues include board structure, size, diversity, skills and independence; executive pay; shareholder rights; stakeholder interaction; disclosure of information; business ethics; bribery and corruption; internal controls and risk management; and, in general, issues dealing with the relationship between a company's management, its board, its shareholders and its other stakeholders.

1. Information about you

Federation of the Dutch Pension Funds

*Are you replying as:							
a private individual							
an organisation or a company							
a public authority or an international organisation	on						
*Name of your organisation:							
Federation of the Dutch Pension Funds							
Contact email address:							
The information you provide here is for administrative purpos	es only and will not be published						
alblas@pensioenfederatie.eu							
*Is your organisation included in the Transparency R (If your organisation is not registered, we invite you to registered to reply to this consultation. Why a transpa Yes No *If so, please indicate your Register ID number:	register here, although it is not compulsory to be						
84476202986-17							
*Type of organisation:							
Academic institution	Media						
Company, SME, micro-enterprise, sole trader	Non-governmental organisation						
Institutional investor	Think tank						
Consultancy, law firm	Trade union						
Consumer association	Other						
Industry association							
*Please specify the type of organisation:							

Th	ne Netherlands
* Field	d of activity or sector (<i>if applicable</i>):
at le	ast 1 choice(s)
	Accounting
	Auditing
	Banking
	Credit rating agencies
	Insurance
1	Occupational pension provision
	Personal pension provision
	Collective Investment Management
	Individual portfolio management
	Financial advice
	Market infrastructure operation (e.g. CCPs, CSDs, Stock exchanges)
	Service provider (e.g. index provider, research providers)
	Other
	Not applicable



1.300 billion

Important notice on the publication of responses

*Contributions received are intended for publication on the Commission's website. Do you agree to your contribution being published?

(see specific privacy statement (2)

- Yes, I agree to my response being published under the name I indicate (name of your organisation /company/public authority or your name if your reply as an individual)
- No, I do not want my response to be published

2. Your opinion

2.1 Questions addressed to all respondents:

I. General overview

Yes			
O No			
No opinion			
Please explain the reasons:			
On the basis of the Dutch Pension Act, pension funds already have to take into act in their investment decision-making. In general, the funds strive for realizing good stable economy, within a sustainable, safe and fair world.			-
What are the sustainability factors that the relevant investment entities nsider? (Please make a choice and indicate the importance of the difference of the difference of the definition in the Glo	ent facto	rs (1 is	not
	Yes	No	No opinior
Climate factors (these include climate mitigation factors as well as climate resilience factors)	•	0	0
Other environmental factors	•	0	0
Social factors	•	0	0
Governance factors	•	0	0
Others	0	0	•
nportance for climate factors: 1 2 3 4 5			
nportance for other environmental factors:			
12			
© 3			
4			
© 5			
nportance for social factors:			
© 1			
◎ 2			
◎ 3			

Importance for governance factors:				
O 1				
© 2				
© 3				
4				
© 5				
Please specify, which specific factors within the above categories ye	ou are con	sidering	g, if any:	
In general, all of the described categories are taken into account. How decide to pay relatively more/less attention to specific categories. Of opension fund policy.				
) Based on which criteria should the relevant investment entition their investment decision making?	es consid	ler sus	tainability fac	tors
sase explain.				
Normally, the Board of a pension fund consults its beneficiaries in ord perceived as relevant/important. Furthermore, long-term sustainability opportunities are identified. Though all factors have to be taken into a	trends and	l associa	ated risks and	
) Which of the following entities should consider sustainability cision-making? (Possibility to select several answers). If so, part this would have (1 is the smallest impact and 5 is the highest	lease indi	cate th		act
Occupational pension providers	•	0	0	
Personal pension providers	0	0	•	
Life insurance providers	0	0	•	
Non-life insurance providers	0	0	•	
Collective investment funds (UCITS, AIF, EuVECA, EuSEF,	0	0	•	

© 5

Individual portfolio managers

This obligation has already been included in the Dutch Pension Act.

Please explain:

	All or almost all	th tv	fore nan wo irds	Mor tha ha	n	More than a third	None or almost none	No opinio
Occupational pension providers	©	(0)		0	0
Personal pension providers	0	(0	0)	0	0	•
Life insurance providers	0	(0	0)	0	0	•
Non-life insurance providers	0	(0	0)	0	0	•
Collective investment funds (UCITS, AIF, EuVECA, EuSEF, ELTIF)	0	(0)	0	0	•
Individual portfolio managers	0	-	0	0			0	
	level of int					oility facto		eferent
To your knowledge, which is the stment entities (active in the EE		egrat		susta um	inak			
To your knowledge, which is the	A)?	egrat	tion of	susta um	inak	Dility facto Low	ors by the dif	ferent
To your knowledge, which is the stment entities (active in the EE	A)?	egrat	Medi integra	susta um	inak	Dility facto Low	ors by the dif	ferent No opinio
To your knowledge, which is the stment entities (active in the EE	High integration	egrat	Medi integra	susta um	inak	Dility facto Low	No integration	No opinio
To your knowledge, which is the stment entities (active in the EE) Occupational pension providers Personal pension providers	High integration	egrat	Medi integra	susta um	inak	Low egration	No integration	No opinio

Level of impact for occupational pension providers:

2345

	Individual portfolio managers	(0				0		0		•	
faci	Which constraints prevent releval litate their disregard. Please prov sider relevant (1 is not important	ide the	impo	tance	of the	diff	•	•		-		r

	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
Lack of expertise and experience	0	0	•	0	0	0
Lack of data/research	0	0	0	•	0	0
Lack of impact on asset performance	0	0	•	0	0	0
Inadequate methodologies for the calculation of sustainability risks	0	0	0	•	0	0
Inadequate sustainable impact metrics	0	0	0	•	0	0
Excessive costs for the scale of your company	0	0	•	0	0	0
No interest from financial intermediaries	0	0	0	0	0	•
No interest from beneficiaries/clients	•	0	0	0	0	0
European regulatory barriers	0	0	0	0	0	0
National regulatory barriers	0	0	•	0	0	0
Lack of fiscal incentives	•	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of eligible entities	0	•	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	•

Please provide more details on what the constraints/reasons are and how they limit the integration of sustainability factors:

The relatively small(er) pension funds can be confronted with relatively high costs.

8) How challenging is it for relevant investment entities to integrate the different sustainability factors? (1 is not challenging and 5 is very challenging) - Please refer to the definition in the Glossary).

	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
Climate factors (these include climate mitigation factors as well as climate resilience factors)	0	•	0	0	0	0

Other Environment factors	0	•	0	0	0	0
Social factors	0	0	0	•	0	0
Governance factors	0	•	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	•

Please explain:

In general, Dutch pension funds can quite easily collect and dispose of (detailed) information regarding climate, environment and governance factors; collecting information on social factors is more difficult.

III. Policy options

9) In which area should relevant investment entities consider sustainability factors within their investment decision-making? Please make a choice and indicate the relevance of the different areas (1 is minor relevance and 5 is very high relevance).

	Yes	No	No opinion
Governance	•	0	0
Investment strategy	•	0	0
Asset allocation	•	0	0
Risk management	•	0	0
Others	0	0	•

Relevance for g	governance:
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	-	
100	80	4
W	- 7	7

600	Ω.	\circ
No.	- 2	_

5

Relevance for investment strategy:

- 0 1
- 0 2
- 3
- 4
- 0 5

© 3						
4						
© 5						
Relevance for risk management:						
© 1						
0 2						
© 3						
4						
© 5						
10) Within the exec of governments which appearants were	مما اماريد			n vioto	to on	abla #ba
10) Within the area of governance, which arrangements wo integration of sustainability factors? (1 is the not appropriate				-		
	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
Specific sustainability investment Committee	0	0	0	0	0	0
Specific sustainability member of the Board	0	•	0	0	0	0
Sustainability performance as part of remuneration criteria	•	0	0	0	0	0
Integration of sustainability factors in the investment decision process	0	0	0	•	0	0
Integration of sustainability checks in the control process	0	0	0	•	0	0
Periodic reporting to senior management/board	0	0	0	•	0	0
Others	0	•	0	0	0	0
Please specify others:						
Sustainability expertise of the Board.						
11) Should insurance and pension providers consult their	benef	iciarie	s on a	n annı	ual/pe	riodic
basis on their preference as regards sustainability factors?						
YesNo						
No opinion						
= 1.0 opinion						
Please explain:						

Relevance for asset allocation:

0 2

Pension providers should know what their beneficiaries find important.
12) Within the portfolio's asset allocation, should relevant investment entities consider sustainability factors even if the consideration of these factors would lead to lower returns to
beneficiaries/clients in the medium/short term?
O Yes
O No
No opinion
13) Within the area of risk management, does the current set of corporate disclosures provide the relevant investment entities with adequate information to perform sustainability risk assessments in respect of investee companies?
O Yes
No
No opinion
Please explain where the possible gaps are, if any:
The level of transparency differs between companies. For larger companies however, this is relatively more easy to accomplish. Though it is important to arrive at more consistent and investor relevant disclosures for listed and unlisted entities the pension funds invest in.
14) Do the overall information or risk metrics available enable the relevant investment entities to adequately perform sustainability risk assessments?
YesNo
No opinion
Please explain where the possible gaps are, if any:
Please see question no. 13.
15) Do you think that uniform criteria to perform sustainability risk assessments should be developed at EU level?
© Yes
No
No opinion

P	lease explain:				
	On EU-level, no extra/t set by the EU.	oo detailı	ed rules	should be deve	eloped. We do not believe in prescriptive measures
	5) In case material exp ions to be performed			-	ors is identified, what are the most appropriate entity?
	It's difficult to give an u choice is, amongst othe			•	ls upon scope, scale and irremediable impact. The or exclusion.
the	7) Should relevant inver investment decisio Yes No No opinion			es disclose h	ow they consider sustainability factors within
	Both in pension fund po	olicy and	reportin	ng.	
				s (1 is minor r	ease make a choice and indicate the relevance elevance and 5 is high relevance):
		Yes	No	No opinion	
	Governance	•	0	0	
	Investment	•	0	0	

Relevance for governance:

Asset allocation

Risk management

0

0

0

0

1

strategy

Other

Relevance for risk management:

	1
(A)	2

© 5

3

Q

5

If yes, where?

	Yes	No	No opinion
Pre-contractual disclosure (e.g. prospectuses)	0	0	•
Semi-annual/annual reports	•	0	0
Periodic reports	0	0	•
Website	0	0	•
Newsletters	0	0	•
Factsheets	0	0	•
Marketing materials	0	0	•
Others	•	0	0

Pl	ease	specify	others:

	Benefits	Costs
Occupational pension providers	V	V
Personal pension providers		
Life insurance providers		
Non-life insurance providers		
Collective investment funds (UCITS, AIF, EuVECA, EuSEF, LTIF)		
ndividual portfolio managers		
General public		
Retail investors		
Financial advisors		
Service providers (index provider, research providers)		
Other stakeholders (please specify)		
ere can be additional costs related to resourcing, such as staff, resonefits can relate to better informed investment decisions, reputation restment propositions.	•	

Pension funds can decide individually. As regards 'others': it has to be clear what the fund policy is; the

means/tool is of inferior importance.

inv	Do you take into estment entity? Yes No	o account su	stainability fact	tors when you c	hoose your inve	estment prod	aucts or
1	Question spention Spe	•				6	
2) inv	No What would be estment decisio			_		-	
		< 0.5% of the AUM	0.51% to 1% of the AUM	1.01% to 3% of the AUM	3.01% to 5% of the AUM	> 5% of the AUM	No opinion
	Governance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Investment policy	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Valuation	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Risk management	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Disclosure	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Overall cost	0	0	0	0	0	0
wo	Please explain vuld lead to partion	cularly signif	icant (or potent	-	-		
	Do you engage Yes No	with your cli	ents/beneficiar	ies as regards tl	neir sustainabili	ty preferenc	e?
-	What could be t			•	of sustainability	r factors? Pl	ease,

3. Additional information

Should you wish to provide additional information (e.g. a position paper, report) or raise specific points not covered by the questionnaire, you can upload your additional document(s) here:

Useful links

More on the Transparency register (http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?locale=en)

Consultation details (https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/finance-2017-investors-duties-sustainability_en)

Specific privacy statement (https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/specific-privacy-statement-institutional-investors-and-asset-managers-duties-regarding-sustainability_en)

Contact

fisma-investors-duties-sustainability@ec.europa.eu