

Brussels, 9 February 2005

The European Commission sets a positive agenda for the 2005 review of the Sustainable Development Strategy

With the adoption today of the orientations for the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy European Commission President José Manuel Barroso sets a positive agenda for sustainable development. "The challenges faced by our planet today are global. Europe takes its responsibility. Without clear political leadership and commitment to change, our children and grandchildren will not be able to enjoy the prosperity and quality of life we have today. Climate change is accelerating, we are putting increasing pressure on our natural resources, biodiversity is at stake and narrowing the wealth gap between North and South remains an enormous challenge. If we want to preserve the delicate balance between economic, social and environmental concerns needed for a sustainable society, we must take action now".

In June 2001 the **EU Sustainable Development Strategy** was adopted in Gothenburg. A year later the external dimension of sustainable development was added to the Strategy.

The new Commission wants to **review the Strategy to sharpen its objectives** and to set **new milestones**. We have not achieved the results we wanted. Many of the problems are getting worse - not better. **The Sustainable Development Strategy** and **the Lisbon Strategy** ultimately share the same goal, namely to improve welfare and living conditions in a sustainable way for present and future generations. Both Strategies are mutually reinforcing. However, they focus on different actions and have different time frames.

In this Communication the Commission **takes stock of the progress made since 2001 and sets out its ideas for the first review** of the Sustainable Development Strategy. Later this year the Commission will present a second Communication to Parliament and Council.

The strategy addresses the **most serious threats to sustainable development** in Europe and the world; the so-called unsustainable trends. These are: Climate change, Public health, Transport and land use, Management of natural resources, the challenges of an Ageing society as well as Poverty and Social exclusion. At the international level they concern our response to globalisation and how to effectively and equitably integrate the developing world into our economy; the promotion of good governance and Financing for development which also form part of the Millennium Development goals.

The review will result in **clearer objectives and targets**. The revised Strategy will set new milestones and propose more effective monitoring mechanisms. It will strengthen ownership and raise awareness of the strategy's aims throughout European society. It will improve co-operation with public and private actors at all levels.

Moreover, it will confirm the overarching objective of sustainable development through an approach which ensures that economic, social and environmental actions are mutually reinforcing. The Commission's impact assessment procedure is one tool used to create greater coherence between policies in this regard.

Finally, the review puts more emphasis on horizontal measures such as market based instruments to reflect the true costs of resource use to society and increased investment in science and technology for sustainable development.

The Commission has in October 2004 conducted a **public consultation** on the strategy and had more than 1000 replies from individuals, organisations, private business and national and local governments. On 14 and 15 April 2005 a **stakeholder conference** will be organised by the European Economic and Social Committee on the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy.