



Basic information	
2005/2051(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Sustainable development: environmental aspects Subject 3.70 Environmental policy 5.05 Economic growth	

Key players				
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Climate and Food Safety		FERREIRA Anne (PSE)	24/05/2005
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs		The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		KUSSTATSCHER Sepp (Verts/ALE)	15/03/2005
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	Council of the European Union	Council configuration		Meetings
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy		2721	2006-03-27	

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
09/02/2005	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2005)0037 	Summary
12/05/2005	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/11/2005	Vote in committee		Summary
01/12/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0383/2005	
17/01/2006	Debate in Parliament	CRE link	
18/01/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0020/2006	Summary
18/01/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/01/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		




Technical information

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Committee dossier	ENVI/6/27485

Documentation gateway**European Parliament**

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Amendments tabled in committee		PE357.976	02/06/2005	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE360.185	28/06/2005	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE357.871	14/07/2005	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE362.843	18/10/2005	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0383/2005	01/12/2005	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0020/2006	18/01/2006	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2004)0394 	01/06/2004	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2005)0225 	09/02/2005	
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2005)0037 	09/02/2005	Summary

Sustainable development: environmental aspects

2005/2051(INI) - 09/02/2005 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present an initial stocktaking of the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy and identify future orientations.

CONTENT: The EU first set out its commitment to sustainable development in June 2001 when the Gothenburg European Council adopted the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) on the basis of a Commission Communication. In 2002, the Commission presented a second Communication focussing on the external dimension of sustainable development, which was endorsed by the Barcelona European Council. These texts together form the basis of the comprehensive EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The Commission has committed to review the Strategy at the start of each new Commission's term in office. This Communication provides an initial assessment of the progress made since 2001 and outlines a number of future orientations to guide the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy to be presented in a separate Communication to the European Parliament and Council later this year.

While some progress has been made in implementing the Strategy and immediate results cannot be expected, it is clear that much remains to be done. There are few signs that most of the threats to sustainable development have been reversed. They require urgent and continued attention.

The main points raised in the document are as follows:

1) Changing the way we make policies. Since 2001 a “new way of policymaking” has been introduced to make policies more coherent and to create the right conditions to promote sustainable development.

- *Improving policy coherence:* The integration of a number of horizontal principles of the Treaties in all EU policies is a central objective. However, a first stocktaking in 2004 of the Cardiff process showed that progress has been limited so far. A new Impact Assessment mechanism was introduced in the Commission in 2003 as one instrument to help improve policy coherence. It is designed to assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of major policy proposals in an integrated manner and to make the trade-offs between competing goals more explicit. To date, the Commission has produced over 50 Impact Assessments on a wide range of policies.

- *Developing the open method of coordination:* The open method of coordination can be a powerful instrument to promote exchange of good practice, involve and mobilize stakeholders and put pressure on Member States to adopt a more strategic and integrated approach and deliver more efficient policies. Common objectives and common indicators have, for example, been agreed by the Commission and the Member States in the areas of social inclusion and pensions. Most Member States have set quantitative targets for the reduction of poverty and social exclusion.

- *Getting prices and incentives right:* Making sure that market prices reflect the true costs of economic activities to society will encourage changes in production and consumption patterns. To achieve this, market-based instruments like environmentally-related taxes, emission trading schemes and subsidies can be an effective complement to traditional regulatory measures.

- *Investing in science and technology:* Advances in knowledge and technological progress are key to achieving a balance between economic growth and social and environmental sustainability. There are many synergies to exploit between innovation for quality and performance and innovation to optimise energy use, waste and safety.

- *Communicating and mobilising citizens and business:* Civil society and the private sector play important roles in sustainable development.

2) Unsustainable trends

- *Climate change and clean energy:* Over the last 100 years, Europe's temperature has been rising faster than the global average, 8 out of 9 glaciers are retreating to a significant extent and extreme weather events have increased. Keeping the global temperature rise below the level at which more dangerous climate change becomes probable requires deep global cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

- *Public health:* Threats to public health in the EU have continued to increase since 2001. Lifestyle-related and chronic diseases increase rapidly worldwide with obesity showing the most alarming developments. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has globally reached its highest level of infections ever and the proportion of newly reported HIV infections has more than doubled in Europe since 1996. Greater contact and mobility around the globe have increased the impact of health threats through infectious diseases such as avian flu and SARS. Bioterrorism is another new element. In developing countries, recent health and development gains have been reversed and the spread of major communicable diseases is a serious threat to their future development.

- *Poverty and social exclusion:* Poverty and social exclusion represent a growing problem. In the EU, around 15% of the population lives at risk of income poverty. The situation in some of the new Member States is of particular concern. Other worrying trends are the transmission of poverty and exclusion across generations and the disproportionate burden borne by certain population sub-groups (e.g. unemployed, single parents, disabled people, ethnic minorities).

- *An ageing society:* Population growth in the EU is projected to come to an end and a decreasing and ageing working population will have to support an increasing number of old people. The old-age dependency ratio is forecast to increase from 24% in 2004 to 47% in 2050.

Management of natural resources: Rapid global population growth means that by 2010 there will already be 400 million more people on Earth compared to now, essentially located in urban areas. In a world of growing ‘interdependence’ we cannot continue to produce and consume as we are doing today. Bio-diversity is under threat. Fresh water is another precious natural resource under pressure. Overall, the global water crisis threatens lives, sustainable development and ultimately peace and security.

- *Land use and transport:* Despite the aim to decouple transport from GDP growth, the volume of transport continues to rise faster than GDP. This has impacts in a variety of areas, ranging from traffic congestion and health problems caused by air pollutants, to increased CO₂ emissions affecting the EU's targets on climate change.

In the light of the continuing challenges, Europe must not only stand by its commitment to a long-term agenda for sustainable development and a better quality of life, but also to find ways to tackle these more effectively. Europe's response will aim to do the following:

- **Reaffirm the basic principles of the European Union Sustainable Development Strategy:** Development can only be achieved if economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection go hand in hand, both in Europe and in other parts of the world. The review will also take into account the EU's contribution to global sustainable development in two ways: first, by addressing the international aspects of the six unsustainable trends addressed by the strategy; second, by integrating into it the external EU policies that contribute to global sustainable development. In doing so, the EU will reconfirm and strengthen its commitment to take a leading role in driving the sustainable development agenda at global level.

- **Reaffirm the new approach to policy making and policy coherence:** The review will re-enforce the ‘new approach to policy making’ as the central means of placing sustainable development at the core of EU policy-making. In particular, the future EU Sustainable Development Strategy will give a further boost to the different components of the EU's Better Regulation agenda, including impact assessment, stakeholder consultation and regulatory simplification.

- **Maintaining a focus on key unsustainable trends and exploring the linkages between unsustainable trends in greater detail:** The review will maintain the Strategy's focus on main trends that pose a threat to sustainable development. Many of these trends can only be tackled through continued action over a long period of time and will involve major structural changes in the functioning of our societies and economies. However, this should not be an excuse for inaction in the short run.

- **Setting objectives, targets and milestones:** The approach taken in the 2001 strategy was to define medium-term headline objectives relating to each of the unsustainable trends and to identify a number of measures intended to address these. The review will confirm the need for clearer objectives, targets and related deadlines as a way of giving focus to action in priority areas and enabling progress to be measured.

- **Ensuring effective monitoring:** The decision in Gothenburg to ensure yearly monitoring of the strategy at the Spring European Councils has fallen short of expectations. A reinforced reporting system will be developed in the review. It will focus on the short and medium-term delivery of the strategy's objectives, combining and simplifying as far as possible current reports on sustainable development issues. The institutional responsibilities (particularly the roles of the European Council and the European Parliament) in the monitoring process will also be made clearer.

- **Strengthen ownership and improve co-operation with public and private actors at all levels:** Further action is needed to raise awareness, mobilise and involve stakeholders at all levels. It must be clear who is responsible for what action at what point in time and who will bear the costs. To this end, the Commission will explore how to create effective partnerships with industry, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and consumer interests, particularly with a view to discussing ways of helping to curb the unsustainable trends identified in the context of the review.

Sustainable development: environmental aspects

2005/2051(INI) - 18/01/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Anne FERREIRA (PES, FR) on the environmental aspects of sustainable development. Parliament recalled that the Johannesburg summit in September 2002 identified five essential areas where concrete results are needed: health, energy, agriculture and biodiversity, ecosystem management, water and sanitation. Despite the undertakings made at the Rio and Johannesburg summits respectively, the signatory States have not taken measures to reverse the current tendency to overexploit resources and pollute the environment, or the climate change which is the most visible results of this failure.

It was also recalled that the number of natural climatic disasters has more than doubled in Europe since the 1990s and global warming is set to continue. A new definition of growth is needed, based on responsible, efficient use of natural resources and a change in patterns of production and consumption. Parliament welcomed the fact that the Commission is taking stock of the sustainable development strategy in accordance with its undertaking and welcomed the sustainable development guidelines adopted by the European Council in June 2005. However, it was regrettable that the revision of the sustainable development policy was not carried out in combination with the mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy. It was also regrettable that most of the orientations contained in the second part of the Commission communication fail to respond to the magnitude of the challenges noted in the first part of the communication. Parliament concurred with the Commission's observation that tendencies running counter to sustainable development have become worse, whether they consist in overexploitation and pollution of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, aggravation of climate change, inequality and poverty, or the accumulation of public debt, both in the EU and in third countries.

Climate change, transport, clean energy sources and control of energy consumption: Parliament stated its concern about the following:

- there is a risk that the Union will not attain the Kyoto protocol objectives for 2012, due to the absence of suitable measures to curb the rise in road transport;
- the large increase in air transport and polluting emissions in that sector. The Commission is urged to create a pilot emission trading scheme for the aviation sector for the period 2008-2012, covering all flights to and from any EU airport;
- solutions are required designed to achieve a substantial reduction in atmospheric pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in the EU by 30% of 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050, recent reports having confirmed that countering climate change requires a larger reduction in emissions in Europe and the rest of the world;
- there must be measures to stabilise distribution among modes of transport at the 1998 level by 2010;
- Europe's current use of natural resources is exceeding biological capacity by more than double; Europe is making disproportionate demands on existing terrestrial and marine natural resources;
- most Member States depend heavily on fossil fuels and nuclear energy for their energy supplies, and promotion of biofuels is urgently required.

Management of natural resources: Parliament stated as follows:

- it called on the Member States, especially those in the west and south of Europe, and the sectors concerned, in particular the agricultural and tourism sectors, to undertake measures to reduce water abstraction and guarantee water supplies for the various areas of human activity;
- the EU must try to achieve the ambitious objective of reversing by 2010 the loss of biodiversity in Europe and the world. Many species of fauna and flora are threatened with extinction. The Commission is asked to present a European action plan, endowed with the necessary budget to fulfil the objectives of protecting and restoring ecosystems and biological diversity in the EU and third countries. Further action is also necessary to fully integrate biodiversity protection into agriculture, regional development, fisheries and development policy;
- Parliament deplored the increase in the overall volume of waste, particularly packaging and asked for new provisions aimed at reducing at source the production of waste in the medium to long term.

Land use: Parliament asked for the integration of soil protection into the Community's environmental measures. It drew attention to the final outcome of any soil degradation, namely desertification, which is affecting large parts of the Union and has obvious effects in terms of poverty, loss of biodiversity, water quality and climate change. Parliament recalled the vital role of forests in soil fixation, avoidance of erosion, CO₂ absorption and flood prevention. Pollution and increasingly difficult access to natural resources and raw materials constitute a threat to the maintenance of biodiversity, and will result in a rise in prices, the magnitude of which will destabilise economic and social systems. Parliament noted with regret the lack of any adequate response to this situation by the Commission and the EU.

Public health: Parliament deplored the gap between the assessment of the consequences of environmental degradation on health, on the one hand, and the insufficiently bold measures proposed by the Commission in its European Environment & Health Action Plan 2004-2010, on the other.

International: Parliament called on Member States to extend debt cancellation to more developing countries. Environmental protection measures and mechanisms for the transfer of environmentally friendly technologies should accompany this debt cancellation programme. The revised strategy must clearly state that its objective is reform of the WTO such as will make trade subordinate to sustainable development objectives and international commitments to environmental preservation and respect for the international conventions in the social field. Whilst Parliament welcomed the outcome achieved at the Montreal Conference, it called on particularly the United States to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, which now has the force of law. It also stressed the strong links between poverty and the environment and the fact that the poorest are often the principal victims of environmental degradation. Specific initiatives need to be taken to address these poverty and environment linkages.

Market instruments as incentives: Parliament noted the Commission's proposal to supplement the traditional regulatory instruments with market instruments such as cost internalisation, ecotaxes, subsidies and the emission quota trading system. It emphasised support for ecotaxes since they are essential tools for an effective pollution reduction policy. Market instruments, although necessary, are not in themselves sufficient in order to pursue a policy of reducing pollution and protecting the environment. The Commission must develop targeted proposals.

Innovations: Parliament endorsed the Commission's proposal to invest in innovation in the area of more environmentally friendly technologies, with scientific and technical research being required to take account of environmental and social issues. It called on the EU to take the necessary decisions so that it can become the world's foremost resource- and energy-saving economy. Achieving those objectives would bring about greater autonomy and security in terms of resources and energy supplies, while also uncoupling economic growth from the exploitation of natural resources.

Application of the principles of sustainable development: The "polluter pays" and precautionary principles must be affirmed as the regulatory principles underpinning public policy on public health, food safety and consumer and environmental protection.

Informing and mobilising citizens and businesses: Protecting the environment calls at the same time for information, awareness-raising and education. The strategy must be the result of a transparent process involving the citizens of Europe. The Aarhus Convention on access to information must be fully implemented. Furthermore, Parliament called for the development of environmental education to give it a full place on primary school curricula, and to put in place information and awareness-raising programmes directed at adults.

Thematic strategies: Parliament was delighted that the first thematic strategies have finally been presented. It felt, however, that a good number of them, particularly the reform of the CAP and fisheries policy, do not take enough account of sustainable development objectives and continue to favour intensive production methods.

In conclusion, Parliament called for the financial perspective for 2007-2013 to make sufficient provision for appropriate action to be taken at every level to combat unsustainable trends such as poverty, social exclusion and the consequences of the ageing of society. The revised strategy implies above all a real change in our modes of production and consumption, and involves reconsidering the aims of our economic activity. Failure to act will come at an increasingly high price, will have ever more considerable direct consequences, and will make it even more difficult to implement the EU's objectives as regards social progress, health and environmental protection, generating an intolerable burden for future generations.

Sustainable development: environmental aspects

2005/2051(INI) - 01/06/2004 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE: Presentation of a working document on integrating environmental considerations into other policy areas – a stocktaking of the Cardiff process.

CONTENT: This stocktaking of environmental integration follows from the 2003 Spring European Council, which noted "the Commission's intention to carry out an annual stocktaking of the Cardiff process of environmental integration process and a regular environment policy review and to report in time for the outcomes of these exercises to be taken into account in the preparation of its future Spring reports, starting in 2004". The stocktaking complements the 2003 Environment Policy Review (EPR) adopted in December 2003, and should be seen in the context of the information presented in the 2003 EPR.

The principle of environmental integration recognises that environmental policy alone cannot achieve the environmental improvements needed as part of sustainable development. The changes required to reduce environmental pressures of high concern from fisheries, agriculture, transport, energy and other areas so as to achieve sustainable development, can only be achieved through a process of environmental integration in these sectors.

While this stocktaking has shown the positive results of the Cardiff process, both in terms of raising the profile of environmental integration and in terms of concrete improvements in some sectors, it also points to a number of weaknesses in implementation. Amongst other issues, it emphasises the need to improve the consistency of strategies across Council formations and for greater emphasis on good practice in terms of content and implementation.

It also points to a set of measures at Community and national levels to support sectoral Councils in their efforts under the Cardiff Process to integrate environmental concerns into their policies and to help maximise the benefits of these efforts in terms of concrete environmental improvements. Further efforts are also needed at national level to fully implement the decisions taken at Community level.

While sustainable development involves dealing with economic, social and environmental policies in a mutually reinforcing way, environmental integration needs increased visibility and political support at the highest level. It should become a regular item on the agenda of the Spring European Council. In this respect and in line with the Presidency Conclusions to the March 2003 European Council, the European Commission will carry out an annual stocktaking of environmental integration as a complement to the Environment Policy Review, which will feed into the Commission's Spring Report and the Spring European Council debate.

Forthcoming opportunities to further promote environmental integration should also be seized:

- The Review of the Sustainable Development Strategy planned for 2004- 2005 will examine progress made since 2001 and identify priority actions to ensure delivery. This exercise will enable the EU to pinpoint where environmental integration gaps lie at EU level, hampering the EU's efforts to curb unsustainable environmental trends, and to make concrete proposals to address them.

- The mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy in 2005 offers an additional opportunity to examine how environmental integration and economic and employment growth could increasingly be mutually supportive.

- The Commission's emphasis on sustainable development in its Communication on the Union's next financial perspectives (2007 onwards) will give an additional boost to further environmental integration, in particular in the agricultural and regional policy. The adoption in 2004 of a Commission proposal for a regulation on the structural and cohesion funds in the period post-2006, setting new guidelines, will provide an opportunity to better integrate the environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainable development into cohesion policy.

Environmental integration is a key condition for progressing towards sustainable development. It requires the unfailing and continuous commitment of all policy sectors at all levels of governance in the Union