

PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS

GÖTEBORG EUROPEAN COUNCIL

15 AND 16 JUNE 2001

II. A STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

19. Sustainable development – to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations – is a fundamental objective under the Treaties. That requires dealing with economic, social and environmental policies in a mutually reinforcing way. Failure to reverse trends that threaten future quality of life will steeply increase the costs to society or make those trends irreversible. The European Council welcomes the submission of the Commission's communication on sustainable development which includes important proposals for curbing such trends.
20. The European Council agrees a strategy for sustainable development which completes the Union's political commitment to economic and social renewal, adds a third, environmental dimension to the Lisbon strategy and establishes a new approach to policy making. The arrangements for implementing this strategy will be developed by the Council.
21. Clear and stable objectives for sustainable development will present significant economic opportunities. This has the potential to unleash a new wave of technological innovation and investment, generating growth and employment. The European Council invites industry to take part in the development and wider use of new environmentally friendly technologies in sectors such as energy and transport. In this context the European Council stresses the importance of decoupling economic growth from resource use.

A new approach to policy making

22. The Union's Sustainable Development Strategy is based on the principle that the economic, social and environmental effects of all policies should be examined in a coordinated way and taken into account in decision-making. "Getting prices right" so that they better reflect the true costs to society of different activities would provide a better incentive for consumers and producers in everyday decisions about which goods and services to make or buy.
23. To improve policy coordination at the level of the Member States, the European Council:
 - *invites* Member States to draw up their own national sustainable development strategies;
 - *underscores* the importance of consulting widely with all relevant stakeholders and *invites* Member States to establish appropriate national consultative processes.
24. To achieve better policy coordination in the Union, the European Council:
 - *will* at its annual Spring meetings give policy guidance, as necessary, to promote sustainable development in the Union;
 - *invites* the Union institutions to improve internal policy coordination between different sectors. The horizontal preparation of the Sustainable Development Strategy will be coordinated by the General Affairs Council;

- *notes* that the Commission will include in its action plan for better regulation to be presented to the Laeken European Council mechanisms to ensure that all major policy proposals include a sustainability impact assessment covering their potential economic, social and environmental consequences.
25. To build an effective review of the Sustainable Development Strategy, the European Council:
- *invites* the Council to examine, for the purposes of implementing the strategy, the proposals in the Commission communication, in particular its proposals for headline objectives and measures, as well as the 6th Environmental Action Programme and the sector strategies for environmental integration;
 - *will* review progress in developing and implementing the strategy at its annual Spring meetings, in line with the conclusions of the Stockholm European Council;
 - *notes* that the Commission will evaluate implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy in its annual synthesis report, on the basis of a number of headline indicators, to be agreed by the Council in time for the Spring European Council 2002; at the same time, the Commission will present a report assessing how environment technology can promote growth and employment;
 - *supports* the Commission's work on a draft on the labelling and traceability of GMOs;
 - *asks* the Council to take due account of energy, transport and environment in the 6th Framework Programme for Research and Development.

The global dimension

26. Sustainable development requires global solutions. The Union will seek to make sustainable development an objective in bilateral development cooperation and in all international organisations and specialised agencies. In particular, the EU should promote issues of global environmental governance and ensure that trade and environment policies are mutually supportive. The Union's Sustainable Development Strategy forms part of the Union's preparations for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Union will seek to achieve a "global deal" on sustainable development at the Summit. The Commission undertakes to present a communication no later than January 2002 on how the Union is contributing and should further contribute to global sustainable development. In this context, the Union has reaffirmed its commitment to reach the UN target for official development assistance of 0.7% of GDP as soon as possible and to achieve concrete progress towards reaching this target before the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002.

Targeting environmental priorities for sustainability

27. Building on the Commission communication on sustainable development, the 6th Environmental Action Programme and the sector strategies for environmental integration, the European Council has, as a first step, singled out a number of objectives and measures as general guidance for future policy development in four priority areas: *climate change, transport, public health and natural resources*, thus complementing decisions on social and economic issues taken by the European Council in Stockholm.

Combating climate change

28. Emissions of greenhouse gases from human activity are contributing to global warming with repercussions on the world's climate. Therefore, the Conference of the parties in mid-July in Bonn must be a success. The Community and the Member States are determined to meet their own commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. The Commission will prepare a proposal for ratification before the end of 2001 making it possible for the Community and the Member States to fulfil their commitment rapidly to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. The European Union will work to ensure the widest possible participation of industrialised countries in an effort to ensure the entry into force of the Protocol by 2002. To enhance the Union's efforts in this area, the European Council:
- *reaffirms* its commitment to delivering on Kyoto targets and the realisation by 2005 of demonstrable progress in achieving these commitments. Recognising that the Kyoto Protocol is only a first step, it endorses the objectives set out in the 6th Environmental Action Programme;
 - *furthermore reaffirms* its determination to meet the indicative target for the contribution of electricity produced from renewable energy sources to gross electricity consumption by 2010 of 22 percent at Community level as set out in the Directive on Renewable Energy;
 - *invites* the European Investment Bank to promote the Sustainable Development Strategy and to cooperate with the Commission in implementing the EU policy on climate change.

Ensuring sustainable transport

29. A sustainable transport policy should tackle rising volumes of traffic and levels of congestion, noise and pollution and encourage the use of environment-friendly modes of transport as well as the full internalisation of social and environmental costs. Action is needed to bring about a significant decoupling of transport growth and GDP growth, in particular by a shift from road to rail, water and public passenger transport. To achieve this, the European Council:

- *invites* the European Parliament and the Council to adopt by 2003 revised guidelines for trans-European transport networks on the basis of a forthcoming Commission proposal, with a view to giving priority, where appropriate, to infrastructure investment for public transport and for railways, inland waterways, short sea shipping, intermodal operations and effective interconnection;
- *notes* that the Commission will propose a framework to ensure that by 2004 the price of using different modes of transport better reflects costs to society.

Addressing threats to public health

30. The European Union must respond to citizens' concerns about the safety and quality of food, use of chemicals and issues related to outbreaks of infectious diseases and resistance to antibiotics. To this end, the European Council:
- *notes* the Commission's intention to present formal proposals, and invites the Council and the European Parliament to adopt them, so that the chemicals policy is in place by 2004, thereby ensuring that within a generation chemicals are only produced and used in ways which do not lead to a significant impact on health and the environment;
 - *notes* the Commission's intention to present by the end of 2001 Action Plans for tackling issues related to outbreaks of infectious diseases and resistance to antibiotics;
 - *urges* the European Parliament and the Council to profit from the substantial progress achieved and rapidly agree on the final adoption of the European Food Authority and Food Law Regulation in order to comply with the time frame agreed at the Nice and Stockholm European Councils;
 - *asks* that the possibility of the creation of a European surveillance and early warning network on health issues be examined.

Managing natural resources more responsibly

31. The relationship between economic growth, consumption of natural resources and the generation of waste must change. Strong economic performance must go hand in hand with sustainable use of natural resources and levels of waste, maintaining biodiversity, preserving ecosystems and avoiding desertification. To meet these challenges, the European Council agrees:
- that the Common Agricultural Policy and its future development should, among its objectives, contribute to achieving sustainable development by increasing its emphasis on encouraging healthy, high-quality products, environmentally sustainable production methods, including organic production, renewable raw materials and the protection of biodiversity;

- that the review of the Common Fisheries Policy in 2002 should, on the basis of a broad political debate, address the overall fishing pressure by adapting the EU fishing effort to the level of available resources, taking into account the social impact and the need to avoid over-fishing;
- that the EU Integrated Product Policy aimed at reducing resource use and the environmental impact of waste should be implemented in cooperation with business;
- that biodiversity decline should be halted with the aim of reaching this objective by 2010 as set out in the 6th Environmental Action Programme.

Integrating environment into Community policies

32. The Council is invited to finalise and further develop sector strategies for integrating environment into all relevant Community policy areas with a view to implementing them as soon as possible and present the results of this work before the Spring European Council in 2002. Relevant objectives set out in the forthcoming 6th Environmental Action Programme and the Sustainable Development Strategy should be taken into account.