



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**LIMITE**

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**NOTE**

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from : Presidency

to : Delegations

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Subject : Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS)

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With a view to the Friends-of-the-Presidency Group on 3 March, delegations will find attached, as submitted by the Presidency:

- A draft on the governance cycle and the follow-up of the reviewed EU SDS (Annex I);
- A draft basic structure for the reviewed EU SDS (Annex II).

**The governance cycle and the follow-up of the revised EU SDS**

- The Commission should submit every two years (Start February 2008) a progress report on sustainable development of the EU and the Member States. The Commission will draw on a set of sustainable development indicators. With regard to the EU internal policies and international commitments the report will be based on the EUROSTAT SD Monitoring Report (2007) and on developments of the key EU activities (strategies, action plans, legislation). With a view to the national level the report will build additionally on available national data and the Member States' reporting in the frame of National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS). The first national reports should be available at the latest by October 2007 (two year intervals) and if appropriate take into account developments at the sub-national level.
- On the basis of the Commission report and the related contributions of the relevant Council formations the June European Council every two years (Start 2008) should review priorities and provide general orientations on sustainable development. The Council and the European Parliament will have appropriate contacts and exchanges on the EU SDS.
- The Commission will launch a comprehensive review of the EU SDS in 2009.
- The Economic and Social Affairs Committee and Committee of the Regions will play a very important role in creating ownership inter alia through the organisation of regular stakeholder discussions and through acting as a catalyst to stimulate debate at EU, national and regional level.
- Member States elaborating their first NSDS should complete these by June 2007. Future reviews of the NSDS should be undertaken in the light of the revised EU-Sustainable Development Strategy.

- Voluntary peer reviews at the Member State level should start in 2006 with the first (group of) Member States. In addition to other Member States, the peer review should include national stakeholders and possibly international observers. These reviews could focus either on the strategies as a whole or specific issues where appropriate identifying examples of good policies and practices. A second phase of peer reviews could start in 2007 with the next (group of) Member States. Peer reviews could be supported by scientific evidence through external evaluation.
- Member States should make full use of the existing European Sustainable Development Network in order to enhance coherence between EU and national level and the exchange of experiences. This informal network and its office facilities could identify specific priority themes and issues to be (peer) reviewed by all Member States in order to exemplify and document good policies and practices.
- Member States should consider, the strengthening or, where these do not yet exist, the setting up of independent national advisory councils on sustainable development to stimulate informed debate, assist in the preparation of national SD strategies and/or contribute to national and EU progress reviews. The national SD councils could also help involving civil society in SD matters.
- At EU level the establishment of an independent advisory body consisting of scientists could be considered. It could support the preparation of the bi-annual EU progress report.
- The EU sustainable development strategy should feed into the international processes on sustainable development and help progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
- The EU institutions should improve internal policy coordination between different sectors. The General Affairs Council should ensure the horizontal co-ordination of the sustainable development strategy.

Explanation:

Two years cycle seems appropriate and the 2008 progress discussion could serve as a basis for the comprehensive review in 2009/10.

Separation of Lisbon and EU SDS reporting as long as the two strategies are separated.  
High visibility of SD especially in June summits.

Procedure:

- All NSDS available by June 2007
  - Eurostat Progress Report in November/December 2007
  - Progress Report of the Commission in February 2008
  - Debate in relevant Council formations between February and May 2008.
  - European Council in June 2008.
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**EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS)**

**Basic Structure of the document**

**Longterm Vision** (builds on the introduction of the Declaration on Guiding Principles for SD + additional elements)

**Key objectives + policy guiding principles** (Declaration on Guiding Principles)

**Introduction / Horizontal questions**

**Key issues**

- Situation
- Objectives / targets
- Key actions

**Governance Cycle and follow-up**

**Better policy making**

- Improving policy coherence
- Using the most effective mix of instruments
- Mobilising actors and multiplying success

**Indicators (Set)**

