



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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from : General Secretariat
to : Council

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

Introduction

In June 2005, the European Council adopted a Declaration on Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development based on four key objectives:

1. Environmental protection;
2. Social equity and cohesion;
3. Economic prosperity; and
4. Meeting international responsibilities.

In December 2005 the European Council noted the presentation of the Commission's communication on a renewed EU SDS for the next 5 years and looked forward to adopting in June 2006 an ambitious and comprehensive strategy, comprising targets, indicators and an effective monitoring procedure, which should integrate the internal and external dimensions and be based on a positive long-term vision, bringing together the Community's sustainable development priorities and objectives in a clear, coherent strategy that can be communicated simply and effectively to citizens.

The Commission's "SDS Review Package",¹ consists of:

- the Communication itself proposing six priority issues, the integration of the external dimension into internal policy making as well as an effective monitoring procedure and follow-up process
- Guiding Principles for SD adopted in June 2005 by the European Council (Annex 1)
- Objectives, Targets, Policies and Actions (Annex 2)
- a Commission Communication adopted in February 2005, taking stock of progress and proposing first orientations (Annex 3).

Given the horizontal nature of sustainable development and the need to ensure coherence across sectors, the Presidency established a Group of the Friends-of-the-Presidency on the Review of the EU SDS (FoP) to steer the SDS review process.

¹ Cf. doc. 15796/05 (COM(2005) 658 final)

On 3 and 17 February 2006, this FoP Group held preliminary discussions and examined a first draft of Presidency questions to guide policy debates in the different Council formations directly concerned by the SDS review, the Environment Council being first in line:

- Environment: 9 March 2006
- Ag/Fish: 20 March 2006
- TTE - Transport: 27/28 March 2006
- GAERC – External Relations: 10 April 2006
- ECOFIN: 5 May 2006
- EJC - Education: 18 May 2006
- Competitiveness: 29/30 May 2005
- EPSCO/Employment and Social Affairs: 1 June 2006
- EPSCO/Health and Consumer protection: 2 June 2006
- TTE - Energy: 8/9 June 2006

On the basis of the Commission's SDS Review package and the debates in the different Council formations, the Presidency will prepare a draft for a reviewed EU SDS to be adopted by the European Council at its June 2006 meeting.

On 24 February 2006, Coreper confirmed the questions examined by the FoP Group in view of the Council (Environment).

The Council (Environment), at its meeting on 9 March 2006, is invited to hold a policy debate on the basis of the Presidency questions which appear in the Annex to this note. Written contributions from delegations are welcome.

Questions to all Council formations

- Do you consider the objectives, targets, key actions and the implied mix of policy instruments proposed in the SDS Review package, in particular Annex 2,¹ are appropriate and sufficient to meet the challenges of Sustainable Development and to efficiently address unsustainable trends in your policy area? Are greater prioritisation and/or stronger efforts necessary to achieve this?
- How can your Council formation best contribute to deliver visible results and measurable progress in implementing the EU SDS? What should be done to enhance synergies and coherence across policies and processes, including the Lisbon agenda?
- How can an ambitious EU SDS ensure coherence between EU internal policies and its international commitments and contribute to sustainable development at both EU and global level, in particular in your specific policy area?

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¹ doc. 15796/05 (COM(2005) 658 final)