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Ostend meeting identifies European priorities on SCP



A comprehensive communication strategy is urgently required to pave the way for sustainable consumption and production decisions by individuals, promoting a change in mindset and behavior. SCP should be endorsed from the highest political level. Consumer rights instruments in both developed and developing countries, including those regarding access to basic needs and information, need to be

improved. The financial sector needs to increase investments in sustainable infrastructure. These recommendations are the result of the first European Stakeholder Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), held in Ostend, Belgium, from 25-26 November 2004.

▶ *Continued on page 2*

Stumbling blocks on road to green consumption

An official EU stakeholder meeting on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) last month has pointed to challenges ahead as Europe tries to advance the global pledge to develop a ten-year framework of SCP programmes agreed in Johannesburg in 2002.

The conference was organised by the European Commission and UNEP to flesh out "concrete proposals and commitments" on how the EU can contribute both domestically and internationally.

Commission representative and conference chair Claus Sørensen

acknowledged calls for "a coherent communication strategy" on SCP, adding that more work with stakeholders would be needed.

Reports from six working groups demonstrated general agreement that targets and timetables - for example, for green public procurement - were needed. Identifying key areas, such as waste, urban transport and energy, could help. One group asked for SCP to be included in a forthcoming review of the EU sustainable development strategy.

▶ *Continued on page 2*



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(...) Ostend meeting identifies European priorities on Sustainable Consumption and Production

► Other challenges and recommendations, as presented by the co-chairs of the meeting, Claus Soerensen, European Commission, and Nadine Gouzee, Belgium, in a co-chairs summary include:

- Building a clean, clever and competitive Europe and ensuring that companies can exploit the first mover benefits.
- Supporting other regions, especially developing countries, in achieving sustainable development including SCP.
- Anchor sustainable development at a high political level (a designated minister/Commissioner with a clear and broad horizontal mandate) in national and EU governance structures.
- Agree at the level of Heads of State and Government on indicators, timetables, benchmarks, and alarm bells to monitor progress on SCP, including concrete and sector specific de-coupling targets.
- Promote the market provision of public and private goods so that consumers have a real choice.
- Promote workplace based sustainable production assessment so that all producers, including employers and workers, really participate in the production processes.
- Address the specific needs for support from SMEs, in particular in developing countries and transition countries, to help them better integrate the global dimension in supply chain management.
- Promote sustainable development labelling and other product information tools (using the life cycle perspective) in co-operation with business, including the retail sector.

- Co-operate with transition countries in setting up sustainable infrastructure in areas such as waste, housing, energy, and promote public-private partnerships to increase investments in these areas.
- European countries should collaborate with other donors to promote sustainable development, including sustainable consumption and production, through national development strategies and poverty reduction strategies.

Concrete actions for implementation include:

- Create a forum or board of governments and stakeholders to monitor progress on SCP towards 2010 (CSD policy cycle on SCP) as well as other Johannesburg commitments, including the EU Gothenburg commitments.
- Establish a fund to support the activities launched, open to contributions by interested institutions (governments/EU) and stakeholders.
- Launch task forces on specific issues on SCP with champions/lead countries or stakeholders.
- Set up specific targets and timetables for sustainable public procurement at local, sub-national, national and EU levels.
- Promote SCP at the global level by strengthening co-operation between EU member states and other European countries, involving also key stakeholders. Teams of European experts could pool resources to work with key partner countries, such as China and India on circular economy and SCP.
- Focus consumers' attention to SCP

through annual European events on sustainable lifestyles, such as car free days.

- Discourage traffic congestion, with governments and local authorities making use of economic instruments such as road pricing, car free zones and congestion charges.
- Encourage institutional investors to offer green or sustainable financial savings instruments. Percentage targets, i.e. 20% of the total portfolio should be reserved for such purposes.
- Adopt comprehensive policies for specific products, such as phasing out obsolete light bulbs, stand-by modes of electronic equipment, and eliminating double packaging and plastic bags.

This informal expert meeting - part of the regional consultation process on the Marrakech process to develop a ten-year framework on SCP was attended by over 120 experts representing governments and other stakeholders from 30 European countries. The meeting was organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) together with the European Commission (EC), in consultation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and hosted by the Federal Government of Belgium. The European Commission and the governments of Belgium, Finland, Germany and Sweden provided financial support.

Link(s)

- [Report - European Stakeholder meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production](#)

(...) Stumbling blocks on road to green consumption

► Funding for SCP remains a perennial problem. Speakers called on the EU to scrap distorting subsidies by 2010, and to introduce tax breaks, together with more easily understandable loan systems, encouraging investment in environmental products. An EU fund to support SCP activities was proposed.

Several groups called for steps to support marketing of greener products, highlighting a need to make them "sexier - so they come out of the environment corner". One group said care had to be taken not to market

sustainable products "in a moralistic or guilt laden way".

Other suggestions included a framework directive on making environmental aspects part of product design. Belgian sustainable development minister Els Van Weert called for more ministers - or even a European commissioner - with her job title.

It was suggested that EU experts could work with developing countries such as India and China to promote SCP globally. A European Commission official said

the EU had to remember its "global responsibility" to set an example outside Europe.

Timo Makela added that the conference was brought home the "need to review [Europe's] sustainability agenda". He said the time would come for this at next year's spring council, when the Commission presents its annual sustainable development strategy report.

Link(s)

- [Environment Daily](#)

Global efforts for the environment: European Commission and UNEP to reinforce co-operation

The European Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) announced that they will strengthen their cooperation to fight global threats to the environment more effectively.

The agreement takes the form of a Memorandum of Understanding and was signed by Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström and Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, in September, 2004. The Memorandum will reinforce policy dialogue and collaboration at all levels between UNEP and the Commission. This co-operation will support implementation of the commitments made at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, for example on sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity, water and sanitation, renewable energy and chemicals. It will also help achieve the environment-related UN Millennium Development Goals, such as environmental sustainability and the eradication of poverty and extreme hunger.

In signing the Memorandum of Understanding, Commissioner Wallström stated: *“Environmental challenges need an effective international response. Many threats we face are of a global nature. UNEP’s mandate and goals match the EU’s environmental policy priorities. It is therefore important that the Commission fully participates in UNEP’s work and contributes actively to the development and implementation of global environment policies. This will also strengthen UNEP as the main global*

environmental organisation. By joining forces, we will be in a better position to cope with today’s environmental problems.”

“The signing of this memorandum is a big step forward for environmental protection on the global and regional levels where the Commission and UNEP share common objectives,” said Klaus Töpfer. Congratulating all those involved in the process, UNEP’s Executive Director added, *“I want to congratulate all in the Commission, particularly Commissioner Wallström, and those in UNEP that have brought us to this point. But, now the really hard work begins. From combating climate change, to beating poverty in Africa or helping rebuild the devastated infrastructure of post-conflict countries like Afghanistan. The environment and development challenges before UNEP and the EC are immense. By working together, we have a much better chance of succeeding,”* he concluded.

The Memorandum of Understanding provides a framework for structured and consistent collaboration. It envisages regular meetings at senior and expert levels, strategic policy discussions and financial co-operation.

Initially, financial assistance from the

Commission will focus on supporting ongoing co-operation activities, such as work on promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns and reducing the loss of global biodiversity. But the two institutions will also consider possibilities to widen their financial co-operation.

Among the areas selected for immediate cooperation are:

- Sustainable consumption and production;
- Capacity building in developing countries and countries in transition to assist them in reaching sustainable development and environment-related targets, enforcing international environmental agreements and integrating environmental considerations into their trade policies;
- Supporting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, with an initial focus on the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity and agreements on regional seas;
- Providing global access to clean water and sanitation and sustainable energy.

For more information please contact: Sylvie Motard, info@unep.be

Link(s)

- [European Commission](#)

YouthXchange project launched in Dubai for the West Asia region

The UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange project in West Asia was launched by the Dubai Government and the Emirates Diving Association, in conjunction with UNEP, on 11 October 2004.

The project will involve:

- Carrying out the UNEP/UNESCO “Is the future yours” survey on around 5000 youth in Jordan, Dubai and Bahrain to understand the level of awareness on sustainable consumption in the region;
- Translating the youthXchange guide into Arabic;
- Setting up several train-the-trainer sessions in West Asia to create a network of youthxchange trainers.

An Arabic version is fundamental for youthxchange. Arabic is one of the official languages of the United Nations and there is the need to raise awareness among West Asian youth on existing and future challenges for the environment.

Furthermore, as West Asia has one of the highest percentages of youth among



the population in the world, there is much potential for the development of a strong and creative environmental movement especially among youth. YouthXchange will therefore contribute to the development of a higher

environmental awareness in the region. For more information: Ibrahim Al - Zu'bi edadiver@emirates.net.ae

Link(s)

- [Youthxchange](#)

Time is running out to achieve sustainable development, UN warns

Warning that time is running out in the race for sustainable development - vital in the war on growing poverty, hunger, disease and ecological degradation - the United Nations environmental agency has been hosting regional meetings and producing a set of indicators to bring about concrete improvements at the ground level.

"We need to do the job faster because people's lives and the health of the planet are at stake," the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Klaus Toepfer, told environment ministers and over 200 senior decision-makers from 60 countries brought together by his agency last month in Monterrey, Mexico.

"Let us not forget the goal - the ultimate focus of these efforts is at the poor

- those who do not have access to basic services, such as clean water, food, and energy, and who are exposed to health risks due to improper waste management," he said. *"For others, there is the need to consume differently - with less environmental and social impact on the world. We need to create the 'space' for a better quality of life for all."*

Mr. Toepfer called for rich and middle-

class consumers to lead their lives in a way that uses fewer resources and causes less pollution and social damage.

The recommendations of the seminar, which brought together donor organizations and banks, business, government and ground level implementing groups such as Cleaner Production Centres, will shape UNEP's work in the sustainable consumption and production area.

Canadian project wins 2004 "Bremen partnership award"

Klaus Töpfer, UNEP's Executive Director, and Jens Eckhoff, Bremen's Senator of the Environment presented the 2004 "Bremen partnership award" to Alex Winch for the project "Beach Solar Laundromat Wash and Fold".



The Bremen award is aimed at projects which feature cooperation between business partners and ones from the fields of science, politics, local government or NGOs, in the field of sustainable development.

Senator Jens Eckhoff explained *"The 168 entries for the competition completely exceeded all our expectations. The awards go to three projects which are highly committed to the environment and set examples for sustainable economic activity. A fourth project has been awarded a special prize of recognition for*

its outstanding success".

Second and third place went respectively to the "Ukrainian Network for Local Environmental Sustainability" project from the municipality of Nikolaev and to "EcoMTex - Ecological Textiles for the Mass Market" by the German company Otto (GmbH & Co. KG). A special prize of recognition was also awarded to UK entrant BedZED by Bremen's Senator for Construction, Environment and Transport.

Prof. Klaus Töpfer, praised not only the winners, but also Bremen's outstanding

commitment to sustainability. Bremen leads the way in the area of innovative environmental technology. Following the award ceremony, around 300 guests seized the opportunity to exchange ideas.

For further information, please contact: Regan Mundhenke at regan.mundhenke@ecolo-bremen.de

Link(s)

- [Ecolo Bremen](#)
- [Sustainability Center Bremen](#)

UNEP Advertising & Communication Forum to be strengthened

At the UNEP Consultative Meeting on Advertising and Communication (Paris, October 4th, 2004) Monique Barbut, Director of UNEP DTIE, called for the development of a framework of activities for 2005-2006, in close co-operation with the Forum's members. The idea to change the current Forum into a formal initiative was introduced to the Forum's members and will be discussed within the forthcoming months.

The meeting also gave the opportunity to the participants to introduce their current projects and share their own experiences with the group.

Mike Longhurst presented the planned activities of the European Association of Communications Agencies (EACA), including the completion of a Code of Ethics, joining the UN Global Compact, creating an advertising award related to CSR issues and setting up an Advertising

Library on sustainability issues.

Jim Peacock from Future Forests and Nina Kowalska representing St Luke's advertising agency, unveiled their "Carbon Neutral Advertising" joint project. Chris Sherwin from Forum for the Future described Limited Edition, a sustainable marketing project, which intends to make marketing more sustainable and make sustainability more marketable, by educating both marketers

and customers.

Keynote presentations will be available soon on the UNEP website.

For more information, please contact sc@unep.fr

Link(s)

- [UNEP Advertising Forum](#)

Upcoming Events

Asia-Pacific Eco-Business Forum, 24-26 Jan 2005, Kawasaki, Japan
The initiative of Kawasaki City Government, in partnership with UNEP-IETC, to set up the Asia-Pacific Eco-Business Forum aims to highlight the need for business and industry to be active partners with local governments and urban residents in creating a sustainable city

Sustainable Consumption: The Contribution of Research
Workshop, 8-10 February 2005, Gabels Hus, Oslo
Call for Papers

Doors of Perception 8, New Delhi, March 2005
Theme "Platforms for social innovation and how to design them", 21-26 March 2005

Sustainable Innovation 05
Global 'state of the art' in sustainable product/service development and design
10th International Conference 24th - 25th October, 2005
Brussels, Belgium

New Publications

The European Eco-Label issue #2 / 2004
newsletter published by the eco-label sector of the European Commission

The Center for a New American Dream
A group focusing on sustainable consumption, has launched a new website

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E-technology: a key enabler for sustainable development

"In a global industry such as electronics, manufacturing often takes place in countries with little ability to manage environmental problems. In greening their operations, the global players need also to reach out to the small and medium size enterprises in developing countries that form part of their supply chains", said Klaus Toepfer, UNEP's Executive Director at the "Electronics Goes Green" conference on 6 September 2004.

Toepfer especially emphasised the positive greening efforts of companies in emerging countries motivated by rewards in the supply chain.

Future electronic products have to be designed with minimal environmental impact for maximal user benefit. This implies design for energy efficiency. Human needs should be at the centre of technology and business development. Technology is a key enabler for sustainable development. New tasks evolve from globalisation and the need for a balanced - sustainable - development.

Design for Environment and Environmental Management Systems are not new to the electronics sector.

However, with dynamically increasing dissemination of electronics and its convergence with everyday products (ubiquitous electronics) a holistic approach to product and business design has to be taken.

The Fraunhofer Institute for Reliability and Microintegration, IZM Berlin, in cooperation with the Technical University of Berlin hosted the meeting and exhibition in Berlin, Germany.

More information, including the proceedings, can be obtained from the conference website, given in the link below.

Link(s)

• [Fraunhofer Institute](#)

Barcelona symposium endorses Greening Events Initiative

A "Greening Events Initiative" and action plan was endorsed at a symposium in Barcelona, including a model mission statement for green event planning, management principles for including sustainability criteria, and the creation of a loose network for co-operation.

The International Symposium on Greening Events, was held in Barcelona, 20-22 September 2004. ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) initiated an international discussion with cities and event organisers to understand how the environmental and social impact of large-scale events can be reduced.

Organising events is a major activity in some cities and many of these events focus on various aspects of sustainability. But they are not always sustainable themselves. According to ICLEI "events are often - but not always - beneficial to the cities that stage them, and the opportunities for increasing this potential was repeatedly highlighted. Local governments must play a key role and have a special responsibility to introduce sustainability principles into event planning. Though not necessarily organisers or hosts - and sometimes

with an only very marginal role - local governments are always, and rightly so, made accountable to some degree for the responsible running of events."

The discussions in Barcelona highlighted problems and some of the solutions initiated by cities to make sure their green "activism" and conference hosting is sustainable for both the city and for the environment.

"Greening Events" was first presented as an initiative at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg by IUCN.

For further information, contact green.events@iclei.org

Link(s)

• [ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability](#)