

# A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN OUR HANDS



“We do not  
inherit the Earth  
from our ancestors;  
we borrow it from  
our children.”

*Lakota*

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Belgium

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# **A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN OUR HANDS**







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# General introduction



Worried about climate change? How to pay for your pension? Air pollution? Or, perhaps it's whether your child will find a decent job? The European Union is tackling these and other issues that affect us every day – working to improve the quality of our lives and to make our children's future more secure. The EU's Sustainable Development Strategy reaches across the board. From how we cut down our trees to the way we treat our elderly, Europe's future depends on whether it achieves the triple objectives of wealth creation, social cohesion and environmental protection.

## **What is sustainable development?**

Defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", sustainable development was the main theme of what is often called the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It was here that world leaders signed up to conventions on both climate change and biodiversity. They issued a declaration at the end of the summit, listing 27 principles on the environment and sustainable development.



## What are the EU's goals?

The EU has its own strategy on sustainable development dealing with most of the Rio challenges covering economic, environmental and social issues. It lists the following seven key challenges:

- Climate change and clean energy
- Sustainable transport
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Conservation and management of natural resources
- Public health
- Social inclusion, demography and migration
- Global poverty

The Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy ('renewed' because it has been updated from the first which was formulated in 2001) sets out how we can meet our needs without making the quality of life worse for the next generations.

In February 2005 the European Commission took stock of the progress that had been made and came to the conclusion that the situation was deteriorating. So in a bid to halt the destructive trends leading to the exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation and to deal with unemployment, immigration and public health, the EU Council adopted the strategy in June 2006. In 2007 a progress report was published and can be found on the sustainable development website at [ec.europa.eu/sustainable/](http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/)

The first, specific long-term objective is to limit climate change and the EU will put pressure on its countries to meet the commitments they signed up to in 1997, through the Kyoto Protocol and the most recent targets agreed between the heads of state at the Spring European Council in March 2007 to reduce greenhouse gases by 20 percent by 2020. How the targets can be met is the subject of a wide range of programmes and laws.

Although this stays at the top of the list, emphasis has also been placed, among other areas, on solidarity between generations. Closing the poverty gap is a key thread of the strategy and it outlines ways of doing so, such as increasing employment, putting effective social welfare into place and making sure education and training are flexible and widespread enough to appeal to all.



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The EU is also very focused on the reality of an ageing population so pensions, health care and long-term care systems come under the spotlight. To support the demographic change, young people need to be helped into work; the older generation encouraged to stay active longer; gender equality has to become a reality, and migration to be handled intelligently.

Another point of focus is public health, together with food safety, the dangers posed by chemicals in the environment and pollution. The threats to our health caused by the way we chose to live - smoking for example - are also targeted in the renewed strategy as is our general well-being and mental health.

Improving the management of our natural resources is also vital. New rural development programmes, a reformed fisheries policy, frameworks for organic farming and animal welfare, and an emphasis on sustainable forest management are all being harnessed in the fight to protect the world around us.

### **How is the EU going to achieve its goals?**

**Educating and training:** The Commission recognises the importance of education for all ages and at all levels, throughout the EU. In 2006, the European Parliament and Council adopted a lifelong learning programme to run 2007 – 2013. This is part of an overall aim to increase the skills needed to create a modern Europe and to give everyone the chance to play an active role in society.



**Research and development:** Universities, research institutes and private companies all have a role to play in finding a way to ensure sustainable economic growth and environmental protection reinforce each other. To encourage the most original thinkers to produce results, the Commission has set aside over €50bn for the 2007-13 period in grants under a pan-European funding programme for research called the **Seventh Framework Programme**. Hopefully this will open the way for new discoveries that can help Europe answer its pressing social, environmental and economic challenges.

**Using the economy to bring about change:** The EU wants to see prosperity and growth benefiting everyone without causing more damage to the world in which we live. Tax incentives for 'clean' practice and changing what is subsidised all help to put money where it will have the best effect. A shift in taxation from labour to environmental issues can also change the public's behaviour. For example, the Swedish government in 2001 increased taxes on diesel, heating oil and electricity and lowered income taxes and social security contributions. As a result, Sweden has been able to lower its greenhouse gas emissions more quickly than anticipated. And in Denmark, a tax on extremely toxic nickel-cadmium batteries caused customers to switch to less toxic alternatives.

**Communicating:** Sustainable development is at the heart of the EU's actions and, in order to maximise success, the EU is emphasising the importance of communication. People, at all levels, need to get together to share their experience of which policies work and which don't. Businesses need to talk with their local authorities, national governments with the EU, and regional governments with their citizens. Taxes need to be explained, the logic behind measures from local recycling projects to spending on third world poverty needs to be understood by everyone.

**Staying on track:** Words must be put into action. Starting in 2007 the Commission will submit a progress report every two years, covering all that has been done throughout the EU to promote sustainable development. Other tactics include: ensuring that policy makers from different EU nations learn from each other; the sharing of information, and the development of a set of indicators to show precisely what is working and what is not.



## Making a difference

These goals are not just pie in the sky. There is a clear awareness that now is the time to put the measures, outlined in this booklet, into practice. To do so, a two-pronged attack is necessary and this is where the notion of active citizenship comes in.

Legal measures, tax incentives, polluter pays - all these elements put us on the right track to sustainable development. But if we don't do our part to meet the challenges facing us in this generation, future generations will inherit a world that is impoverished.

The purpose of this booklet is to let you know what is being done by the EU and what can be done by individuals. We will outline the measures taken at EU level and offer simple, practical ideas that can be applied on a day-to-day basis by you. You and the EU together can make sustainable development a reality.





# Climate change

## Limiting the damage



Climate change is no longer a distant threat, it's here now and it's speeding up. Around the world, many areas are already struggling to cope with rising temperatures. So far, we're talking about a global average of  $0.76^{\circ}\text{C}$  compared with the beginning of the industrial revolution. But the trend looks set to continue and its impact to get worse.

Europeans are feeling the effects of global warming: droughts, floods, heat waves and forest fires are all becoming more and more frequent. This is just a taste of what's in store. Climatologists at the UN's Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) warn us of a further rise of as much as  $4^{\circ}\text{C}$  between 1990 and 2100.

What we're seeing now is largely the result of billions of tonnes of  $\text{CO}_2$  released into the atmosphere each day from burning coal, oil and natural gas. These fossil fuels provide us with the energy we need to run our cars, heat our homes and light up our offices. But we're sitting on a time bomb. Not only is our environment going to suffer, but our economy and society too.



### Situation on the ground

Long considered hypothetical, the effects of climate change are now unmistakable. From cooler winters to hotter summers, our seasons are increasingly marked by extremes in weather. Eleven of the world's twelve warmest years on record occurred between 1995 and 2006. And while this was welcome for some, it was devastating for many.

The scorching heat wave that hit Europe in the summer of 2003 claimed 35,000 lives, approximately half from France. Many also died in Germany, Spain and Italy. Temperatures in the UK exceeded 38°C for the first time ever recorded. These heat waves are projected to increase in both frequency and intensity in the years to come. But if Europe is already struggling to cope now, what will it be like then? In the twentieth century, the temperature in Europe increased by 0.95°C compared with the global average of 0.76°C.

It's not just hotter and colder seasons that we're experiencing, but wetter and drier ones too. A contrasting picture is forming in Europe, with the north becoming wetter (10-40% since 1900) and the south becoming drier (up to 20% since 1900). The resulting floods on one hand and droughts on the other are having a considerable impact on agriculture and water sources. If current trends continue, this can only get worse.

The economy is also affected - extreme weather conditions are blamed for 79% of economic loss due to catastrophes. On average there were twice as many incidents of disastrous weather conditions in the 1990s than in the 1980s.

Patterns are emerging in the ecosystem too. Certain plant species are moving northward now that the climate is warmer, increasing diversity in some areas and lowering it in others. Certain insects are also taking flight, and ticks, for example, are being found further north than ever before. The consequences of this appear to be greater tick-borne diseases in the Baltic countries and in central European countries.



Polar bears on their retreating glaciers in the Arctic are often an iconic image of the effects of climate change. But not so many people know about Europe's own retreating glaciers. In the summer of 2003 alone, 10% of the remaining glacier mass in the Alps was lost and it is estimated that 75% of the glaciers in the Swiss Alps will probably have disappeared by 2050.

With such widespread impact, only urgent action will do. "Climate change is a global problem that needs global solutions, not in ten or twenty years' time but right now" European Commission President Barroso said, during a trip to Greenland to see the effects of global warming first hand.

Europe is already affected but those most likely to suffer most are the developing countries, where the climate is already warmer and where livelihoods are largely dependent on agriculture.

The challenge is a complex one. Today our main energy sources are finite reserves of fossil fuels which take millions years to replenish. There is a danger that at current consumption levels these reserves will run dry. What's more, the International Energy Agency forecasts a 60% rise in energy needs between 2000 and 2030.

With no one miracle energy source, the only solution lies in increasing efficiency and finding alternatives, while making full use of renewable sources.



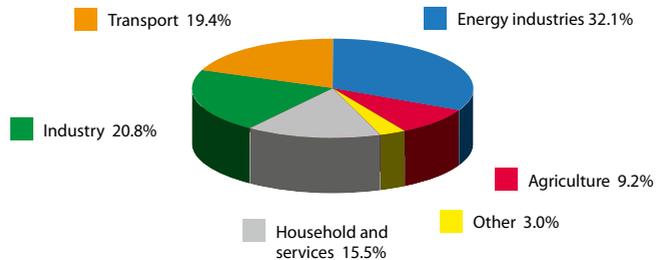
### What the EU's doing

Since the mid-1990s, when the IPCC first established a clear relationship between human activity and climate change, the EU has been intensifying its efforts to tackle the threat posed by climate change. Under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol signed by 140 countries, the EU-15 as a whole committed to cutting its greenhouse gas emissions by 8%, from 1990 levels, by 2012.

Most recently, at the European Council on 9 March 2007, leaders agreed on a comprehensive package of measures, establishing a new integrated climate change and energy policy. This would go above and beyond all previous commitments. Its targets include:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the EU by 20% by 2020, and by 30% if international agreement is reached
- Improving energy efficiency by 20% by 2020
- Raising the share of renewable energy to 20% by 2020
- Increasing the level of biofuels in transport fuel to 10% by 2020

A quick glance at the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU reveals that the sectors most responsible are energy, industry and transport, followed closely by households and agriculture.



Sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU-2004 (European Environmental Agency)



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To identify and develop targeted means of mitigation, the EU set up a **European Climate Change Programme** in 2000. By consulting businesses, scientists and NGOs, this programme draws up ways in which the EU can reduce its own emissions which account for 14% of global emissions. It has so far identified 40 areas, which together can reduce Europe's emissions by up to 16% compared with 1990 figures.

Its major achievement has been the **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Scheme** which began in 2005. This is the largest multi-country, multi-sector emissions trading scheme in the world. It helps countries reach their CO<sub>2</sub> obligations under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol agreement by teaming up an over-producing country with one that is under its Kyoto limit. The over producer then pays for the right to use the spare capacity of the other country concerned: in the end, both emit no more than the amount agreed on.

A set of measures under the **Ecodesign Directive** is being developed to ensure that cost-effective improvements are made to the most energy-hungry products. Minimum energy efficiency requirements will be combined with clearer labelling for these products. It is estimated that improvements to central heating boilers and water heaters alone could lead to 3% less overall emissions by 2020 (compared with 2004).

Through the **Energy Taxation Directive**, the EU will seek to discourage pollutant behaviour and reward positive behaviour in terms of energy savings and environmentally friendly activities.

Did  
you know...

Recycling aluminium requires ten times less energy than producing it from scratch.



Transport is another sector with great potential for mitigating climate change and a number of legislative proposals are being examined. These include: adding aviation to the greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme; increasing the proportion of biofuels used in transport; decreasing the carbon-intensity of fuel, and restoring a balance between different modes of transport.

The EU is also working in partnership with key players to reverse the current trend towards an increase in energy needs by identifying and eradicating the main forms of energy waste: new energy technologies are to be developed to increase the efficiency with which energy is generated and consumed. They will benefit from massive investment thanks to the **EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme for 2007-2013**. Products, buildings and services will all be made more energy efficient and fossil fuel technologies made cleaner.



Renewable energy is also being looked at as a way to further increase sustainable energy sources. Through water power, solar energy, biofuels, biomass and geothermal energy, the EU aims to guarantee that 20% of its overall energy mix comes from renewable energy sources by 2020. Biofuels figure highly in this mix and are to supply 10% of petrol and diesel needs in the EU by 2020. Sweden currently leads Europe in its use of biofuels - with 2.3%. It is followed by Germany, the Czech Republic and France.

While each renewable source has its pros and cons, investment into technology will ensure that the EU harnesses the potential of renewables as fossil fuel-replacing sources. Another alternative source is biomass and this is where the EU's **Biomass Action Plan** comes in. Biomass includes anything that is solid and organic like wood and wood waste, straw, crop harvest residues, vegetal and animal waste. This substitutes more traditional sources like coal, petrol and gas, which are limited and polluting. Measured in terms of 'tons of oil equivalent' (toe), the EU estimates the action plan will help to increase biomass use to 150 million toe in 2010.

Security of supply is a real concern. The **New Energy Policy for Europe Action Plan**, adopted by the European Council in March 2007, has as one of its main aims the provision of secure energy supplies. But while the EU is principally concerned with its own member countries, it is not working alone. Several partnerships with industrialised and developing nations exist.

The EU has initiated an energy dialogue with Russia, for example. It hopes to ensure a high level of environmental protection and nuclear safety with this country that accounts for 7% of world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Through the Kyoto Protocol's flexibility mechanism, efforts are being made to modernise Russia's energy sector and in doing so to promote energy efficiency and environmentally friendly technologies.

With the USA, an energy saving programme, **Energy Star**, is in place for office equipment. Computers, copiers, printers and computer monitors all have to meet demanding energy efficiency criteria. This measure is expected to yield 30 TWh electricity savings in three years – the approximate equivalent of Hungary's electricity demand.



The EU has been trying to rally China and India's leaders to intensify cooperation on climate change. The idea would be to develop clean coal technologies, increase energy efficiency and promote environmentally friendly energy sources. And, if these countries commit to reducing their emissions according to their capabilities, the EU has expressed its willingness to go a step further - increasing its own commitment to a 30% reduction.

### **Making a difference**

Households are directly responsible for around 16% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, 70% of the energy used by households is spent on heating homes, 14% on heating water and 12% on lighting and electric appliances. Private car use is responsible for another 10% of EU greenhouse gas emissions. The potential for action is therefore vast!

It is possible to calculate how much you contribute to global warming by using a **carbon-dioxide footprint calculator**. There are several tools available on the internet, such as the EU's own calculator: [www.mycarbonfootprint.eu](http://www.mycarbonfootprint.eu).

By using this calculator you can discover how you can make your lifestyle more sustainable without compromising your quality of life. Luckily, some of the most effective things we can do are some of the simplest, and they save money.

**Opt for a cleaner mode of transport.** Choose the train or bus instead of the car and walk or cycle as much as you can. This goes a long way to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. If you need to buy a car, purchase one that consumes less fuel and emits less CO<sub>2</sub>.

**Unplug electrical appliances when not in use.** Even on standby these appliances still consume energy – up to 60% of the power they use when on! Fit special light bulbs that consume less energy - these can last up to 12 times longer than ordinary bulbs and so work out cheaper.



Domestic household appliances sold in the EU carry a label grading them according to their energy efficiency, with the grades running from A (high energy efficiency) to G (low efficiency). Choosing higher **energy efficient products** saves unnecessary emissions and encourages enterprises to invest in research and development.

We all try to optimise the temperature of our homes. In the winter we turn up the heat and in summer the air conditioning. But by installing **home insulation** we can reduce this need as our homes become more resilient to outside temperatures. Homes are often overheated - a simple change like turning down the thermostat by 1°C could easily go unnoticed, yet have a great impact. Not only does this cut down in energy use but it can also knock as much as 10% off your heating bill. We can achieve substantial reductions by making clever choices.

“Unplug,  
turn off,  
turn down”





# Sustainable transport

Easier, cleaner & safer



Does your city suffer crippling congestion at rush hour? Are you forever trying to avoid the tailbacks you hear of on radio traffic updates? Could the motorway you use be mistaken for a giant car park? You're not alone. The whole of Europe is affected, with seven and a half thousand kilometres of its roads blocked by traffic each day.

The nuisance of overcrowded roads goes beyond time wasted in bumper-to-bumper traffic – the impact is also detrimental to our environment and our health. Road traffic contributes massively to greenhouse gases. It accounts for one fifth of the EU's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions which have risen 26% between 1990 and 2004. And, in spite of road safety inventions such as ABS brake systems and airbags, 40,000 people still die on our roads each year.

This is just one part of the picture – air travel is another. Flying looms large among environmental concerns as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from international air travel have soared by 87% since 1990.

Did  
you know...

On average, each EU citizen travels 35 km a day – 75% of this distance is covered by car



### Situation on the ground

Reacting to the varying degrees of congestion, noise and air pollution, national and local authorities have been devising innovative schemes to ease up the traffic on their roads.

In Germany, the health conscious are hiring bikes from the Call-a-Bike rental service now running in Berlin, Cologne, Munich and Stuttgart. In northern Italy, roads are now car free on Sundays thanks to the participation of several regions and more than four million citizens. In Paris, the area around the river Seine is free from traffic and open to pedestrians, rollerbladers and cyclists on Sundays and public holidays, thanks to the Paris Respire initiative.

In London, congestion charges are levied on motorists entering the centre, and plans are in the pipeline to introduce discounts for the least polluting vehicles. Surcharges for the most polluting vehicles, such as the gas-guzzling 4x4s and sports cars, are also on the way. A new demand-responsive bus service in Krakow, Poland, allows citizens living in suburban areas to reach the city centre more quickly and comfortably. Public transport can be ordered simply by calling a special telephone number.

The complete bus fleet in the Austrian city of Graz now runs on biodiesel made from reused cooking oil from households and restaurants. And a biodiesel service station was opened in 2003 which allows people to buy biodiesel directly.

While these approaches all contribute to curbing pollution and boosting a cleaner, more balanced transport system, their effectiveness will be limited until there is some form of central coordination. This is where the EU comes in. By providing central coordination, the EU makes these initiatives more than just a postcode lottery, so that all can benefit, not just the lucky few.



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## What the EU's doing

Ideally traffic would never clog up our roads, people would favour the cleanest and most efficient modes of transport, and clean fuel would put an end to toxic fume-filled air. But much still remains to be done to get this concept off the drawing board and onto the streets. This is why the EU has decided to coordinate action in a number of key areas:

- Reducing pollutant emissions to minimise effects on human health and the environment
- Achieving a balance in the frequency of use between different modes of transport
- Cutting vehicle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, targeting 140g/km by 2009 and 120g/km by 2012
- Halving the number of road deaths (compared with 2000) by 2010

The EU's **Eurovignette Directive**, established in 1999, encourages member countries to apply tolls for heavy goods vehicles reflecting the environmental impact of freight transportation. This initiative will reward drivers with less polluting vehicles.

Currently, one out of every nine freight deliveries in Europe arrives late due to road congestion. And, with trends pointing to a 50% rise in freight transport by 2010, action is sorely needed. The **Marco Polo** programme sets out to restore the balance by encouraging the use of combined modes of transport and by building more efficient, cost effective and sustainable transport chains.

For future action, the Commission has adopted a new **Green Paper on Urban Mobility**. This Paper involves new approaches to encourage the use of sustainable and energy-efficient transport solutions, including public transport and non-motorised transport modes. It addresses all modes of transport, including walking, cycling, motor cycles and motor vehicles, and covers both urban freight (and logistics) and passenger transport. The Paper emphasises the need for an integrated policy approach.

## Did you know...

A person flying from London to New York and back will generate around the same emissions as an average EU family heating their home for a year



To cut vehicle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions new legislation is in the pipeline - this follows the poor performance of car manufacturers on reaching the voluntary target of 140g/km set in 1999 for 2009. Vehicles currently emit an average of 163g/km.

Air travel has also been targeted and is proposed to come under the EU greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme from 2012 which allows participating countries to buy or sell their emission allowances. This could cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from aviation by 46% by 2020.

To halve the number of road deaths in Europe by 2010, a string of initiatives are underway and are already proving effective. Thanks to the **Trans-European Transport Network**, Europe's major roads are becoming safer through better infrastructure and engineering. The most vulnerable road users – pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists – are safer too, with heavy goods vehicles now required by law to fit blind spot mirrors. Other road safety devices are being developed and promoted. An **eSafety Aware campaign** has been set up to promote the use of Electronic Stability Control technology which is said to cut road accidents by more than 20%.

### Making a difference

Wherever possible, **share your car**. Parents know the benefits of shared school runs. But how about sharing the car to work, picking up a colleague or two on the way? And if you live in a town and the **public transport** system could take you where you need to go, try it out if you aren't using it already. Cars are habit-forming, try another way to get to work. You may find that not dealing with rush hour jams or fighting for a parking space is a more relaxing way to start your day

Do yourself a favour - **travel by bike**. Not only does this have less of an impact on the environment, but it also helps to keep you in shape. There are a number of public bicycle ranks sprouting up all over Europe - Germany's Call-a-Bike, France's Vélo à la Carte and the Netherlands' OV Fiets are just a few examples.

If you are going to use a car, it's important to **consider safety**.

- Buckling up could save as many as 5,500 lives a year in the EU. Failure to wear a seat belt is the second biggest cause of road deaths, after speeding and ahead of drink-driving
- Smart driving - adapting your speed and anticipating is safer, saves fuel and money, and cuts emissions



- Listening to music at a lower tempo – it's not only speed that kills. Listening to fast music also increases your chances of having an accident
- The colour of your car can affect safety - lighter cars are more visible. Silver would appear to be the safest followed by white, yellow, red and blue
- Fitting safety devices for children under 1.35 metres tall that are adapted to their weight can vastly reduce the risk of serious injury



“Make the most of your bike, get out into the fresh air”



# Consumption & production

Smarter use of resources from start to finish



From disposable cameras to electrical goods that are cheaper to replace than repair, throwing things away is part of everyday life. Think of everything you buy and use daily and then consider the other 1.7 billion people who make up our consumer society - they are all doing exactly the same thing.

Over the last few decades, we have been enjoying higher standards of living with more and more people making use of goods and services not available to them in the past. But at the same time, the way we consume and produce these products and services are the main sources of the pressures we put on the environment. Our consumption and production significantly exceeds the carrying capacity of our Earth on which our prosperity and well-being is based.

These pressures continue to increase as the world population keeps on growing. The result? Urban sprawl, the quality of our soil falls away, watercourses run dry or are polluted and there's a constant challenge to find ways to dispose of all the things we throw away. We are mining minerals like there is no tomorrow while our round-the-clock factories pump out ever increasing amounts of greenhouse gases. These are just some examples of the hidden costs behind the low price tag on intensively farmed meat or the latest techno-gadget.

Did you know...

In the 1960 an average European grocery had 2,000 product lines. A modern supermarket has more than 15,000.

Our consumption in the EU falls into four major categories: food and drink; housing; personal travel and mobility and tourism.

The negative effects of European production and consumption can be felt in other parts of the world. According to the European Environment Agency, we are increasingly using resources from abroad for consumption in Europe, putting pressure on the environment in other regions of the world.

### Situation on the ground

The way we consume in modern society squanders resources and often makes us spend large amounts on unsustainable products that are less than beneficial to us and society at large. We need to create sustainable consumption which takes into account both economic efficiency and the greater social and environmental good.

Buying things has become a cultural habit and shopping, in some EU countries, is now a top leisure activity. Advertisements encourage children to spend their pocket money or influence their parents - UNESCO reports that revenues from advertising aimed at children have reached up to €1bn a year, in the EU alone.

How we make and buy things has to change.

By 2050, with current trends the global energy demand could double as populations rise and developing countries expand their economies, we urgently need to develop products and services that use fewer resources, to prevent needless waste of resources and to consume more responsibly.

These are objectives that will take considerable effort to achieve. This is a common task for all: international organisations, public authorities, producers, retailers, consumers and people educating our children and the public.



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## What the EU's doing

Achieving sustainable consumption and production involves changing the way we produce, buy and throw away. The EU has identified key targets to make our consumption and production patterns less harmful:

- Put an end to the destructive link between economic growth and damage to the environment
- Encourage businesses and the general public to use objects that have been produced responsibly
- Aim to get public authorities across Europe to buy products and services that do not damage the environment. This is already being done in some countries. By 2010, the EU wants to get all countries in the Union to match those countries who are best at sourcing products and services which respect the environment
- Increase the market in technologies and innovations that are environmentally-friendly
- Improve the welfare of animals both within the EU and beyond

On a European level, objectives are being achieved through a variety of measures.

In January 2004 the EU put into force its **Environment Technology Action Plan (ETAP)**. Examples of environmental technologies include recycling systems for waste water in industrial processes, energy efficient car engines and soil improvement techniques. ETAP focuses on creating alternative ways of production that have less environmental impact.

The **Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources** was proposed in December 2005 and runs for 25 years. It aims to ensure that the consumption of resources and the impact involved does not exceed the environment's capacity to regenerate. It is designed to help break the link between economic growth and resource use.



The way that the things we buy affect the environment is the concern of the **Integrated Product Policy** 2003. Designers, manufacturers, marketing companies, retailers and the consumer are brought together to take what action they can to reduce the negative impact of a product from when it is first made to when it is thrown away.

To let the consumer know how environmentally friendly the object they are buying actually is, the EU produced an **Eco-Label** scheme in 1992. This takes the form of a flower logo and guarantees that the object is greener than other similar products on the market. To gain the Eco-Label, the object has to meet strict criteria that take into account the effect of the item on the environment from the moment of its production, through its use and up until its disposal. Now the programme has extended to services and includes rating campsites and other tourist facilities for their environmental impact.

Campaigns such as **Buying Green** and **Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)** have been launched by the EU to influence the business community. The EU aims to set an example through its Buying Green scheme. This puts forward guidelines to help public institutions pick their contractors and suppliers on the basis of 'Green Procurement'.

The EMAS encourages business to follow suit and share their experiences, bringing responsible companies together to network.

The **Community Action Plan for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010** outlines an overall strategy and details a series of concrete actions to improve animal welfare. It highlights how consumers can improve the living conditions of animals by making informed choices.

Wishing to reinforce these initiatives, the Commission intends to present a **Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan**.

Did you know...

European public authorities spend around 16% of the Union's GDP (the value of all the economic activity). By using their purchasing power to opt for goods and services that respect the environment, they make an important contribution.



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### Making a difference

You buy, you vote, you have power. When shopping you make choices. The decisions you make when you travel, choose what to eat and live in your home will have an environmental impact. Price should not be the only element of your choice. By adding a few other criteria to your list you can make a difference. Here are a few ideas.

Travel and tourism have blossomed and grown tremendously in the past half century. Knowledge of other places, other people, and other cultures can expand our lives and enliven our world. But this growth sometimes threatens the very existence of the places that inspire our visits. Getting answers to questions about waste treatment, hiring of local people, respect for native cultures, construction practices, traffic congestion, water supply, and care for natural resources can both **inform your choices** and reinforce sustainable practices at your destination.

Back at home, if you are shopping for household appliances make sure you buy those which are certified to be energy efficient. **Look for an energy star** or a grading such as "AAA" which indicates the machine will also save you money when you run it. Also keep



an eye out for Ecolabels which show that the whole life cycle of a product and its effect on the environment has been considered carefully. A wide range of products are included under the scheme from soaps, shampoos and detergents to tourist accommodation and campsites.

Choose food that is produced sustainably. **Buy in local farmers' markets**, it will be fresh and you'll be supporting local jobs. If you buy organic or free range meat you'll be reducing the amount of chemicals needed to produce the food you eat. Check labels for information on how the animals were farmed.

Where possible **buy FairTrade products**, this certification means that what you are purchasing is produced responsibly. If you can't find a supply of FairTrade items in your local shops, try asking the supermarket to stock them. Make your voice heard.

When you are thinking of replacing or upgrading something, ask yourself:

**Do you really need it?** Are you being manipulated by clever advertising?

**Why not give it away?** If it's not broken but you have to replace it, is there a charity that would put it to good use? A scheme to provide cheap furniture to those on very low incomes? A charity restoring old computer monitors for use in schools in developing countries? Is your office getting rid of all its old IT equipment? Ask around, it's in your hands.

**Is it really broken?** If the object has stopped working a simple blown fuse could be the problem. Check the plug. If it is dead and needs to be thrown away, then look into ways of disposal that are environmentally friendly.

**Can the product be recycled?** If it can but it is electric or electronic make sure you follow the instructions on how to recycle the object.



Often the manufacturer will have a responsibility to take it off your hands. This can save you time and money.

It's time to consume intelligently, using better products that have been produced more responsibly.

“Is it really broken?”






 CHAPTER

# Natural resources

## Protecting the world around us



There may be 20 to 30 South China tigers left in the wild - with numbers so very low, it's hard to be precise. We do know there are more privately owned tigers in America alone than in the whole of the wild. Closer to home, the Iberian Lynx population is so threatened that it may well become the first big cat species to go extinct since the sabre-toothed tiger. These are just a couple of examples of the impact we are having on the air, sea and land around us.

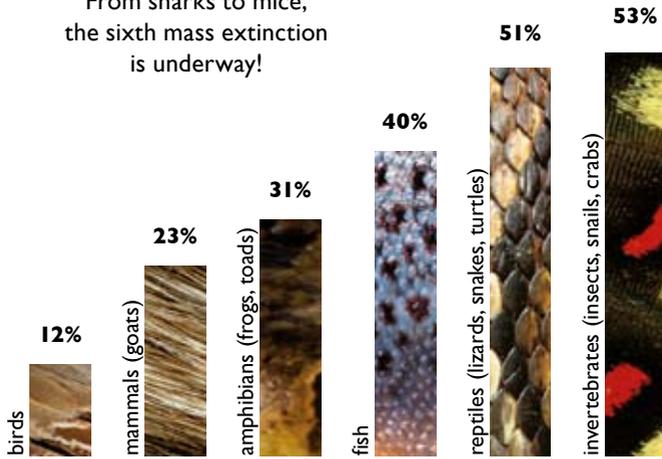
Natural disasters and processes were behind the other five mass extinctions seen in the geological record.

This is the sixth and this time there is no debate over cause – it's us. Centuries of disregard for our impact on the natural world has left us with more statistics than the plants and animals they represent.

And it is not just animals and plants that are affected. Joint research carried out at the universities of Ausburg and Yale looked at the supply of minerals left and estimated when they would run out, given current consumption trends. Their results for 2006 show we have 15 years left of platinum, 15-20 of silver and 20-30 of zinc. They add that key resources will run out even more quickly if some new technologies become marketable and the population grows.



From sharks to mice,  
the sixth mass extinction  
is underway!



Percentage of species classified as threatened

\* International union for conservation of nature & natural resources (2006)

### Situation on the ground

You would think that with supplies running out we would make better use of what we have. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) analysed the proportion of our consumption that is met by recycled materials and found that, globally, we recycle just 26% of the tin we use, 31% of the copper and 26% of the zinc.

While the supply of minerals becomes exhausted under ground, above ground things are also looking grim. Coral reefs, cloud forests, prairies - all are being eroded by fishing or farming, impacted by trawling or cleared to make way for cattle ranches, coffee or soy plantations. Civil engineering projects such as roads and dams tear up wilderness and silt up rivers.

### Did you know...

For decades people have been talking of deforestation in the Amazon but Singapore has lost 95% of its forests and, if the felling remains at its current rate, South East Asia may lose 74% of its forests by 2100

Climate change also has a large role to play: recent modelling by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) predicts dramatic reductions in sea ice coverage over the next 50 to 100 years due to global climate change. This will have a devastating impact on



polar bears. It is anticipated there will be a population reduction of at least 30% over the next 45 years as a result. Other threats to the population include pollution, and disturbance from shipping, recreational viewing, oil and gas exploration and development, and potential risk of over-hunting, both legal and illegal.

In many countries around the world the need for a change of approach is recognised. At the end of last year 16.4 million hectares, an area the size of Portugal and Ireland put together, was given protected status in the north of Brazil. The new protected areas form the world's largest conservation corridor, connecting them to what was, until now, the biggest conservation area in the Amazon. This status will provide protection from illegal logging, soya farming and mining.

A convention on biodiversity was signed by 150 government leaders at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It recognises that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and micro-organisms and their ecosystems – it is about people and our need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live.

However, action taken voluntarily, such as the International Whaling Commission's moratorium which aims to protect whales from the devastating consequences of industrial whaling, can be all too easily overturned. The moratorium is fragile and needs to be rigorously defended against challenges notably from Norway, Iceland and Japan.

Laws are needed. Cooperation to identify what must be done and to make sure that targets are met is also vital: this is where the EU steps in.



### What the EU's doing

Moves to halt global warming, efforts to manage the waste we produce, capping fishing quotas, all show the EU's determination to turn the situation around.

It has set itself the objective of improving the management and avoiding the overexploitation of natural resources in such a way that our rate of use matches regeneration and has listed these goals:

- Contribute to halting and significantly reducing the rate of worldwide biodiversity loss by 2010 and beyond
- Clean up degraded marine environments by 2015 which would be in line with the Johannesburg Plan (2002) and avoid the over-exploitation of fish stocks
- Work towards the United Nations targets on forest protection by 2015
- Improve the efficiency of use to make a little go a long way and so gain a competitive advantage
- Promote recycling and cutting down on the generation of waste

These aims are going to be achieved through a variety of measures.

Over 26,000 sites making up an area the equivalent of Germany and Italy put together have been chosen under the **Natura 2000 programme** based on the **Habitats and Birds Directive**. These sites now form a European network of protected areas selected by EU countries which are legally obliged to ensure their conservation.

The EU has signed up to the United Nations convention on biological diversity which recognises the importance of our natural heritage. The 2006 EU **Biodiversity Communication** sets out a detailed action plan to respond to the challenge of halting biodiversity loss by 2010.

Agriculture and fisheries have seen many recent changes, the **Common Fisheries Policy** has been reformed and in farming the Common Agricultural Policy has shifted its focus away from support for production of agricultural products to general support for farmers. New laws concerning animal welfare and organic food production, hygiene and food quality, deal with concerns that more intensive farming was to blame for 'mad cow disease',



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dioxin in milk, artificial hormones in meat and other food-related health scares.

The seas have suffered from pollution and over-fishing; now climate change is having an impact. But the EU's **Marine Environment Strategy** aims to achieve good biological status of European waters by 2021. EU countries will have to present a detailed assessment on the state of their seas, define what good environmental status means to them in their regional seas, establish targets and set out monitoring programmes. There will also be close cooperation with non-EU countries who share the same waters. From 2008 it is the stated aim of the EU to make sure that their policies on maritime affairs will work together, across the board.

Within the **Water Framework Directive** every river basin will be analysed for its water quality with specific focus on areas vulnerable to pollution. Quantity will be measured against demand for irrigation, energy generation, drinking water consumption and industrial and ecological uses.

In 2006, the EU ensured the protection of 38% of its forests and woods. The **Forest Action Plan** runs from 2007 to 2011 and has four main objectives: to boost long-term competitiveness; improve and protect the environment; contribute to quality of life, and foster coordination and communication.

Looking after our natural resources doesn't only mean protecting them from exploitation it also requires us to re-use what we can. What we can't use again has to be disposed of in a way that has the least impact on the environment.

To work towards this goal, the **Thematic Strategy on Waste Prevention and Recycling** was adopted in December 2005. It is a long-term strategy aimed at helping Europe become a recycling society that seeks to avoid waste and uses waste as a resource.

The **Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive** is a cornerstone of EU legislation dealing with industrial installations that are potential high polluters. Such installations may only be used if the operator holds a permit containing requirements for the protection of air, water and soil. Waste has to be cut right down, the potential for accidents foreseen and prevented and, if necessary, the site cleaned up. These requirements must be based on the principle of best available techniques (BAT).



### Making a difference

The way we use water and energy, the way we design our homes and dispose of waste, whether or not we enjoy the gardens, parks and wilderness areas around us – all these factors have an affect on our world. From projects to recycle old furniture and clothes to fund raising to save orangutans: people are getting involved.

You can help to bring wildlife back into urban areas. By **growing native plants** in your garden, you can attract birds, lizards, frogs and insects. These backyard havens combine with trees on urban streets to make wildlife corridors which link the remnants of natural scrub and wood, and expand the habitats of many animals. Try to plant and encourage indigenous species - imported plants can cause havoc; Japanese knotweed is a case in point. Remember that every tree you plant not only provides a home for wild animals but improves the quality of air around it. When you work in your garden, **use eco-friendly products** and avoid creosote and paints with high levels of volatile organic compounds. This will be shown on the label.

Beyond the back garden, parks and forests are just waiting to be explored – it is easier to recognise the value of something once you have experienced it first hand, so take your family out for a woodland or meadow picnic.

If you have the time for more than a day out, think about the **nature reserves** which protect wilderness areas for the animals within them and the eco-saavy tourists who come to watch them.

Involving and **educating children is vital** and the internet can provide information and inspiration. If you live near a river or lake, find out if there is a group which works on weed clearing, if you live near a wood, is there an organisation that works to manage the trees, clearing scrub? Make you and your environment healthier.



To manage the amount of water you get through, head straight for the bathroom. If you don't have a lavatory that is designed to use water efficiently, then put a brick or a filled and closed bottle in the cistern. This displaces the water level and causes less water to be used with every flush. A shower will use less water than a bath and a low-flow shower head makes an even greater difference. This doesn't mean you have to have a dribbly shower! Up-to-date shower heads mix the water with oxygen, so you are saving on your heating bills, reducing the amount of water you use and you can still have a good shower.

“Choose environmentally friendly garden products”





# Public health

## Health & wellbeing for all



Bird flu, mad cow disease, AIDS, an ever increasing rate of obesity and all that goes with it – it seems you can't go a week without hearing about the latest health issue. Public concern is driving discussion and we want to know that government is taking the necessary steps to protect us.

Threats from environmental factors, such as industrial air pollution, are very difficult for us as individuals to control. Other factors resulting from our choice of lifestyle, such as air pollution caused by smoking, are very difficult for governments to control. There is a clear need for citizens and policy-makers to work together.

### Situation on the ground

Sustained economic development, improved healthcare, better housing and nutrition, and a better educated population have all led to a relative increase in life expectancy. There has been a decrease in the number of serious accidents at work, the suicide rate is coming down in much of Europe, although still high in certain countries, and cases of some types of food poisoning have fallen.

Much has been achieved. But as one set of problems is resolved, another raises its ugly head. Pollution, in the form of particles that can't be seen except when they mass together to form smog, and the release of toxic chemicals into our environment are both serious problems. They have an impact not only on us, but on the animals with which we share the planet - from the polar bear in

Did you know...

Clean Air For Europe found that 350,000 Europeans died prematurely in 2000 due to outdoor air pollution. This works out at an average loss of life expectancy of 9 months.

the extreme north to the albatross in the skies above the southern oceans.

**Threats caused by environmental contamination:** The canary down a coal mine dying of gas poisoning and warning the miner to escape has its modern day equivalent. Wild animals can give us a clear indication of the level of toxic chemicals in our environment and will start dying, often before we are aware of the problem. This should be a clear wake up call since whatever it is that is killing them will probably be harmful to us. Bodies of beluga whales found in the St Lawrence River in Canada were so highly contaminated that they had to be disposed of as hazardous waste. Publicising the situation in their DETOX campaign, the WWF explains that there is hardly an animal on earth that has not been exposed to toxic man-made chemicals. They are the undeserving recipients of our poisons.

And how does this affect us? According to the EU's SCALE initiative, a child-focused analysis of pollution-induced conditions fall into four priority groups: cancers, respiratory diseases like asthma, developmental disorders and the disruption of the natural, chemical interaction in our bodies (endocrine disruption). The links between exposure to pollution and its effects on us are determined by our

ages, how long we have been exposed to the chemicals, our genetic makeup and what the report calls 'the cocktail' effect, or exposure to multiple sources of contamination in the air, water and food.

**Threats caused by lifestyle choices:**

Drinking too much alcohol, smoking, not taking exercise, abusing drugs, or eating food that harms us are some of the threats to our health that grow out of the way we choose to live. Tobacco is the biggest, avoidable cause of death in the EU: it is estimated that 25% of all cancer deaths and 15% of deaths in the EU can be attributed to smoking.



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The stress caused by the every day pressures of our competitive lifestyles and sometimes addictions such as alcoholism, being subjected to violence or abuse all have negative impacts, directly or indirectly, on our health. Depression and other mental illness are also public health issues of growing importance. A report by the European Review of Suicide and

Violence Epidemiology, (EUROSAVE), suggests that those most likely to commit suicide are single men, substance abusers and the unemployed, with rates in northern EU countries being higher than those in most Mediterranean countries.

**Threats caused by disease:** Diseases like HIV/AIDS, or others which could spread in people around the world, like bird flu, need monitoring and rapid response systems. Tuberculosis, measles and influenza are contagious and don't respect borders, combined they account for around one third of the deaths occurring globally. They can spread rapidly if action is not taken to keep them in check. It is vital to develop a coordinated response to health threats and emergencies in Europe.

**Other threats:** Food scares require clear information campaigns and direct control by authorities. Sources of fatal accidents, such as drink driving, require legal deterrents. A coordinated reaction to large scale emergencies is also a priority.

## Did you know...

More people commit suicide every year than die on the roads. 58,000 people kill themselves every year  
40,000 people a year are killed on the roads



## What the EU's doing

The EU has a recognised responsibility to ensure a high level of health protection. An article in the EC Treaty, which established the EU, says action shall be directed at improving public health by preventing human illness and diseases and reducing the dangers to human health. Health and consumer protection are closely related and food safety and alerts in case of danger are something the EU takes seriously.

At a national level, governments' actions to protect their citizens are supported and reinforced by the EU's policies. While countries have their own laws on public health, the EU is working to make sure doctors, nurses and other professionals can move from country to country easily and work wherever they are needed. Patients also need to be able to move around Europe to find the health care that best suits their needs.

Here are some of the EU's aims:

- Making sure that by 2020 chemicals, including pesticides, are produced, handled and used safely
- Working to reduce the inequalities in life expectancy and curbing lifestyle-related diseases, such as alcoholism and obesity in EU countries
- Developing strategies to deal with health threats quickly and efficiently
- Bringing down suicide rates and improving mental health throughout the EU
- Tightening the laws concerning our food and also the feed we give to animals. This is where hygiene and labelling come in
- Making sure that animal welfare standards are high in the EU and outside

From legislating on the use and production of chemicals to coordinating responses to emergencies, the EU has a raft of measures in place. Here are just some examples:



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## Did you know...

According to the WWF, between 1930 and 2000 global production of man-made chemicals increased from 1 million to 400 million tonnes each year

The **Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH)** became law in June 2007 and is designed to improve the protection of public health. It will speed up the identification of exactly what chemicals are in the products we buy, restricting the use of the most dangerous. **REACH** also covers chemicals used in procedures happening around us, such as crop spraying, car spraying, construction and so on. This has been reinforced by **Community Action in the Field of Consumer Policy (2007-2013)** which addresses our right to live healthily and safely where ever we are and to have confidence in the products we consume. It ensures better representation of consumers' interests and the effective application of consumer protection rules.

The Public Health Programme (**2003-2008**) has three objectives: **Firstly**, gathering information on public health to make it possible for countries in the EU to have a clear idea of what is affecting the health of their populations both positively and negatively, and to share their best ways of working. **Secondly**, it sets out ways of reacting to threats such as TB, HIV/AIDS, possible terrorist attacks, and a potential pandemic that could be sparked by bird flu. **Thirdly**, the programme aims to promote healthy lifestyle choices and reduce the numbers of accidents at work.

In 2008 this programme will be replaced by the **Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health 2008-2013**. This will also focus on ageing and health and on reducing health inequalities across the EU.

The **Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE)** aims to ensure that member states put children's health at the top of the political agenda, for the sake of today's children and future generations. The plan involves children and child care professionals in policy-making, promotes health and education programmes, and researches health threats that are a particular to children.

The **Food Hygiene Package**, introduced in January 2006, tightens and harmonises EU food safety measures. These laws apply at every point in the food chain, in line with the EU's "farm to fork" approach. A key aspect of the new legislation is that all food and feed operators, from farmers and processors to retailers and



caterers, have the responsibility of ensuring that food put on the EU market meets the required safety standards.

Helping in this goal is the **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)**. The EFSA is the keystone of the EU's risk assessment regarding food and feed safety. The organisation provides independent scientific advice on all matters with a direct or indirect impact on food and feed safety, including animal health and welfare, and plant protection. **The Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010**, upgrades current standards for animal welfare by using the latest scientific developments to work out how best to look after livestock. It works to make sure that, for example, a veal calf will receive a decent, minimum standard of care wherever it happens to be within the EU.

### Making a difference

Tips for healthy living surround us, but here are basic ideas as a reminder: **move more** – stairs not lift, cycle don't drive, walk when you can; **balance your diet, cut fat** – think about what goes into the food you are about to eat. Some sweet foods will make you hungry again in half an hour, fatter foods will make your body work overtime, remember the old adage: you are what you eat. Put your children on the right track to healthy eating. It can take time to change their eating habits, don't give up, it's their lifelong health you are building; **stop smoking** – put the money to one side and watch it mount up; **aim to reduce your stress levels** – try to spend half an hour a day doing something that makes you less stressed and more happy; **wear your seat belt in cars** – make sure your children are well strapped in too; **don't drink to excess** – a glass of wine a day could help your health, assuming you are not pregnant or behind a steering wheel! More may harm you. For every glass you drink, have a glass of water; **avoid pollution** – request your right to work and eat in smoke-free rooms, and be aware of passive smoking.

Pollution, to a certain extent is also something you can control. Protect yourself. Take steps to reduce the amount of chemicals you use around your home. Simple actions such as dry cleaning only when absolutely necessary, or using unbleached lavatory paper and bathroom products that are made from natural ingredients can



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help you to cut back. You can also play a role outside your home, in the garden. Creosote - a petrochemical preservative - is one to avoid, as are paints containing VOCs (volatile organic chemicals): check the label. Alternatives which are both safer for you and for the world around you exist, it's a matter of looking at the labels and savvy shopping.

If you have access to the internet, [health.europa.eu](http://health.europa.eu) offers a wide range of reliable information.



“Don't forget your fruit and veg”



# Social inclusion

## Involving everyone in Europe's future



Including everyone and making sure that each individual in our society has the means to contribute to their full ability is vital if we are to combat the challenges of poverty. We need to value the contribution of everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic origin or disability.

Ensuring children are raised out of poverty, people embrace education and life-long learning, and pensions and other aspects of our welfare systems don't just become fond memories – these are pieces of the jigsaw that makes up an inclusive society.

With 2007 designated the European Year of Equal Opportunities, a fundamental shift in the perception of some members of the public is required. Diversity is opportunity and it is high time we followed the lead of the most successful societies and embrace what are known as the three T's: technology, tolerance and talent.

### Situation on the ground

The overall aim of social inclusion is to significantly reduce poverty by 2010. An ambitious goal since the number of people at risk of poverty is still high - in 2003, the average across the EU was 16%.

A report on cohesion in the EU concluded that the enlargement of the bloc to 25 countries, and subsequently to 27, presents an unprecedented challenge for the competitiveness and internal cohesion of the Union. There is now a widening of the economic development gap. The gulf between the 10% of the population living in the most prosperous regions and the same percentage living in the least prosperous ones has more than doubled compared with the situation in 2004.

According to Eurochild's review Ending Child Poverty, within the EU, one in five children are at risk, a situation which has only marginally improved over the last six years. In Slovakia, 30% of children under 15 were at risk in 2004 in comparison with 9% in Denmark.

One of the causes of this gap between rich and poor is unemployment. The EU is facing serious problems in its labour markets with low participation among older workers, women and young people, and high unemployment within these groups. In view of globalisation, Europe's ageing population and rather rigid labour legislation in many countries, the EU has high targets for job creation. Throughout the EU unemployment fell slightly in 2007, from 8% to 7.1%.

Young people are also at risk of poverty – an issue which the Youth Forum looked at in 2006. Their report, "Social Inclusion through Youth Participation" pointed out young people face many challenges which can prevent them from fully participating in society. They can't vote and often can't find work due to inexperience. The media frequently represent them as a threat to society. The logical progression from education to college, university or apprenticeship, followed by marriage, family and home is now eroded in many of our societies. Young people have more choices bringing both more freedom and more challenges.



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As with young people, women also face problems – not only in getting a job but also how they are treated once they have got one. A major factor for helping women into work is the provision of good childcare. More mothers in the workforce generally spur the development of childcare facilities. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), of all EU countries, Sweden spends the most on formal day care - 2% of the country's GDP. This is in comparison to Finland's public spending 1.1%, and the UK's 0.4%. The Swedish system is more expensive, as it is the only system that caters for all children under 2. As a result, almost 72% of Swedish mothers with young children are in employment, 52% in Finland, and 49% in the UK.

### Did you know...

Immigrants from outside the EU are more than three times as likely to be unemployed than EU citizens

Unemployment hits those with disabilities the hardest. At least 16% of the working age population are disabled but only 40% of them are in jobs. This is in comparison to 64.2% of people without disabilities.

Immigrants are also an important part of the workforce - a subject which has become totemic for certain political groups. It is important to realise that the proportion of foreign-born residents in the EU remains low, ranging from 9% in Austria, Belgium and Germany, to under 2% in Spain.

The public's definition of economic immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers are often very blurred. Populist politicians and the



media do little to clarify the situation. The result is all too frequent hostility and suspicion sometimes erupting into violence. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights found that over 9 million people in the EU (that's 3% of all inhabitants) experienced racist attacks in 2004. In order for immigrants to contribute to the social welfare of the society in which they have made their home, they need to become tax payers. For this to happen legitimate jobs and legal employment must be offered and racism and prejudice rooted out at ground level.

Europe's population is set to decline over the next 50 years. Italy is likely to lose 28% of its population by 2050. To maintain its working age group, Italy would need to start opening its doors to more than 350,000 immigrants per year or keep its citizens working until they are 75. Other EU countries are in the same boat.

### **What the EU's doing**

Throughout Europe, our hopes for the future seem essentially the same: a safe, dynamic, democratic society which provides for the vulnerable and helps the population get into work. But although we are all aiming for the same things, there is still too much prejudice and suspicion that prevents us from working together to make these hopes a reality throughout the EU. To break down the barriers to progress and security we need to think again about how we view people around us. To make change concrete, the EU has outlined its goals to:

- Reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, by 2010, with a particular emphasis on child poverty
- Ensure territorial and social cohesion
- Support EU countries as they modernise social protection in the face of challenges such as falling birth rates and longer life spans



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- Promote employment and in particular create more jobs for women, older workers and migrants by 2010
- Welcome and integrate migrants into European society
- Promote employment for young people – ensuring that at least 85% of 22 year-olds complete secondary education. By the end of 2007, within six months of leaving education, every young person should have some kind of job, apprenticeship, training or something to make them more employable
- Help those with disabilities to get work

To make these goals a reality the EU has set up a range of funds, programmes and laws.

With a budget of €743m, the Community programme for employment and solidarity, **PROGRESS (2007-2013)**, targets: employment, social protection and inclusion, working conditions, diversity and combating discrimination, and equality between women and men.



Another weapon in the fight against social exclusion is the **European Social Fund (ESF)**, one of Europe's main sources of financial support to help people develop their skills and, consequently, their job prospects. It entered a new phase in 2007, concentrating on four areas: adaptability among workers and businesses; access to employment; reducing social exclusion and promoting partnerships for reform. These measures will come under two of the three new objectives: convergence, regional competitiveness and employment. The bottom line is investment in people.

The EU expressly recognises the rights of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence, and to participate in social and cultural life.

In order to guarantee those rights, the **European Employment Strategy (EES)** will promote lifelong learning and work flexibility. Social protection policies will find ways to reverse the trend towards early retirement and develop better, more flexible pension schemes. The EU is investing in health and medical research, and the active fight to wipe out discrimination and exclusion continues.

The framework programme on **Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows 2007-2013**, has several aims. One key goal is to integrate legal immigrants into society. It intends to do this through the **European Integration Fund** which: contributes to introduction programmes; increases participation by immigrants in their host society; strengthens the capacity of national organisations so that they can respond to the needs of different groups and keeps an eye on how the situations evolve by helping EU countries to evaluate their integration policies. The fund is worth €1.8bn and is part of the ESF.

Keeping people out of poverty is also a key part of the EU's aim to make sure that nobody falls by the wayside and is left out of society. In all the countries that make up the EU, youth unemployment, especially in migrant families, is twice as high as the overall rate. It ran at just over 18% in 2004. Young people often find



themselves trapped in a vicious 'low pay – no pay' circle. The EU encourages countries to put more apprenticeships in place, provide more support and active alternatives to people who

are going through a short spell of unemployment. These programmes often focus on deprived areas.

In a bid to make life easier for students, free movement around Europe for teachers and students and the recognition of qualifications is a priority – programmes such as **Socrates**, **Leonardo da Vinci** and **Youth** all work to help people get qualified.

Everybody has the right to contribute. To make sure that the handicapped are also fully engaged in Europe's future, the action plan **Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities (2004-2010)** works to remove the environmental, technical and legal barriers faced by disabled people. This it does through the ESF and the European Employment Strategy. A specific guideline in the strategy states its aim: "To ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive."

To boost the full involvement of people with disabilities in our society, there is an EU-wide law, the **Directive against Discrimination**, which establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

### Making a difference

While governments and politicians can decide on priorities and set aside budgets to realise these, we can also do things to make our society fairer and help ourselves and those around us to become more involved.

Remember that you can make yourself more employable and have fun doing so. **Evening classes** are a way to pick up extra qualifications and meet people who share your interests. **Learning**



**another language** opens a door to new cultures – if you don't want a heavy commitment, conversation classes are available after you've learned the basics.

Don't fancy learning something new yourself? **How about teaching?** In many EU countries adult basic education programmes give people the chance to offer their time to help others who can't read or write or, perhaps, can't do basic mathematics. Details of such schemes can often be found advertised in local libraries or town halls.

Helping immigrants to learn the language of their new country is also something that we can do. Conversation classes are a way to get people together and you don't need to be a qualified language teacher to get a group of people chatting around a table. Language classes are often offered to immigrants for free. If you have the time, **offer to run a conversation class** just to give people the chance to practise what they have learned in their more formal language classes and the chance to meet others from outside their own community.

**Starting up your own business** can be easier than you imagine. If you have always had a secret desire to be your own boss and have a service to offer, why not make an appointment with your local bank and get some advice. Who knows, five years from now you could be in a position to put some work in the direction of a younger person or someone who is having a tough time finding employment!

If you have musical, theatrical or artistic skills, then how about putting an hour aside a week and putting your skills at the disposal of a retirement home, a special needs school or a youth club? If you are into sports, **how about starting up a club or a team?** Get everyone involved. If you are not sure what you can offer, just showing the fact that you are interested and support what carers are doing will be a real boost to those whose very hard and important work is often forgotten.

Not really a 'people person' but like animals? Check out the notice board in your local hospital. Often people going into hospital are at their wits' end to know what to do with their pets. Leaving a much loved dog, cat or other companion can be very stressful for people already unwell. Foster homes are highly valued.

If you are healthy, valued by your colleagues, friends and family, have a place in society, have the time and are lucky enough to be at home in your world, reach out a hand and help someone else belong.





# Global poverty

## Closing the gap



“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.”

Nelson Mandela

Extreme poverty, defined as having less than a dollar a day to live on, affects over one billion people in the developing world - that's one in every six of the world's population. The fact that they are on another continent, doesn't mean there's nothing we can do to ease their plight.

Globalisation has brought us closer together, connecting people all over the world through global decisions, policies and practices. But the benefits of this have not always been shared equally. Instead, disparities in wealth and power have grown further to the detriment of the world's poorest people.

### Situation on the ground

A Zanzibar farmer unable to tend his herd of tsetse-infested cattle; a Bangladeshi factory worker making 8 cents an hour for sewing beads onto ballet costumes; an Ethiopian school kid walking more than fifteen kilometres a day to fetch water – different lifestyles, different cultures, but all facing the same challenge: survival against the odds.



Heart-rending, individual stories make up a global picture in which hunger and malnutrition are the number one health risk, killing more people than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Hunger gnaws at the stomachs of one in every four living in Sub-Saharan Africa. Children are considered lucky to make it to their fifth birthday – 11 million a year don't.

And while households in industrialised countries can use up to 50 litres of water per day by just flushing the toilet, over one billion people don't even have access to the 20-50 litres of safe freshwater considered necessary to ensure basic needs for drinking, cooking and cleaning. The diseases associated with this lack of access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene are costing thousands of people their lives each day.

Global poverty is a predominantly rural phenomenon: the meager livelihoods of three-quarters of those in extreme poverty are dependent on natural resources which are constantly being depleted. Over the past half century more than a quarter of the world's 8.7 billion hectares of agricultural lands, pastures, forests and woodlands have been degraded. This is very bad news both for the poor and their environment. The good news is that poverty can be eradicated.



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### What the EU's doing

The EU considers development cooperation the key to solving the problem of global poverty and is working alongside both international players (United Nations, World Trade Organisation, international financial organisations) and regional players (in African, Latin American, Caribbean and Pacific countries) to provide effective responses to the many challenges facing the world's poorest people.

It has made a firm commitment to the eight targets set at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit which have a deadline of 2015. These Millennium Development Goals aim to:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Strengthen gender equality
- Reduce child mortality

### Did you know...

In 2006 European aid ran to some €48bn, that's nearly €100 per citizen



- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

At the 2002 **World Summit for Sustainable Development** in Johannesburg, the EU launched two initiatives designed to guarantee supplies of water and energy – two essential components to poverty reduction. The first – the **Water for Life** initiative – aims to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation by 2015. The second – the **Energy Initiative for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development** – seeks to attract new resources in terms of capital, technology and human resources from the private sector and financial institutions.

Trade is another essential component of growth. Under the Cotonou Agreement which runs until 2020, the EU is working with **African, Caribbean and Pacific countries** to achieve their gradual integration into the global economy. With **Latin America**, a range of agreements have been concluded based on a strengthening of economic cooperation, institutionalised political dialogue and trade relations. The EU is now Latin America's number one foreign investor and second biggest trading partner. And, in **Asia**, which is home to two-thirds of the world's poor, the EU is contributing to a third of the continent's total aid. The EU's overall target is to raise the volume of aid donated to developing countries to 0.7% of its countries' Gross National Income by 2015.

Debt relief is also high on the European agenda. The EU is an important player in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's initiative to cancel the debts of heavily indebted poor countries. So far, full debt relief has been given to 18 countries, including Bolivia, Madagascar, Tanzania and Uganda.



### Making a difference

While national policies regarding the eradication of poverty are set by governments, each of us can make a difference.

One way of helping is to buy as you would normally and donate at the same time. **Cause marketing**, as it's known, brings together for-profit businesses and non-profit organisations in a win-win situation. An example of this is Product RED which raises money to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria through a number of well-known brands.

You can also make a difference at your local grocery store by choosing from among 1,500 **FairTrade products**. This simple act goes a long way to guaranteeing fair wages for producers.

Another way of contributing to your favourite charity, without it costing you a penny, is through **ethical banking**. This is becoming increasingly popular across Europe.

If you have money to invest, wherever you are in Europe, ask your bank or financial advisor how you can make your money work for you and in the fight against global poverty. If you prefer to donate directly then many European countries will give **tax breaks** on charitable donations.

If you are put off the notion of donating because you feel that you can't really be sure where your money is going, then there are many schemes that involve **sponsoring a specific child**. Donors receive regular updates on how the child they have sponsored is doing and are sent photos and letters.

There is no shortage of worthy causes. Look out for charities contributing to the livelihoods of family farmers through sustainable agriculture in countries as far a field as Laos and Nicaragua.

For a more personal touch, why not help your child to find a penpal of their own age in the developing world? Choose the country that shares your language or use the opportunity to improve your child's foreign language skills. Ring international directory inquiries and ask for a school in a given town within the country concerned.



Perhaps your child could involve their friends or put the matter to their teachers to involve a whole class. A potentially lifelong friendship at best and a formative experience at least is just a phone call away. Let's close the gap.

Alternatively, as a one-off, if you find you simply cannot think of what you would like for your next birthday or for Christmas, how about asking for a set of bee hives or a goat? They won't arrive on your doorstep! Some charity schemes give you the chance to buy livestock for families in developing countries.

“The trees and bees you gave us have changed our land, air and soil. Our whole life has changed!”

*Zahara Bekre,  
Kabso Takuma Forest,  
Ethiopia*





# Cross-cutting policies

## Turning the dream into reality



The EU is aiming at sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, but in such a way that protects the world around us for future generations.

Clamping down on discrimination, protecting natural resources, addressing immigration and global poverty, producing goods in an environmentally friendly way - laws are being passed and programmes developed to make each goal within the EU's sustainable development strategy possible.

But cutting across the separate areas discussed in this booklet are the four ways used to make the ideals concrete: education, research, communication to motivate people and make programmes run as efficiently as possible, and letting the polluter pay. Changing the way people buy and produce is essential and one way to encourage a move towards more environmentally friendly habits is through tax incentives. Reflecting the real price a product has on the environment will help consumers make the right choices.



## Education - sharing knowledge

At the heart of all the policies, programmes and initiatives outlined so far is the realisation that nothing can be done without the help of an educated public. Education to equip people with the means to deal with these challenges and give us the skills we need to make Europe's growth sustainable.

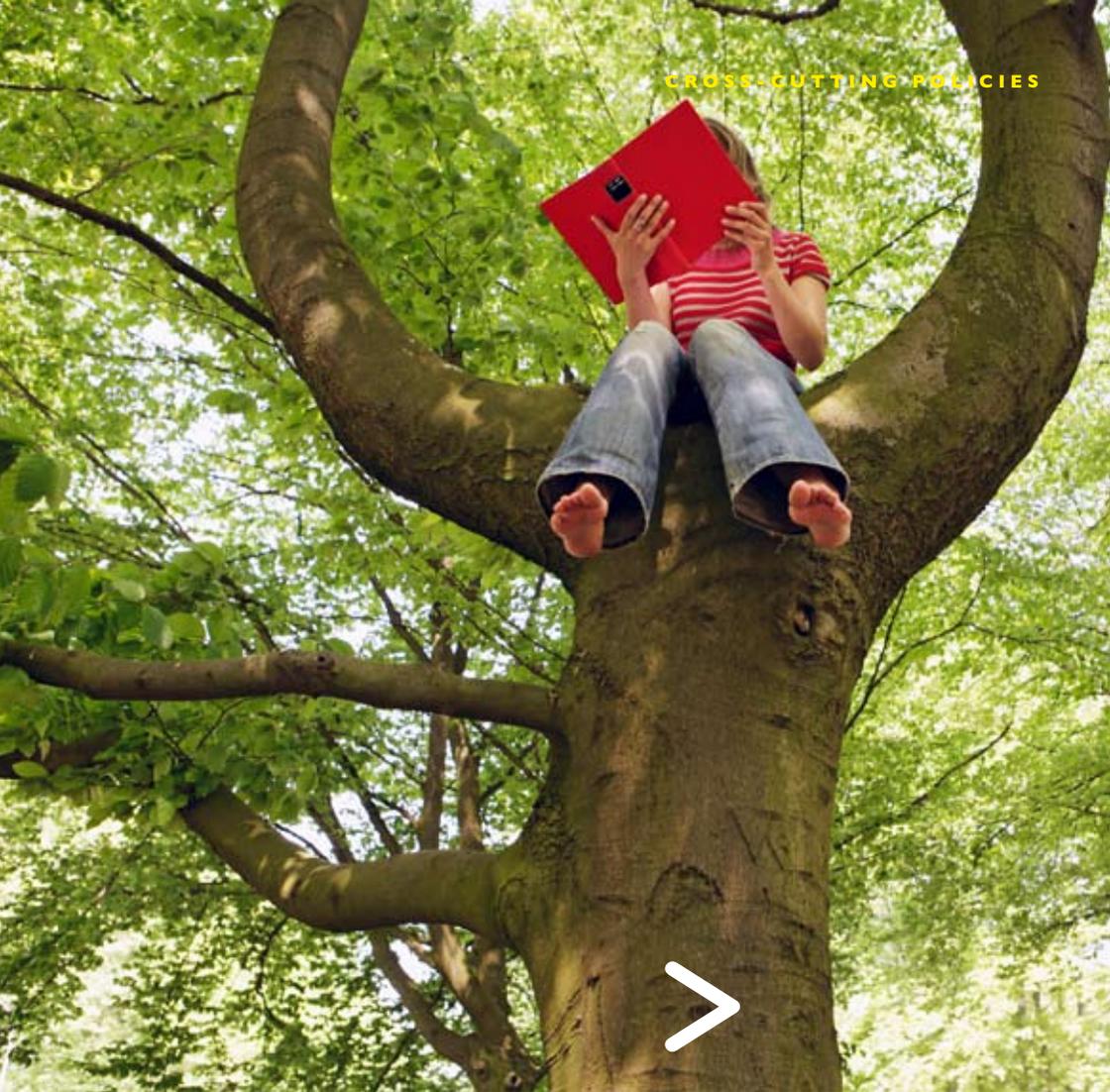
When we think of education we tend to think of our school days. But the issue is much larger – it covers knowledge sharing at all levels and across all subjects. Technical knowledge shared to keep us competitive; scientific knowledge shared to keep us healthy; information technology reaching out into far-flung communities, putting them in touch with people and concepts all over Europe; school children staying in education up to university level; lifelong learning; businesses being educated in environmentally sustainable choices – it all involves sharing knowledge.

Sustainability is about using our resources in a way that permits future generations to benefit too – and this refers not only to natural resources but also to human resources – the people of Europe. Education is a way to reduce inequalities, those that exist between men and women or between minority groups and the other citizens they live with. This is a lifelong process – gone are the days when learning and training ended with college graduation. Now the emphasis is on helping people boost their knowledge and their skills throughout their lives.

### What's being done?

In February 2001, the EU launched **Education and Training 2010**. Ministers of education throughout the EU decided on three, concrete objectives to ensure the development of the skilled workforce upon which our future depends. The elements are: opening up education and training to the wider world – meaning both the world of work and the world beyond the EU; increasing the quality of our education systems, and making access to education easier.

All three ambitions involve a range of measures. Opening up education to the wider world, for example, highlights the importance of language learning and seeks to strengthen the links with working life and research.



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Improving the quality of education includes boosting flexible learning programmes to help people continue their education while holding down jobs and updating the definition of basic skills in the light of our changing world.

Access to education, at all ages, requires a change in the way systems are structured, asking “How easy is it to move from one qualification to another?”, “Do all paths enable the learner to go forward or are they pushing them to opt out?” It also underlines that education is in the hands of society and should construct the society we want.



## Research

The challenge that faces each and every one of us is how to make sure that our European way of life, with its values and standard of living, remains secure in the face of competition without exploiting and ruining the world around us.

While we all have a role to play, some problems need to be solved scientifically – alternative energy sources, ways to feed the world's population, establishing access to clean water for all, ways of improving communication – the realisation of these goals, and many others, rest in the hands of our scientific community.

### What's being done?

While scientists look for solutions to the fundamental problem of how to find sources of clean, renewable energy and while Europe faces the challenges of globalisation, migration, unemployment and an ageing population, the EU is harnessing all means possible to secure our futures.

€50bn for research and development has been set aside under the **7th Framework Programme**. This will run until 2013 and aims to:

- Gain leadership in key scientific and technology areas
- Stimulate the creativity and excellence of European research
- Develop and strengthen the human potential of European research
- Enhance research and innovation capacity throughout Europe

Communicating results and networking between scientists is also a focus point and the development of a European Research Area is underway to make sure ideas and results are shared effectively throughout the EU. Scientists need to be able to move around the Union freely, having access to the very best communications networks. To help them push back the boundaries of knowledge, research institutions will be set up, exploiting partnerships between public and private sectors.



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The EU is also encouraging networking and peer learning between universities and colleges in the Union and in other countries.

### Using the economy to bring about change

Inducing people to buy products that are made responsibly and spend less on production that is environmentally harmful can be done through green taxes. This is one way of using the economy to bring about change. As things stand now, when we buy something, the price fails to reflect the real cost in terms of environmental damage. But the market can be used to work for the environment.

Using market forces to boost sustainable development is a keystone of the strategy. But public funding has its role to play too and it is a stated aim of the strategy that all money coming out of the EU should be channelled in the best way to promote sustainable development.

### What's being done?

A gradual shift away from taxes on labour towards taxes on pollution, energy and resources can boost employment, eco-innovation and protect the environment. Getting prices right - so that what we pay reflects the real social, environmental and economic cost it takes to produce the object or provide the service – is a way to smart economic growth.

The EU is thinking creatively and working with national governments to develop 'green taxes'. Just as the emphasis for agricultural funding has shifted from production to stewardship, where farmers receive funding for taking care of the land they control, so too can the burden of taxation shift from labour to consumption.

Under the **New Directive on Energy Taxation**, countries in the EU have the right to offer companies special tax breaks in return for lowered emissions of damaging pollution and gasses. It also taxes energy sources such as electricity and fuels such as coal. This makes the user focus on efficiency – consuming less in order to keep their tax bills down. Companies that have invested in their efficient use of energy can get some of these taxes refunded, adding a further incentive.



Taxing energy consumption instead of people's incomes, selling the right to emit greenhouse gases – both are key weapons in the battle against climate change. And both have an important concept in common: polluter pays.

Making the polluter pay works on two levels. Wasteful or environmentally damaging behaviour is penalised so people are encouraged to look for alternatives and, while they do so, the pollution they do produce earns the exchequer money. This revenue can then be ploughed back in to research or used to fund projects.

Throughout the Union, countries are applying the idea of taxing pollution in a variety of ways: Denmark and Finland have a tax on tyres, Denmark, Iceland and Italy tax plastic bags, France taxes paper and cardboard.

While countries find ways to both limit pollution and raise revenue from it at the same time, business and organisations are also working towards sustainable practices. Here the notions of 'polluter pays' is taking off as companies come under the influence of consumer pressure and legislation to become greener. Some are leading the way, voluntarily changing the way they conduct their business.

Paying for the emissions they cause is growing in importance for the business community. Phrases like 'carbon off-sets' or 'carbon-trading schemes' sometimes crop up, and will do so more frequently in the future. Charging money for the production of carbon means thinking of this greenhouse gas like any other commodity. You pay a certain amount and that buys you the right to produce a certain amount.

Money is coming directly from the EU through the funding of programmes such as **LIFE+** which runs until 2013. With a budget of around €2bn, the programme co-finances environmental initiatives throughout the Union and in some bordering countries. It brings together a variety of programmes, grouping them under a single set of rules. Decision-making becomes more efficient and the whole procedure more transparent. 20-25% of the money will be put towards raising public awareness on sustainable development issues.

With such large budgets, funding that the EU puts forward needs to be channelled to ensure it promotes sustainable development. EU countries and the commission will be coordinating various



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policies such as the cohesion and agricultural policies, rural development, research and technological development, to maximise their potential.

By 2008 the Commission will also work on a plan for the reform of the subsidies that have a considerable, negative impact on the environment, with a view to gradually phasing them out. Areas such as agriculture will benefit from funding that regenerates rural communities while protecting the land they farm.

### **Informing and motivating**

The booklet you are now reading is part of the EU's campaign to use all available means to get the sustainable development message across. One of the Commission's stated aims is to say what needs to be done, explain what action the EU is taking to address the challenges and motivate people to work towards the goals that will benefit us all.



### What's being done?

The **European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign** is made up of a group of local governments whose goal is to establish towns which are prosperous, creative and sustainable and in which everyone has a valued role to play. To achieve this they have signed up to the **Aalborg commitments** and the EU hopes that countries whose local governments are not involved will sign up soon.

The commitments include, for example, ensuring people have fair access to natural resources. This involves improving water and air quality and the creation of parks and gardens. Another commitment is to better transport and less traffic – boosting public transport choices. Health and social equality are also on the list.

The campaign brings together authorities on all levels from around Europe. What works, what doesn't: such information is shared. The Municipality of Barcelona can rub shoulders with the Union of Baltic Cities in their bid to find solutions to the challenges of making sustainable development a reality.

Another opportunity for action was put forward by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992, in Rio. **Agenda 21** puts forward a complete action plan to achieve the goals of sustainable development. Countries throughout Europe are getting involved and the EU hopes to see even more take up Agenda 21, sign up to the Aalborg commitments and involve themselves in the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign.

Recognising that you have to get the message across if you want to motivate people, the **“enhanced communication effort”** inspired the creation of an award for the best projects in the field of economic modernisation, **RegioStars**. Put forward by the Commission in 2006, this is just one prize set up by the EU in order to motivate people and highlight the aims of sustainable development.

Open days such as the annual **European Week of Regions and Cities** are another way the EU reaches out to its citizens and gets over the message of sustainability. The event brings together thousands of people representing development projects all over Europe.



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But only a handful of the population of Europe pass through the doors of the EU itself. Reaching all citizens and keeping them informed is the goal of **i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment**, launched in June 2005. The initiative is made up of laws designed to ensure everyone is included in a society based on the widespread use of information and communication technologies (ITCs). Connection speeds which get digital technologies into people's homes, taking steps to reduce internet fraud, developing and promoting systems which can work together across borders to keep people in touch – all this and more make up this EU initiative.

Whether by inviting people into its buildings to see what is happening, giving prizes for innovative economics focusing on sustainability or by making sure people across Europe can keep up to date with the best ways of doing things, the EU is getting the message across.

Businesses are also waking up to their responsibilities. One such example is the EU-Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change. This group, which got together at the initiative of several company directors, seeks to work in partnership with the EU to stimulate a low-carbon economy while enhancing the prospects for growth and competitiveness. It intends to do this by identifying the conditions necessary to meet greenhouse gas emissions reductions, implementing effective emission-reduction measures, and looking for business opportunities in low-carbon technologies.



# Implementation & follow-up

## Staying on track



The principles of openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence are at the heart of how the EU runs its policies. These are joined by one more vital component needed to make the sustainable development strategy work: monitoring.

With such a variety of programmes and legislation running throughout Europe and with action being taken by people in all walks of life: citizens, the business community, regional and national governments, and by the EU itself – finding out what works and what doesn't is more important than ever.

### What the EU's doing

The issues raised within the sustainable development strategy have moved on from being something just discussed by those responsible for environment policy. Now the whole subject is right at the heart of the European decision-making process with heads of state and government monitoring the situation as it evolves to ensure the strategy stays on track. The European Commission regularly examines how the policies are unfolding. Every two years, starting in the autumn of 2007, they publish a progress report showing, in a clear and concrete way, what is working, what is not, and how to keep the strategy updated and effective. This is the basis of the December European Council's discussions, where the way ahead is decided.



The Commission's progress report looks at how policies are working, how individual countries are doing, and puts forwards ideas about the next steps to take. One of their sources of information is the data collected by Eurostat which regularly monitors the progress being made on sustainable development in Europe.

The first step in monitoring progress is to have a clear idea of what is to be measured and to make sure that figures are comparable across countries, and over time – comparing like with like.

To make this possible, Eurostat has developed a set of 'indicators', which are regularly reported upon. Eurostat's 2007 report on Sustainable Development Indicators can be found at: <http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/>

The indicators can be clearly measured throughout the Union, showing what is happening on the ground. So, for example, the theme public health has, as its main indicator healthy years lived, by gender. Measuring this factor across the EU will show where we are now and, thanks to regular data collection, whether the situation is getting better or worse. But how long men and women are living healthily is only a very broad indicator. There are a range of others which reflect the complexity of the situation in more detail, such as factors which influence the state of health, including obesity and smoking, exposure to pollutants, and production of toxic chemicals. Indicators will be developed and new ones created with the input of the countries that make up the EU.

Regularly updated, the Eurostat information is there for you to check out on the net if you have access to it and will give you a picture of progress towards sustainable development objectives across the EU.

The European Parliament has a part to play, contributing its views, cooperating with the Council and the Commission and liaising with national parliaments. The Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee also provide input.



### What the countries within the EU are doing

Individual EU member countries appoint representatives who meet regularly in the Sustainable Development Coordinators Group chaired by the European Commission to discuss progress on the strategy. Every two years they also provide the necessary input on progress in their national sustainable development strategies - developed in the light of the EU's revised strategy. This makes sure that the goals of the country in question and those of the Union as a whole are mutually supportive.

Another layer of expertise is the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN), an informal network of public administrators and other experts, which deals with sustainable development strategies throughout Europe.

Countries also volunteer to let other countries peer review their sustainable development strategies and to see how they are working on the ground. The idea is, by examining each other's success stories, countries can learn from one another. By 2011 the European Council will decide when the next comprehensive review of the strategy should be launched.





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