

# **Chemistry and sustainability**

## **The view of the European Commission**

Safety and sustainability for chemicals handling in metal working and surface treatment – Brussels, 8 December 2009

Daniele Colombo – DG ENTR/G2



**European Commission**  
Enterprise and Industry

# Sustainable development in the EU

Sustainable Development – meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs – is the overarching long term goal of the EU

Article 3 of the Treaty:

*3. The Union... shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment.*

# Fundamental steps

- **2001:** A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A EU Strategy for Sustainable Development (SDS) (*COM(2001)264*)
- **2005:** Commission Communication on the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy - A platform for action (*COM(2005)658*)
- **2005:** Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development (*COM(2005)218*)
- **2006:** Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy as adopted by the European Council (*10917/06*)
- **2008:** Commission Communication on the Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan (*COM(2008)397*)
- **2009** Mainstreaming sustainable development into EU policies: Review of the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development (*COM(2009)400*)

# Strategy on Sustainable Development

The Strategy on Sustainable Development has the following components

- broad vision: the economic, social and environmental dimensions must go hand-in-hand and mutually reinforce one another
- improve the way in which the EU makes policies
- address a limited number of trends that are clearly not sustainable

# Key Objectives

- **Environmental protection:** Safeguard the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. Prevent and reduce pollution, promote sustainable production and consumption
- **Social equity and cohesion**
- **Economic prosperity:** promote a prosperous, innovative, knowledge-rich, competitive and eco-efficient economy which provides high living standards, and full and high-quality employment throughout the EU
- **Meeting the EU international responsibilities**

# Key challenges / 1

- Climate Change and clean energy
- Sustainable Transport
- Sustainable consumption and production: decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation
- Improving the environmental and social performance for products and processes and encouraging their uptake by business and consumers

# Key challenges / 2

- Conservation and management of natural resources
- Public Health
- Social inclusion, demography and migration
- Global poverty and sustainable development challenges

# The Action Plan (2008)












- Proposal for the extension of the Ecodesign Directive
- Proposal for the revision of the Ecolabel Regulation
- Proposal for the revision of the EMAS Regulation
- Communication on Green Public Procurement
- Proposal for the revision of the Energy Labeling Directive
- Proposal for a Regulation for an Environmental Technology Verification scheme

# EU 2020

To achieve a sustainable social market economy, a smarter, greener, competitive, connected and more inclusive economy, where our prosperity will come from innovation and from using resources better, and where the key input will be knowledge



# Is the EU delivering?

Every two years, Eurostat publishes a monitoring report of the EU sustainable development strategy

SDI theme	Headline indicator	EU-27 evaluation of change
Socioeconomic development	Growth of GDP per capita	
Climate change and energy	Greenhouse gas emissions*	
	Consumption of renewables	
Sustainable transport	Energy consumption of transport relative to GDP	
Sustainable consumption and production	Resource productivity	
Natural resources	Abundance of common birds**	
	Conservation of fish stocks***	
Public health	Healthy life years****	
Social inclusion	Risk of poverty****	
Demographic changes	Employment rate of older workers	
Global partnership	Official development assistance*****	
Good governance	[No headline indicator]	:

\* EU-15    \*\* Based on 19 Member States    \*\*\* In North East Atlantic    \*\*\*\* EU-25, from 2005    \*\*\*\*\* From 2005

## LEGEND:

-  clearly favourable change/on target path
  -  no or moderately favourable change/close to target path
  -  moderately unfavourable change/far from target path
  -  clearly unfavourable change/moving away from target path
  - :
- contextual indicator or insufficient data

# Sustainability and the chemicals industry

The chemicals industry has a pivotal role in providing sustainable solutions:

- Provide jobs and innovation
- Save energy
- Develop alternative energies
- Better health care
- Improve production processes
- Water management

# Initiatives in the chemicals industry

- **Responsible Care:** improve health, safety and environmental performance of the chemicals industry
- **SusChem** - European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry
- **Long-range Research Initiative:** identify and fill gaps in understanding of chemical hazards and assess the associated risks

# References

- [http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index_en.htm)
- [http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/library/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/library/index_en.htm)
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