

The Role of National Councils for Sustainable Development.

2nd part: The EU Focus

Günther Bachmann, Co-Chair of EEAC Working Group on SD

1. As national SD policies are increasingly determined at the EU level or in the very least impacted, it seems reasonable to facilitate the nexus of activities and actors that play a role in influencing the outcome and shape of both National and EU Sustainable Development Strategies. The post-Johannesburg stock-taking and updating of National Sustainable Development Strategies has important linkages with the EU SD Strategy
2. At a recent meeting representatives of national councils or commissions for sustainable development in Europe agreed on a number of recommendations to the Commission as to how the EU strategy could be developed further and implemented.
 - a. The meeting recommended the EU SD Strategy be completed and fleshed out because currently it is represented by a series of fragmented documents. A much more accessible format of the strategy should be promulgated more widely so as to provide a focus for efforts throughout Europe.

Fehler! Keine gültige Verknüpfung.

- b. A strategy needs to improve the involvement of civil society (agenda setting, monitoring, communication etc.). SD impact assessment is a useful tool.
 - c. For prior issues of SD quantified targets and time tables are sensible to apply.

Fehler! Keine gültige Verknüpfung.

3. Some of these points appear to have found their way into the conclusions of the 2003 Spring Summit.
 - a. Targets: The Spring EC decided on indicative target for Renewables of 12 % of primary energy needs and of 22 % of electricity needs by 2010; there is a reference value of 5,75% use of bio-fuels by 2010 for transport purposes. The Conclusions are encouraging national targets. It is also inviting the EC to examine setting indicative targets increasing energy efficiency.
 - b. Interaction: The Summit strengthened the Cardiff Process (integration of environmental policy into sector policies on EU level).

- c. Review: A monitoring process is triggered. Assessing impacts and monitoring of progress will be part of a road mapping procedure.

Fehler! Keine gültige Verknüpfung.

4. For other recommendations such a reference can not be established.
5. As to the future of NCSDs involvement into SD processes: NCSDs might play a useful part in assembling views from their constituents to feed into the Union's annual update on progress for the Spring Council each year.
6. Therefore, the chairmen of the Working Group have commissioned a consultant to work out a scope of what could be a Common Initiative of NCSDs. Ecologic has tabled a "think piece" for further discussion.
7. The think piece may serve as useful basis to answering the question whether it makes sense to apply for a Co-ordinated Action and who could be the applicant.
 - o What can be the targets of a Co-ordinated Action? Why is it sensible to apply?
 - o Possible frame of activity: Capacity building, research, common action.
 - o How to design a Co-ordinated Action (Structure and proceedings)? Who to get involved (Councils, NGOs, Governments)? How can the activities be organised and co-ordinated?

It introduces possible issues of an Initiative, inter alia:

- o providing public statements monitoring SD policies on EU level, particularly by providing input to the EU annual review on SD
- o work as a sounding board for EU SD policy, providing input to EU organs
- o agenda setting and facilitating political debates
- o implementing of joint activities
- o exchanging information and best practice; networking research activities at the EU, regional, and national levels; building transnational counseling capacity and research activities; promoting and focussing public and political awareness; make use of the variety of national CSDs and national SD processes.

Fehler! Keine gültige Verknüpfung.