Long Term Strategy for the EEB 2010-2014

This document was agreed by the EEB Board on the 26th of May 2009 after discussions at the 2008 AGM of the EEB. The purpose is to give direction to the further development of the EEB and give clarity to outsiders about what the EEB is about and where it wants to go. The five years duration is linked to the same term for the new European Parliament and Commission.

1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EEB

a. To keep:
- Its broad and inclusive character, with regards to its membership and its agenda.
- Its outreach and coalition-building, also outside the environmental movement.
- Its unique ways of working, including its focus on more specialist EU environmental issues, including the implementation and enforcement phases of legislation, in combination with environmental governance (including the functioning of the EU Institutions) and sustainability.
- Its high profile with decision-makers at the EU level and within national governments, in particular environment ministries, largely a result of its facts-based argumentation, reliability and credibility.

b. To improve
- Its pro-active approach with regards to agenda setting.
- Its involvement in sectoral policies such as agriculture, fisheries, energy, transport, EU budgets.
- Its presence at the global level where the EU plays an important role, e.g., trade negotiations and other international processes (if closely linked to issues the EEB covers at the EU level and where EEB’s contribution has clear added value).
- Its staff capacity and therewith its financial resource base.
- Its cooperation with its member organisations, including bringing EU-policy work closer to the agendas of national membership. Awareness about EU issues should include concrete opportunities to take part in coordinated action towards EU institutions.
- Its public relations: EEB needs to better promote its plans, successes, its specific role and achievements. National media should know EEB better and rely on it more for feedback.
- Its communication tools, including towards the membership and to national audiences.

2. OUTLOOK FOR THE EU IN THE COMING FIVE YEARS:

2.1. It is difficult to say how the current economic crisis will develop. The changed attitude of politicians regarding the role of the public sector in society, in particular with regards to public investments and steering of private activities, may be an advantage for environmental policies. Promoting new economic activities is often linked to promoting a low-carbon economy. On the other hand, increased unemployment and government income can put pressure on downgrading environmental policy development and implementation. The crisis may also have an impact on the finances of the EEB.

2.2. The latter part of the next decade might also be characterised by the beginning of real oil scarcity, as some analysts say we have already reached “peak oil” or are getting close to it. This could lead to permanently high energy prices, major challenges in certain industries, impoverishment and social unrest.
2.3. The traditional dominant economic position of the EU in the world, together with the USA/Canada and Japan, is likely to be further reduced in the coming five years. While in these three regions environmental pressures might become stabilised or even reduced, such pressures are likely to increase in the rest of the world.

2.4. Pressure will continue to exist for the EU to reduce the burdens on business in a competitive world. EEB will cooperate on reduction of burdens where this has no or a positive impact on ambitions and realisation of environmental (and social) objectives, but need to fight against this pressure where a possible outcome is negative.

2.5. The institutional setup of the EU will change if the Lisbon Treaty enters into force. Both the European Council and the External Affairs Council will have a permanent President. While the rotating six-month Presidency will continue to exist, with the advent of a Council President, it will lose importance and therefore public profile. Furthermore, the European Parliament will gain co-decision power in the fields of agriculture and budget. The EU is also likely to have a stronger profile in foreign policy, which could also have implications for our work on the environment and sustainable development.

2.6. EEB fears the tendency of more and more politicians in recent years to insist on subsidiarity for issues where there is a clear common interest and where many Member States would actually benefit from EU leadership may continue.

2.7. Climate and energy are likely to remain high on the political agenda, in particular as science will continue to underline the urgency of tackling both simultaneously. At the same time, real reductions of greenhouse gas emissions globally will not start anytime soon.

2.8. The focus on climate change risks creating or worsening other threats to environment and health. Nuclear power is falsely being promoted as a solution, when in reality it worsens environmental problems compared to e.g. energy efficiency and renewable energy; biofuels production might increase pressure on biodiversity; and climate change may even be used to promote unsustainable GMOs.

2.9. Biodiversity protection and enhancement will continue to face difficulties given urban sprawl, infrastructure development, invasive alien species, climate change and also because of the different nature of the costs involved (direct and often for the private sector) and benefits (more long term and for society as a whole). The pressure on farmers to use GMOs is adding to these threats.

2.10. While progress has been made with the protection of public health, the increasing volume of production and consumption requires further steps to ensure that the EU achieves the human health protection goals set by, for example, the World Health Organisation. The emphasis on climate change has slowed down further work on protection against toxic air emissions. Progress on water protection is slow and uneven and the implementation of REACH is going at a too slow pace.

2.11. The recognition of the need to change consumption and production patterns will likely increase, but with only piecemeal improvements being made on specific products and not as a more comprehensive strategy, or with better understanding of how to develop SCP-related policies. These improvements always risk be neutralised by new products on the market, as business will not accept the idea of limitations (e.g. resource availability) unless governments translate this into regulation and market signals. The EU will continue to live way beyond its carrying capacity, with trends continuing in the wrong direction unless the economic downturn drives production and consumption to lower levels.
3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS:

A. EEB wants to achieve significant demonstrable impact on the course the European Union has taken with regards to environmentally sustainable development. More specifically:

3.1. Better environment and nature protection by improving EU policy and legislation and better enforcement
3.2. A more transparent and democratic EU, in particular in fields of environment and sustainable development.
3.3. An EU-led greening of the economy as a whole, promoting both sustainable consumption and production, leading to economic policies and mechanisms that work to achieve sustainable development.
3.4. More systematic integration of environmental objectives in sectoral policies of the EU.

For its own organisation, EEB has the following objectives:

3.5. Increased ability to be relevant to all the major environment-related issues on the agenda of the EU in the coming five years, while not duplicating the work of other connected organisations.

3.6. An EEB membership that again covers all EU Member States + candidate countries, with all these countries represented on the EEB Board.

3.7. A considerable increase in participation of EEB members in the work of the EEB, in particular by means of participation in EEB's working groups, intensified use of new communication tools and liaison with individual members. EEB should also increase support to its members.

3.8. The use of new IT opportunities by setting up new forms of communication with its members (based on Extranet) and with other partners/stakeholders, media, through blogs etc., and increased coverage in relevant media (European and key national) showing the EEB as an important and reliable voice of the EU environmental movement.

3.9. A significant increase and diversification of its financial resources and greater staff capacity in order to be able to respond to the challenges laid down in this strategy.

4. SPECIFIC POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMING 5 YEARS:

4.1. On the basis of the existing “Guiding Principles” of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy a new, ambitious, strategy needs to be approved which is clearly connected to powerful tools: the renewed Lisbon Strategy; EU-budgets; EU’s foreign affairs policies; and the work identified to be completed under “sustainable consumption and production”. A new SDS needs to make an explicit move away from a “reduced environmental impact” approach to one that is limits-based, with mechanisms for managing these (see additional discussion under 4.10).

4.2. The promotion of “A People and Planet focussed economy” as demanded by the Spring Alliance should become the main driver for the renewed Lisbon Strategy. This means abandoning the “trickle down” theory of wealth creation and includes the systematic use of market instruments to give the right financial incentives to business, including environmental fiscal reforms, green public procurement and full auctioning of greenhouse gas emission rights. Innovation incentives should be led by sustainability objectives. These and other means need to be used to spur ecological innovation systematically.
4.3. The new EU Financial Perspective, prepared in the coming years and valid from 2014, should be fully in support of environmentally sustainable development and social cohesion. EU funds are of decisive importance in certain sectors throughout the EU (e.g., agriculture, rural development, fisheries, research) and others in large parts of the EU (e.g., infrastructure), so they need to be spent in an exemplary manner.

4.4. The drive for “Better Regulation” should lead to modernisation of legislation for increased environmental effectiveness, in particular by using e-tools, increased transparency and public participation, sustainability impact assessments and integration of policies for specific sectors. However, it should not to undermine the ambitions of existing and future policies, slow down new policy making that is needed to respond properly to environmental challenges or reduce enforceability and transparency of implementation.

4.5. A new Environmental Action Programme (succeeding the 6th which runs out in mid-2012) should be prepared from the start of the new Commission. Lessons need to be learned from the fate of the previous programmes. These lessons include addressing the absence of legally binding clear targets and objectives, which weakens environmental priorities in sectoral policies. The objectives also need to be based on the idea of absolute limits to bring the EU back into carrying capacity. Another lesson is that the EU should clearly choose integration of environmental policy objectives into all policies and for all levels of governance, based on common interests and with respect to the different strengths of local administrations.

4.6. The EU should have a stronger, more straightforward EU policy and enforcement practice rather than withdrawing and handing it back to national levels. While the Commission is charged with the responsibility of being “Guardian of the Treaty”, it does not have the means to do this effectively. EEB calls for an EU Inspection body in order to have more systematic and rapid enforcement and to deal more effectively with public concerns.

4.7. Greenhouse gas emissions must start decreasing globally in the next decade in order to stay below 2°C average temperature increase. This is an enormous challenge and it requires strong EU policies both inside the EU as well in its global policies. The current agreements are not sufficient and should be improved. The EU should implement measures that bring greenhouse gas emissions down 40% by 2020 compared to 1990 on the way to achieving at least -90% by 2050.

4.8. Energy efficiency should become the cornerstone of climate and energy security policies. Dynamic standard setting (using a Top Runner approach) for products as well as buildings and vehicles, targeted financial measures, are all based on a legally binding obligation to reduce at least by 2% a year total energy use in the EU in the next decade.

4.9. Halt biodiversity decline and increase ecosystem resilience. The 2010 target will not be achieved and climate change is creating additional challenges, including more extreme weather patterns. Globally the situation is much worse. The EU should adopt a new biodiversity strategy that leads to a considerable improvement of the resilience of EU’s ecosystems by 2020. This strategy should penetrate in all major sectoral areas (water management, agriculture, fisheries, transport, energy, tourism). Existing EU nature legislation should be reinforced and its implementation well funded. Agriculture should move towards organic practices.

4.10. Set absolute limits on resource use, aiming for an EU that stays within its carrying capacity and shares resources equally with other regions within the total global carrying capacity by 2040. This objective should be conceptualised and measured using ecological footprinting, environmental space[ and other approaches which will require moving away from GDP as the
main measurement of progress. This strategy will require particular focus on agriculture, housing and transportation, given that this is where we make the biggest environmental impacts.

4.11. Strengthen public health protection. Some forms of pollution have been tackled effectively, but new technologies and increasing “intensity” of consumption lead to increase of allergies and cancers. Air-pollution, chemicals remain areas of major concern. REACH, IPPC and a new National Emission Ceilings Directive are priority areas for EEB. Prevention and precaution comes first here and market instruments should only be used where direct forms of protection do not work. Environmental quality objectives need to go along with specific emissions-oriented policies. The nanotechnology the debate is not finished. This is an area where prevention and precaution should play a major role.

4.12. Fully integrate sustainability and environmental concerns into the EU’s external trade and aid policies. Ensure a strong, progressive role for the EU in other international negotiations and processes, including UNEP, multilateral environmental agreements and OECD. In those bodies, the Aarhus Convention principles of transparency and public participation must be fully applied.

See timetable in annex

5. WORKING TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE OBJECTIVES.

5.1. Maintaining EEB’s Strengths

The EEB will continue to invest in:

° 5.1.1. Close relationships with the Commission, Presidencies, Member States and Members of the European Parliament, in permanent dialogue on the basis of mutual respect.
° A liaison role for better public participation, while demanding open and fair treatment in exchange.
° Production of Memoranda, Ten Tests and assessments of each Presidency. This exercise provides decision makers as well as the environmental movement with a comprehensive overview of issues on the table and assessments of progress made.
° Offering advice and seeking support from Members of the EP, while preserving the right to ignore those with an anti-democratic and/or clearly intolerant programme.

5.1.2. Proactive involvement in discussions on EU ambitions and governance. This relates to strategic objectives of the Commission, Aarhus Convention implementation, etc.

5.1.3. Coalition-building inside and outside the environmental movement. EEB is a pro-active member of the Green 10 and seeks to collaborate with environmental organisations with a more specific agenda, also in order to seek consistency between different environmental purposes. EEB also has been working with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) since 1995 with concrete results. With social organisations the cooperation started with the promotion of the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy. EEB has worked with the European Consumers’ Organisation (BEUC) for over a decade on product related issues. EEB has been working with individual companies on product and on waste related issues as well.

5.1.4. Working with networks of members to seek consensus-based positions which then can be promoted by the national member organisations as well. Beyond the EU, assisting NGOs in candidate countries in getting engaged in the transition process and in work at UN-ECE and OECD levels.
5.1.5. Working with experts that help EEB to prepare and substantiate its positions so that they go beyond general principles but give direct support to more technical decision-making processes.

5.2. Strengthening cooperation with members.

Increased cooperation with members has four main objectives:
- Increasing the awareness of members of the relevance of EU environment-related policies to their own agendas;
- Increasing the participation of members in EU advocacy work, both in the policy making and the implementation phases;
- Increasing the involvement of members in positioning of the EEB;
- Increasing the involvement of experts based in member organisations in the representation of the EEB.

5.2.1. Development of an Extranet facility so that information flows between members and staff will run more smoothly, members can have permanent access to key EEB organisational documents, the development of working group activities can be traced and member to member exchanges can be better followed.

5.2.2. Streamlining the work of the EEB working groups: publication of group participants on the Extranet; regular updates on policy developments addressed to these participants; short but clear reports of all meetings; and evaluation of the performance of each working group every two years.

5.2.3. More systematic production of briefings on current and upcoming policy issues, including through the production of power-point presentations. Provision of EEB’s expertise to its members in relevant cases.

5.2.4. Every member is invited to appoint a contact person at the EEB. The name of this person will be published on the Extranet. He/she will receive general information from the EEB, publications, as well as invoices. He/she can advise the EEB on the involvement of other members of the group in specific activities.

5.2.5. Board members are invited to organise a yearly meeting with these contact-persons, for at least half a day. Standard agenda items should include:
- comments on services delivered by EEB
- relevance of the current EEB agenda for national environmental work
- ideas for EEB’s future focus

The Board members can invite EEB-office staff for this meeting. The meeting can be combined with a follow event on EU-policies, either to go more into detail on a specific subject or to promote EEB’s work to a wider audience inside and outside EEB membership in that country.

5.2.6. EEB should make special efforts to increase membership in EU member states where currently there is no membership or where membership is rather small or passive.

5.2.7. EEB shall continue to offer special events in Member States, of a capacity building nature or more strategic (for example, ahead of Presidencies), at least 4 a year. The agenda should be decided with the national Board member and should be targeted at increasing EEB’s profile inside the national environmental movement.

5.3. Improving its public profile
A regularly updated, external communication strategy should increase EEB’s profile with specialised press in particular, but, in cooperation with its members, also seek more publicity at the national level, including with the use of new IT-opportunities (blogs, etc) and traditional ones (letters to the editor). The communication strategy should also help to seek professional presentation of EEB in public events and in its publications.

5.4. Strengthening its capacity to make this all possible

For implementation of the objectives of this strategy, the EEB needs to increase its resources in financial and human capacity terms. For fundraising, it seeks to develop a fundraising plan with the following objectives:
- Increase EEB’s income by 50% over the next 5 years, while staying below 50% European Commission funding;
- Keeping/strengthening reliable support from current sponsors;
- Establish relations with new sponsors which can be maintained over a longer period;
- Maintain EEB’s independence towards donors: funding should be EEB-driven, not donor driven.

With regards to EEB’s staff, the EEB aims to increase its capacity with 50% in the coming 5 years, concurrent with the 50% increase in income, in order to strengthen its work in current and new policy areas, membership relations, communication and general support.