



EEB ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2006

PROGRAMME

CAN THE EU STRENGTHEN ITS LEADERSHIP IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION?

Brussels, 22 September 2006

Venue: International Trade Union House (*Maison syndicale internationale*),
5, Boulevard du Roi Albert II, Brussels (near *Gare du Nord*, metro Rogier)

Conference languages: English and French

No conference fees

9.15. Introduction by Mikael Karlsson, EEB President

Chair of the day: John Hontelez

9.30 Keynote speech: Nick Mabey, E3G:
"In a globalised world, Europe's continued prosperity requires leadership on sustainable development" E3G,
'Environment 3rd Generation', is a UK-based think-tank

Presentation and Questions and Answers.

10.30-12.30 Reviewing the implementation of EU's Sixth Environmental Action Programme (6EAP): what future direction to take in EU Environmental Policy?

Introduction by Mogens Peter Carl, Director General, DG Environment

Responses from:

- Jan-Erik Enestam, Finnish Environment Minister , presenting the Finnish proposals on a "New Generation of Environmental Policies"
- Riita Myller, MEP, Finland, former Rapporteur 6EAP
- Jacqueline McGlade, Director, European Environment Agency (EEA)
- Stefan Scheuer, EU Policy Director, EEB
- David Baldock, Director, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)

Followed by discussion with conference participants

12.30-14.00 Buffet Lunch

14.00 -16.30 “What do Member States Expect from the EU on Environmental Policies?”

A Roundtable of Environment Ministers and Commissioner Dimas

- Commissioner Stavros Dimas
- Minister Connie Hedegaard (Denmark)
- Minister Bruno Tobback (Belgium)
- Minister Jan Szysko (Poland)
- Minister Jan-Erik Enestam (Finland)
- Vice-Minister Olavi Tammemäe (Estonia)
- State-Secretary Van Geel (Netherlands)
- a representative for the German Environment Minister
- other Ministers invited
- Mikael Karlsson, EEB President

Ministers have been invited to respond to the following questions:-

- Which aspect of progress on environmental protection which the EU has brought to your country has been the most remarkable?
- How do EU policies block or complicate national policy priorities?
- How pro-active and demanding should the EU now be?

Responses by: Commissioner Dimas and Mikael Karlsson.

Discussion in the panel and with the conference participants.

16.30 Conclusions by the Chair

Sponsors of this Annual Conference:

The Ministries for the Environment of Finland and the Netherlands.

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Objectives of the Conference:

- Highlight both the successes of EU environmental policies for the state of the EU's environment, and the urgent need to do more, which means both new initiatives and more effective enforcement of existing legislation on the ground.
- Present a critical overall view on 6EAP implementation. Specifically, how effectively have specific requirements to deliver legislation applying targets and deadlines been achieved?
- Discuss the need to ensure the environmental quality of impact assessment procedures and simplification-of-regulation exercises.

- Reconfirm the need to integrate environmental costs and objectives into prices paid for goods and services through subsidy reform, taxes and charges, emissions trading, green public procurement, and effective environmental liability.
- Challenge the views emanating from business, industry and EU Institutions that the implementation of the Lisbon process on innovation and competitiveness necessitates the subordination of environmental objectives and policies.
- Underline the essential role of the European Commission and European-level decision-making to protect and improve the quality of the environment in Europe and globally.

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Background:

- In July this year the Commission was expected to produce a mid-term report on the progress made in implementing the Sixth Environmental Action Programme (6EAP), "*together with associated environmental trends and prospects.*" It is now clear that the publication will be postponed until the Autumn, so the Conference, instead of commenting on the review, can in fact still give input into the work of the Commission
- It is expected that the review will assess progress in the priority areas of 6EAP, based on indicators developed by the European Environmental Agency for its 'State of the Environment 2005' report. It will also look at how the Lisbon process and the general evolution of the economic and social agenda has influenced opportunities for environmental policies and, specifically, how environmental policies can contribute to Lisbon. It will look back at the results of the seven Thematic Strategies, as a tool for a more comprehensive approach to decision making. And it will specifically examine the situation and perspectives in New Member States and allow them to have an input to 6EAP. It is likely then to draw conclusions on the focus and approach which the implementation of 6EAP should take.
- Early 2006, the EEB commissioned the Institute for European Environmental Policy to make an independent review of the 6EAP implementation so far. This was published in April (see: http://10.0.0.12/activities/env_action_programmes/IEEPFinalReport6EAP-April2006.pdf)

- On this basis, the EEB wrote a critical position paper about the 6EAP performance, and drew conclusions about the future orientation of EU environmental policies. This position was later endorsed by the other nine European environmental organisations that work together with the EEB in the Green 10. (See: http://10.0.0.12/activities/env_action_programmes/20060515-EEB-6EAP-position-revised.pdf)
- The Finnish Presidency has made the review a central theme, and organised a discussion on a “*New Generation of Environmental Policy*” at the Informal Environment Council in July. EEB was invited to take part and present its views. The renewed Sustainable Development Strategy also gives some directions and new incentives to apply horizontal instruments, such as green public procurement, subsidy reform and environmental tax reform. And the Commission intended to publish a Green Paper on Market-Based Instruments for the Environment before the summer. We now hope it will still come out before our Conference.
- In the afternoon, we hope to have a panel discussion about the dilemma of EU leadership and subsidiarity. In this discussion we should like to get a clearer picture of what Environmental Ministers expect from the Commission and the EU, and how that compares with current trends in EU policies. We hope the discussion can form a clear view on the kinds of initiative necessary to strengthen environmental policies at national level, both in terms of legislation and enforcement, and in the introduction of effective market instruments.