

ESDN Conference 2009

Conference Proceedings

**“Options and Opportunities for the
Future EU Sustainable Development Strategy”**

17-19 June 2009 in Prague, Czech Republic

Hosted by the Czech EU Presidency and co-hosted by the Swedish EU Presidency

prepared by

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1. Introduction

The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) Conference 2009, “Options and Opportunities for the Future EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS)”, took place in Prague on 17-19 June 2009. It was hosted by the Czech EU Presidency and co-hosted by the Swedish EU Presidency.

The aim of the annual ESDN conferences is to facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge between public administrators responsible for sustainable development (SD) strategies and policies at the EU, national and sub-national levels, experts from National Sustainable Development Councils, members of the SD working group of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC), members of the SD Observatory of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), NGOs and distinguished experts and researchers. In total, about 115 participants from 27 countries attended the ESDN Conference 2009 (the list of participants can be found in the [ESDN Conferences section](#) at the ESDN website).

This year’s conference was the 8th in a series of similar events. Previous ESDN conferences were held in The Hague/Netherlands (2002), Vienna/Austria (2003), Kinsale/Ireland (2004), Windsor/UK (2005), Salzburg/Austria (2006), Berlin/Germany (2007) and Paris/France (2008). For a full documentation of all ESDN conference, please also go the [ESDN Conferences section](#) at the ESDN website.

The ESDN Conference 2009 explored three themes:

- Coherence of strategies & the challenge of policy integration
- Key objectives and topics for the future EU SDS
- Governance mechanisms & institutional structures for the future EU SDS

The conference was supported by a pre-conference survey on key objectives and governance mechanisms for the future EU SDS among SD coordinators from the EU Member States, national input papers from various EU Member States, a conference discussion paper and a background paper on the contribution of economic stimulus packages in Europe to sustainable development.

Similar to previous ESDN conferences, the 2009 event dealt with the conference themes in different formats: Keynote presentation highlighted general issues and key aspects of the conference themes, panel discussions provided an overview of experiences and standpoints of different actors and institutions, parallel working groups discussed specific aspects of the conference themes in-depth, and summaries of the results of the working group discussions during the conference were used for immediate reactions and further discussions.

The discussions at the conference and the results of the pre-conference preparation are summarised in an ESDN Advisory Paper on the further development of the EU SDS that will be submitted to the European Commission and the Swedish EU Presidency.

Supporting documentation of the ESDN Conference 2009, including

- the Conference Programme,
- the Conference Discussion Paper,
- the Background Paper,
- the PowerPoint slides of the keynote presentations and all other presentations, and
- a photo documentation

is available in the [ESDN Conferences section](#) of the ESDN homepage.

2. Welcome addresses

Jan Dusik, First Deputy Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic, welcomed the participants of the ESDN Conference 2009 and stressed that the conference was the last event in the environmental area that was hosted in the Czech Republic under the Czech EU Presidency. Mr Dusik first presented several challenges faced by the Czech EU Presidency, e.g. to pave the way for a successful agreement during the climate change conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, the need to address the global financial and economic crisis and the energy security crisis, and the elections to the European Parliament.

He then presented the priorities and activities of the Czech EU Presidency in the areas of environment and sustainable development: energy and climate change, environment and human health (IPPC, mercury, ozone, GMOs, etc), sustainable consumption and production (EMAS, eco-labelling), and biodiversity (seal products, whales, invasive species, soil). After presenting the legislative achievements in the environmental area under the Czech EU Presidency, Mr Dusik outlined some thoughts on a 'sustainable Europe' for the future: (a) political will to support SD is crucial, (b) the EU SDS should be a living policy document rather than a statement of intent, (c) sound SD indicators are needed as part of the implementation process, and (d) maintaining a high quality of life in the EU is important and requires a change in attitude of consumers, producers and service providers towards more sustainable lifestyles. He concluded that climate change (also due to its close connection to other key environmental, social and economic issues) will be a dominant SD topic in the future and that innovation in the context of resource and energy efficiency will be crucial on the way towards a low-carbon economy.

Maria Åsenius, State Secretary to the Swedish Minister of European Affairs, mentioned that the ESDN has become the most important network at the EU and Member States level for the exchange on preparing and implementing SD strategies. Ms Åsenius also stressed that although the EU SDS is only one of several instruments available for advancing SD at the EU level, its follow-up will be one of the priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency. She pointed out that Sweden has been playing an important role in the development of the EU SDS since the Gothenburg Summit and it is now under the Swedish EU Presidency that the second review of the EU SDS will be prepared. In this context, the Swedish EU Presidency is looking forward to the EU SDS progress report prepared by the European Commission.

In order to support the process of preparing the EU SDS review, Sweden has established an SD Group at the Swedish Ministry of the Environment. This group will also support the Friends of

the Presidency Group that will convene for the first time in mid-September 2009. Ms Åsenius mentioned that the link between the EU SDS and other EU policy strategies (e.g. the Lisbon Strategy, European Energy Policy, Economic Recovery Plan) should also be address during the review process. Ms. Åsenius highlighted how the EU SDS can help to transform our societies, for instance, by stimulating the creation of an eco-innovative economy. She particularly stressed the win-win character of sustainable growth and new environmental technologies. She suggested that the EU SDS should address the issues of resource efficiency and ecological footprint in more detail and also to widen its focus beyond purely environmental issues, e.g. to global consequences of climate change. Policy coherence remains an important challenge, especially given that SD should be integrated into all policy areas. She also stressed the importance of new instruments for measuring SD, such as the 'Beyond GDP' initiative.

Finally, Ms Åsenius addressed the relation between the Lisbon Strategy and the EU SDS. She argued that the future Lisbon Strategy should outline short-term measures and address ways how to overcome the financial and economic crisis. The EU SDS has the particular added-value of addressing long-term issues and development trajectories. Nevertheless, it would be important to establish ways to better link both strategies and their objectives so that they complement each other.

3. Coherence of strategies & the challenge of policy integration

Keynote presentations

Below, we summarise the keynote presentations on the first theme of the conference, 'coherence of strategies & the challenge of policy integration'. The slides of the PowerPoint presentations (of those who used slides) can be found in the [ESDN Conferences section](#) of the ESDN homepage.

Michel Servoz, Head of Direction D 'Better Regulation and Institutional Issues' at the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, stressed the timeliness of the ESDN Conference 2009 and that the discussions during the conference will be important to the European Commission when finalising the EU SDS progress report. Mr Servoz also mentioned that the current economic crisis could be understood as an impulse to reconsider established worldviews, models and assumptions. In this sense, the economic crisis may not be understood only as a challenge, but also as a major opportunity, provided that the short-term recovery measures will be made compatible with the long-term objectives of SD. He argued that the move towards a low-carbon economy will be the major objective of the EU in the future and suggested that the EU SDS should contribute to this objective. In his presentation, Mr Servoz focused on four issues:

(i) Progress achieved towards sustainable development: Mr Servoz argued that there appear to be different timeframes and perspectives of progress towards SD. For instance, policy-makers tend to have the impression of strong, major progress as they see policies being adopted and implemented. But in reality, the objectives of SD are long-term and progress needs to be consistent and short-term objectives need to be in line with long-term objectives. This type of coherence is one of the most difficult challenges and is constantly tackled by the European Commission. He argued that some success has been achieved on the EU level in mainstreaming

SD into various policy fields, e.g. fisheries, agriculture and cohesion policy. However, Mr Servoz also pointed out that progress is lagging behind in some areas: Pressure on natural resources must stay in the centre of attention; since the current economic crisis caused a decrease in prices of natural resources, the topic of low-input economy should be discussed. The low-input economy is an opportunity for a win-win solution: to consume less and be more productive. Another area lagging behind is energy consumption in transport and transport in general. Transport may be one of the most difficult future challenges, as it is strongly linked to national infrastructure and urban areas. As another major challenge for the future, Mr Servoz identified climate change policy and how to convince the EU's partners (i.e. USA, India, China, Japan) to achieve good progress in the future.

(ii) Coherence of major EU strategies: Mr Servoz argued that the EU needs different policy strategies, all of which should be framed by the objectives to achieve SD. He highlighted several important EU policy strategies, such as the Lisbon Strategy, the Climate and Energy Package, Integrated Maritime Policy, EU Health Strategy, the Economic Recovery Plan and the EU's Social Agenda. He stressed that these strategies need to preserve their own identities (as each responds to different problems) but coherence among them needs to be ensured and their objectives need to be consistent. Another important challenge for the future on the EU and Member States level is to improve the deliver of strategy objectives.

(iii) Issues for reflection in the future: Ms Servoz mentioned several issues which should be addressed in the future: better alignment between strategies, particularly between the EU SDS and the Lisbon Strategy; supporting the exchange between Member States and sharing information on good practice more effectively; reflecting on the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) as model for the EU SDS; further developing the EU SD indicator set; increasing the flexibility of the EU SDS to consider new developments.

(iv) EU SDS progress report: Mr Servoz mentioned that the progress report will launch a debate about the review of the EU SDS that will also be taken up by the Friends of the Presidency Group.

Bedrich Moldan, Professor of Environmental Sciences at Charles University Prague and Senator of the Czech Parliament, provided a short overview of the origins of SD. The term 'sustainable development' can be traced back to the IUCN World Conservation Strategy (1980), in which a chapter was called 'Towards Sustainable Development'. Generally, SD is about balancing three equally important pillars: economic development, social cohesion and environmental protections.

Mr Moldan also mentioned that SD is becoming increasingly linked to particular social sub-systems: sustainability of financial markets, sustainability of healthcare etc. However, in practice, SD policy almost always translates to environmental action only. A point in case is the material prepared by the Czech Presidency for the Council meeting which stresses the issue of climate change as the central SD topic. He argued that at the international level, SD lacks political will and ownership. Lastly, Mr Moldan presented two options of how to lead the SD discourse in the future: Either to specifically acknowledge the balancing of the three pillars of SD and its related challenges; or to focus SD on environmental sustainability, which would keep the discourse more focused.

Jan De Smedt, European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC), mentioned that the two main EU policy strategies – the Lisbon Strategy and the EU SDS – are currently different tools and operate on different time frames. Generally, not enough attention is given to their synergies. For instance, transport is dealt with independently by both strategies. Another difference is the unequal balance of power between the two strategies: Ms De Smedt argued that, in contrast to the Lisbon Strategy, the EU SDS does not receive enough attention to significantly affect the core of EU policy-making. The EU SDS is not mainstreamed in terms of EU governance and it has only limited resonance in day-to-day political action at the European and national level. Moreover, the key challenges of the EU SDS are not efficiently translated into concrete measures.

Generally, the EEAC believes that the EU SDS needs to be stronger and better articulated. However, the Lisbon Strategy should also address SD issues more strongly – this should be considered during the discussion on the post-2010 strategy on growth and jobs. In this context, it will be important how to use the term ‘sustainable’ in the post-2010 strategy. He stressed that it would be important to reflect upon some general issues like the relationship between SD and economic growth. There are already interesting discussions going on in this direction, e.g. the recent report of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, “The Prosperity Without Growth”, that argues that reaching economic stability without growth is possible.

Mr De Smedt then addressed various dimensions of the potential transformation of the Lisbon Strategy towards SD: more sustainable consumption and production patterns; an ambitious climate and energy policy; biodiversity and sustainable use of resources; social well-being; international responsibilities. He also suggested instruments for policy integration, e.g. SD indicators, impact assessment (IA), a reassessment of the EU budgetary mechanisms, and strong political ownership. Regarding IA, Mr De Smedt argued that current procedures at the EU level do not handle the three dimensions of SD in an equal or balanced way. This makes a shift towards Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) necessary. In addition, he stressed the importance of the reassessment of the EU budgetary expenditures from the point of view of SD criteria such as equity or environmental impact.

Christophe Bouvier, Director of the Regional Office for Europe at UNEP, provided a global picture for SD in general and the EU SDS in particular. He stressed that current food production practices are not sustainable to feed the population of 9.5 billion that is expected in 2040-50, as production would need to grow by 50 per cent. Food production is just one of the examples of the need for a sustainable transformation. Mr Bouvier also suggested that the current financial and economic crisis is the result of working with virtual financial capital and that there are similarities to be found with the way we currently operate with natural capital. He pointed at the fact that regardless of the price of oil in the past, it was never the ‘right time’ for investing into renewables. Policy-makers should thus be aware that markets alone may not be able to achieve a transition to SD. A specific challenge is represented by international trade – its negative effects in many developing countries are beyond the capacities of public actors or investors.

Mr Bouvier continued to present the Green Economy Initiative in which UNEP is involved (among a variety of other international organisations, enterprises, trade/labour unions and other stakeholders) and which consists of several sub-initiatives (the Green Economy Report,

TEEB – The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Green Jobs, and Poverty and Environment). The Green Economy Report is aimed to be concrete enough to be used by different stakeholders. Mr. Bouvier also pointed to the IPCC report where short-term profitability in behaving ‘low-carbon’ is already identified. He went on to comment on the Copenhagen objectives – although 20 per cent emission reduction can be seen as a great political achievement, it still remains a weak environmental achievement. He argued that it would be necessary to achieve an 80 per cent emission reduction to keep CO₂ concentrations at pre-industrial levels.

R. Andreas Kraemer, Director of Ecologic, began his presentation by discussing the causes and triggers of the current economic crisis. He argued that the triggers were energy and climate related (high oil prices and energy costs of households did not allow to repay credits and mortgages for houses). The results of the crisis led to a decrease in GDP by about 2 to 3 per cent; import and export decreased by 10 to 25 per cent and world trade faces even bigger downturns with the lack of confidence in finance. Mr Kramer argued that neither the EU SDS nor the Lisbon Strategy provide good answers to these challenges. He then presented some methodological issues associated with analysing the contribution of economic stimulus packages to SD. Firstly, stimulus packages can have various forms. Secondly, in many cases they do not have clear budgetary linkages (e.g. in the case of governmental guarantees). Thirdly, a significant portion of the stimulus packages is redirected spending (such as the resources channelled to sub-national authorities). Fourthly, another significant portion is ‘repackaged’ spending (i.e. spending which would happen anyway but now under a different name). Fifthly, a lot of the money allocated for stimulus packages has not yet been spent. Nevertheless, he presented some figures of stimulus packages of 6 EU Member States (Austria, Germany, France, Poland, Slovenia and UK).

Mr Kraemer argued that the results show that a lot of damage has been done to the sustainability of public finances. Expenditures tend to be significantly higher than revenues, which might in the near future either require the help of private capital with a subsequent crisis of confidence in governments or severe budget deficits. The most significant benefits of the stimulus packages can be observed in the labour market (which is the primary beneficiary of stimulus packages) and small- and medium-sized enterprises. A comparatively small effect has been seen in social security systems (even though they have a stabilising effect in the time of economic crisis) and research & development. Putting climate change aside, stimulus packages have otherwise only very limited positive impacts on ecosystems. Mr. Kramer argued that the environmental/SD community (such as the Ministries of Environment) were typically excluded from the processes of designing the stimulus packages.

Finally, Mr Kraemer presented two likely scenarios for the future of the crisis and economic stimulus packages: Under the first one, the current packages will be insufficient as the crisis is deeper than expected. Subsequent stimulus packages will become more ‘intelligent’ (targeted more effectively and with better consideration of potential impacts) although still very similar to the past ones. The general understanding of the crisis might not have been improved. Under the second scenario, the bottom of the crisis may have been reached. However, it might seem that the crisis has not triggered any significant societal learning. If one takes the examples of the past oil crises, it may take two crises for the society to learn. Since the root causes of the

crisis would not have been addressed by the current recovery plans, the next crisis might be coming in 3 to 5 years, with many familiar components.

Thomas Bergmark, Social and Environmental Affairs Manager of IKEA Group, brought the experiences of an international company with integrating economic, social and environmental issues into the discussion. After presenting some basic facts and figures about IKEA, he expressed a firm belief that in a vast majority of situations, environmental and social solutions can be combined with business solutions to provide win-win situations. The case of IKEA is somewhat special for an international company as it is a foundation and not listed on the stock market. This legal form enables IKEA to incorporate more long-term issues into its business operation. IKEA has more than 600 million customers per year in all its stores and, therefore, outreach activities in the context of SD reach a large audience. This represents a huge potential for building awareness and changing lifestyles. More than 50 percent of the material used by IKEA in its production is wood-based and, therefore, sustainable forestry is a key issue for IKEA: for instance, IKEA currently employs 15 educated forestry experts.

Mr Bergmark concluded that SD has become an integral part of doing business at IKEA and is also integrated in all other business strategies. Regarding long-term planning, IKEA is focussing on solutions for a sustainable life at home, sustainable use of resources, minimizing the carbon footprint, social responsibility and transparency to all stakeholders. He also pointed out that international companies need clear answers and support from the policy-makers to plan their future activities. In this context, IKEA needs support on rail and renewables.

Panel discussion

The panel discussion was held in the form of a moderated dialogue between the panellists, followed by a discussion with the conference participants. The panel discussion was guided by four questions. The panel was moderated by **André Martinuzzi** (ESDN Office Coordinator). The panellists were **Michel Servoz** (European Commission), **Jan De Smedt** (EEAC), **Christophe Bouvier** (UNEP), **R. Andreas Kraemer** (Ecologic) and **Thomas Bergmark** (IKEA).

Question 1: Which suggestions would you provide for the EU SDS regarding policy coherence and horizontal policy integration?

Michael Servoz pointed to the fact that various opinions exist on the success of the EU SDS. Generally, however, the concept of SD has never been more important: climate change and clean energy are major objectives of the renewed EU SDS, SD is being mainstreamed into many different EU policies, and it is suggested to make the financial markets more sustainable (although 'sustainability' must be understood here in a different context). He argued that the Lisbon Strategy should serve to provide measures to overcome the current crisis, however, these measures should be guided by the long-term SD agenda. Mr Servoz stressed that the effects of stimulus packages are almost impossible to assess. Therefore, he thinks it is vital to make the objectives of various individual measures and initiatives more compatible.

Christophe Bouvier suggested that in order to achieve SD, the system has to push countries and all stakeholders to a broader idea of SD. SD should not remain on the agenda of only a small group of environmentally-minded actors, it needs to be addressed globally and in other

important policy fields, like justice. Mr Bouvier mentioned that one of the best practice examples of anchoring SD in the constitution can be found in Montenegro.

Jan De Smedt argued that horizontal policy integration could be ensured by converging on a single mobilising strategy (e.g. based on the European social prosperity model). This single mobilising strategy – called for instance European Prosperity Strategy – should ensure policy coherence and provide a set of policy principles which should serve as framework of reference for all other strategies. It is important that such a strategy receives enough attention by the policy-makers to be politically relevant.

Andreas Kraemer mentioned that there is a strong need to align the EU SDS and Lisbon Strategy which, however, requires a relatively clear idea of where society wants to go. He pointed out that the central idea should be transformation.

Thomas Bergmark stressed that from the business perspective, a clear ‘playing field’ for businesses needs to be created as a basic precondition. Following from that, businesses should assume proper responsibility. He also presented IKEA’s vision of a responsible retailer: SD is integrated into all business strategies, in all its core processes across the world. For example, currently 85 per cent of resources and materials used by IKEA are renewables, recycled or reclaimed, and the objective is to move up to 100 per cent until 2015. Moreover, ‘carbon footprinting’ is being calculated for IKEA. New products should enable consumers to consume fewer resources.

Several contributions to the discussion came from the conference participants who raised critical issues concerning the EU SDS: John Hontelez (European Environmental Bureau) provided a critical assessment of the EU SDS. He argued that the Lisbon Strategy is not challenged by the EU SDS: generally, the EU SDS ‘has no teeth’ and is largely ignored by policy-makers. In contrast to the EU SDS, the Lisbon Strategy has a lot of tools, such as better regulation, and much high symbolic power. He argued that the success of SD policy-making is often exaggerated: for instance, the climate agenda is not addressed because of the EU SDS and the progress in agriculture has occurred before the EU SDS. In his opinion, the EU SDS has not delivered and its roadmap is not kept. He sees the challenge in developing a new EU SDS that has more ‘political teeth’ and gets more support from policy-makers. Derek Osborn (SD Observatory of the EESC) suggested that the reformed Lisbon Strategy should have a much stronger SD component. In his opinion, too many people in the economic sector think that ‘sustainable growth’ is just ‘continuous growth’. Moreover, he listed some of the major shortcomings of the EU SDS: it ‘lacks teeth’; it does not possess sufficient political backing; it does not exhibit an annual dialogue with the Member States; and it has no real focus on indicators and unsustainable practices. Strengthening the EU SDS ‘machinery’ is needed, with a clear timetable and monitoring of progress.

Question 2: What are the most important time horizons for implementing the future EU SDS?

Christophe Bouvier made a distinction between decision horizons and decision time. Since almost every problem seems to be immediately pressing, decision time (i.e. the time to make the decision) is almost always short, which puts pressure on decision-makers. He stressed that decision-makers also tend to contribute to the compounding of the problem by the way they address it, i.e. by choosing short-term responses which can create delayed negative impacts.

The challenge lies in being able to respond to challenges in the short-term, while respecting long-term objectives. Mr Bouvier also addressed the question of forecasting and uncertainty. The traditional practice of forecasting by looking at past trends and projecting it into the future needs to be changed. Biodiversity is an example of an area where a more complex kind of science is needed. Among the successful pioneers are the scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

On the question whether the timeframes of a successful SD strategy should be linked to election cycles, Andreas Kraemer argued that on the decision-making timescale, two time horizons are relevant: On the one hand, a 1-year monitoring and reporting cycle is better than a 4-year cycle. On the other hand, impacts of important policy decisions should be considered in the time horizon of 7 generations (200 years).

Thomas Bergmark presented the planning timeframes of IKEA: a 10-year long-term vision, implemented by a 6-year long-term strategy, broken down into 3-year short-term and more concrete plans. He stressed that IKEA is generally very future-oriented by focusing on future needs and challenges.

Question 3: Which concrete measures for SD should follow in the various policy sectors?

Andreas Kraemer suggested transformation of the energy and transport sectors. He argued that there are relatively clear ideas about what such a transformation would entail in the energy sector, but this is not the case for transport. He also suggested that a co-transformation of these two sectors might be easier than a separate transformation. However, he pointed out that the constraints of carrying capacity are going to increase. Michel Servoz confirmed that the energy sector is already in progress, but the transport sector is only at the very beginning.

Jan De Smedt added that struggling against poverty is also very important for our societies. SD should not be reduced to eco-efficiency only; the larger context and the commitments of the developed countries to the developing world should also be taken into account. Thomas Bergmark similarly stressed the social dimension and human rights. He pointed out that more than 300,000 people die annually due to climate change.

Other issues identified were sustainable buildings, especially the refurbishment of old buildings (Bouvier) and sustainability criteria for the production of bio-fuels (Bergmark). Christophe Bouvier also stressed the importance of thinking outside the box when creating enabling conditions as well as the important role of sub-national levels that are directly concerned with issues that happen on their territories.

Again, the conference participants raised several issues: Anders Wijkman (European Parliament) raised a question on efficient resource use: he suggested that effective initiatives and instruments to achieve a more sustainable resource use are often met with opposition by business representatives and representatives of the European Commission. He used the eco-design directive as an example for which no policy instruments to affect resource use are present. He also pointed out that the EU SDS lacks policy instruments to stimulate resource efficiency, recycling and reuse.

Jiri Hlavacek (Czech Ministry of Environment) pointed at the risks that the climate change debate could overshadow all other important SD issues: the future of European agriculture, subsidies in CAP and the impact on rural areas and food; soil protection and the slow progress in the development of a framework directive; marine biodiversity; international trade (not only in agricultural products). The EU SDS should also address issues of governance on the highest political level.

Question 4: Is sustainable growth possible?

Michel Servoz argued that sustainable growth is possible and of high priority for the European Commission. He pointed out that if growth were sustainable, there would be no reason to disconnect prosperity from growth. Growth, if sustainable, leads to prosperity.

Andreas Kraemer stressed the importance of a 'proper' measurement of prosperity/welfare and mentioned the 'Beyond GDP' initiative. He argued that there is now a shared understanding that GDP does not reflect welfare. Current GDP would be a 'replacement business', a good measure for how fast to destroy natural resources. He suggested disaggregating GDP into negative, beneficial and neutral components.

Christophe Bouvier pointed to the difficulties in keeping individuals' footprints within ecosystem limits, especially with the world's population still growing. However, he believes that the dichotomy between economic growth under current business practices and improvement of well-being without overstretching the carrying capacities can be solved.

4. Key objectives and topics for the future EU SDS

The second theme of the conference was addressed in a keynote presentation, a presentation of the results of the survey among SD coordinators of the EU Member States, discussions in parallel working groups and a panel discussion.

Keynote presentation

John Hontelez, Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), talked about the experiences of the Spring Alliance process. The [Spring Alliance](#) aims to mobilize a broad range of actors and convince EU's decision-makers to change course to create an EU that is fundamentally based on SD. The Spring Alliance specifically targets the new EU Commission and the Spring Summit in 2010.

For this, the Spring Alliance prepares a manifesto. The work on the manifesto was kicked-off in January 2009 and several working groups addressed specific SD issues. In early June 2009, a draft version of the manifesto was completed on the basis of the working group results. Shortly before the ESDN Conference 2009, the Spring Alliance organised a conference with the participation of business representatives. In early July 2009, the manifesto will be finalized and officially presented at an informal Environmental Ministers Council on 25 July 2009. On 28 September 2009, a conference will be organised in Brussels to debate with EU decision-makers and other stakeholders. The draft manifesto includes the following topics: preserving the

ecosystem; establishing inclusive societies; promoting green and quality jobs; assuming global responsibility; addressing economy and governance; improving democracy.

Mr Hontelez also mentioned the biggest challenges for the manifesto: making the manifesto relevant for national level; consensus about ambitious climate policy in times of rapidly growing unemployment; giving the social dimension its proper place and weight; the mobilisation of businesses.

Presentation of survey results (part 1)

As part of the pre-conference preparation, the ESDN Office undertook a survey among SD coordinators from the EU Member States (many of them are members of the SDS Coordinators Group) on expectations regarding key objectives and topics as well as governance mechanisms & institutional structures for the future EU SDS. During April and May 2009, ESDN Office members undertook telephone interviews with SD coordinators from 21 Member States.

Wilhelm Zwirner, ESDN Office, presented the results of the survey on key objectives and topics for the future EU SDS:

General aim and purpose of the future EU SDS:

- The future EU SDS should be a general development strategy with a long-term view (meta-strategy for all sectoral policy strategies);
- It should include a set of limited key challenges (well defined and precisely formulated);
- It should reflect upon the challenges posed by the global financial and economic crisis and comprise a clear definition of the link between economic growth and SD;
- It should define horizontal and vertical policy integration as well as outline clear governance mechanisms and institutional structures;
- Concrete measures for the implementation of the EU SDS should be formulated in an Action Plan;
- The EU SDS should clearly define the role of the EU in pursuing international SD objectives.

Key challenges (objectives, topics) of the future EU SDS:

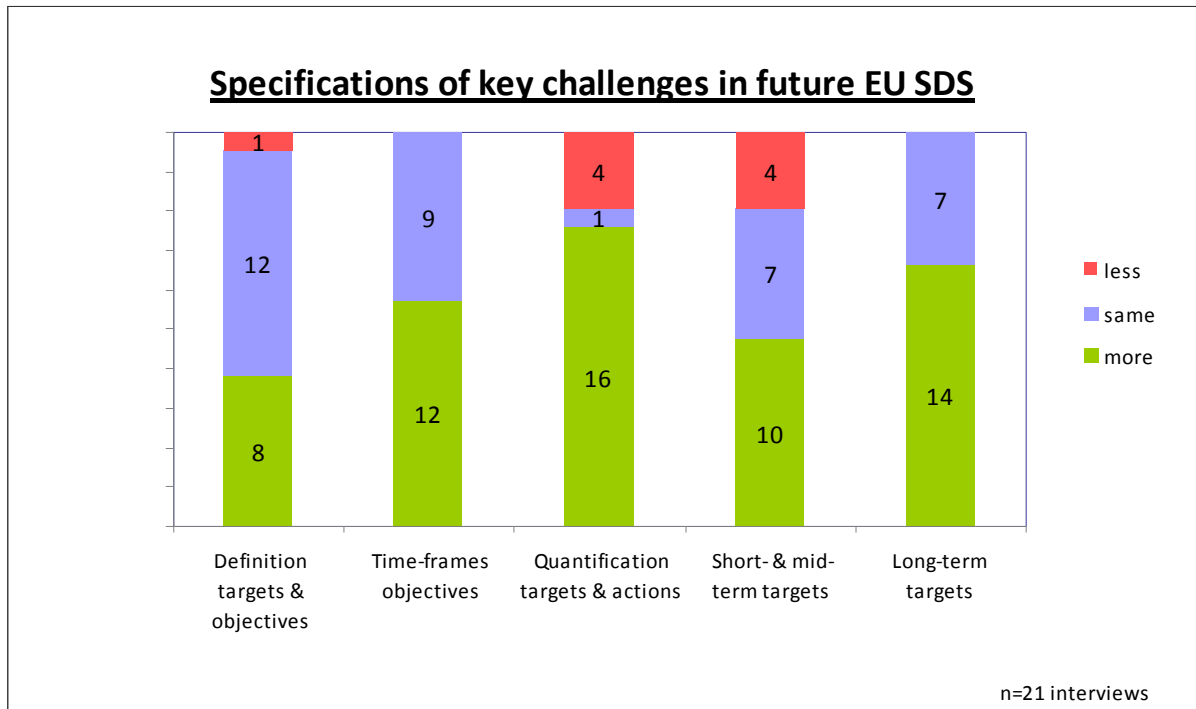
- SD coordinators seem generally content with the key challenges included in the current EU SDS;
- However, macro-economic issues should be included as additional key challenge (addressing the link between economic growth and SD in the EU SDS).

Some of the current key challenges should either be expanded, split or addressed differently:

- The cross-sectoral character of each key challenge should be better specified;
- A strong link to the policy sectors is necessary (where objectives and targets of key challenges are decided in sectoral policy circles);
- The future EU SDS should include links to the Lisbon Strategy objectives for each key challenge;

- Revising the current key challenges with regards to the challenges posed by the financial and economic crisis;
- Detailed objectives and targets of the key challenges should be defined in a separate Action Plan.

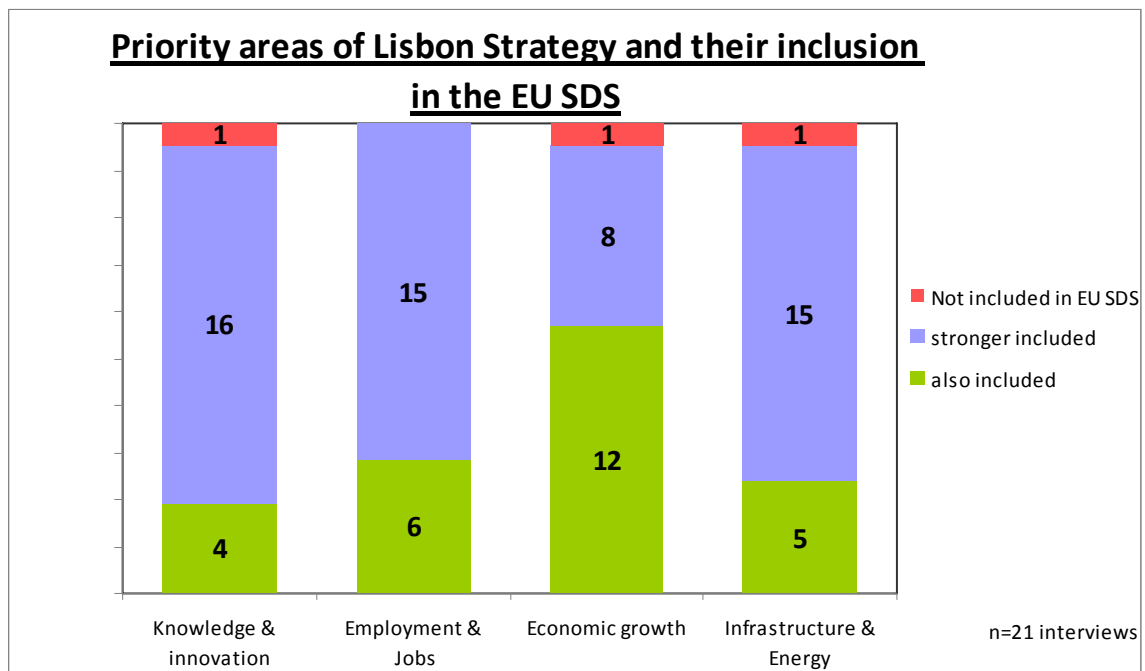
Specification of key challenges:



Graph 1: Specifications of key challenges in the future EU SDS

For several of the current key challenges, more quantified targets and actions would be useful (good example: targets and actions in climate change); the targets should be realistic and based on scientific evidence. The EU SDS should include more long-term targets and actions in the key challenges and the future EU SDS should be a strategic development strategy with a long-term perspective. Short- and medium-term targets and actions should rather be included in sectoral policy strategies or action plans.

Inclusion of Lisbon Strategy priorities in the future EU SDS:



Graph 2: Priority areas of the Lisbon Strategy and their inclusion in EU SDS

It is necessary for the future EU SDS to define economic growth in relation to SD, to reflect on the challenges for SD posed by the global financial and economic crisis, and to outline what SD could contribute to overcome this crisis and prevent similar future crises. The future EU SDS should deal with issues like eco-efficient, green technologies, clean energy, etc, and should also provide a link to R&D and innovative systems. Regarding employment and jobs, the EU SDS should deal with specific issues important in the context of SD, e.g. linking sustainable growth and job creation, inter-generational solidarity, equal opportunities, work-life-balance, new working models, active aging and retirement, etc. The future EU SDS should address transport, construction of buildings, energy efficiency and climate change in relation to quality-of-life issues. Moreover, it is important for the EU SDS to continue and ultimately increase its efforts on the challenge of climate change.

Working group results

The conference participants discussed key challenges for the future EU SDS in eight parallel working groups.

Firstly, the participants were asked to add key challenges to the current list (if they considered this as necessary) and to prioritise the key challenges of the EU SDS in order to identify any priority areas for the future EU SDS.

The working group results on the priority areas for the future EU SDS (order does not indicate a ranking of priorities):

- Conservation and management of natural resources
- Strategic goal of a 'high quality of life with less use of resources'

- Low carbon & resource efficient economy
- Climate change & clean energy
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Macroeconomic issues (greening the economy; sustainable public finances)
- Sustainable transport and infrastructures
- Global poverty & SD challenges

Secondly, the participants discussed which priorities of the Lisbon Strategy should be included in the future EU SDS and how they should be addressed. The working group results on the four Lisbon priority areas are listed below:

Knowledge & innovation

- Education & training for SD (societal responsibility)
- Green technology
- Social innovation & combating inequalities
- Links between SD and research & development

Employment & job creation

- Green jobs & green technologies
- Quality of employment & health
- Sustainable jobs & high quality jobs
- Social consequences of unemployment

Economic growth

- Addressing prosperity in relation to growth
- Economy as a tool for well-being (beyond GDP)
- Low carbon & low resource economy & absolute decoupling

Infrastructure & energy efficiency

- Transformation of infrastructure (oriented towards SD, low resources consumption)
- Sustainable cities, energy & transport
- Climate change & resource efficiency

Panel discussion on the key objectives and topics of the future EU SDS

The panel discussion was moderated by **Elisabeth Freytag** (ESDN co-chair). The panel consisted of **Robin Miege** (European Commission, DG Environment), **John Hontelez** (EEB), **Anders Wijkman** (Member of the European Parliament), **Jörg Mayer-Ries** (Ministry of the Environment, Germany) and **Alexia Flowerday** (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK).

For Robin Miege (European Commission), the crucial challenge for the future is to organise the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient society (i.e. low-input, low output). Fiscal

instruments, 'right' prices and environmental tax reform should be the primary instruments for this transition. Mr Miege also underlined the importance of the transformation of long-term objectives (such as climate change and biodiversity) into short- or medium-term practical actions. Specifically regarding biodiversity, the challenge is to include biodiversity into decision-making by attaching prices (e.g. through shadow prices for wetlands as proposed by France). In the medium- to short-term, transport is one of the key issues. It will require also looking into key infrastructure and land-use issues, where the trade-offs will become apparent. Another challenge pointed out by Mr Miege is on the demand-side effects for consumption. It would be critical that consumers realise the impacts of their consumption decisions. In this context, public acceptance of environmental aspects of consumption needs to be reached. Nevertheless, Mr Miege believes that it will be difficult for legislators on the EU level to strengthen environmental issues. Even if the Lisbon Strategy will be adopted, the opposition to EU-level taxation is still strong. Generally, public acceptance of taxes remains at a very low level and budget deficits are going to be very high. Budget reform might open the discussion on new revenue sources, e.g. some forms of green taxes.

Jörg Mayer-Ries (Ministry of the Environment, Germany) stated that the EU SDS's policy principles are well-formulated, but the strategic vision for the EU should be more strongly emphasised. For example, it should be stated more clearly that the EU SDS is the long-term strategy of the EU. Mr Mayer-Ries argued that quality of life should be the central pillar of the EU SDS on which sectoral policies and strategies should be based. SD strategies cannot solve problems alone – they should not be made more complex, but rather more focused and supportive of sectoral strategies on growth, health etc. For Mr Mayer-Ries, the bottom line is how to organise the societal transition to a resource-efficient economy. The EU SDS should be a framework for the politicians to achieve transition and to devise sectoral policies. In this context, new governance styles should be explored that help to achieve a transition to a globally competitive knowledge society without negative environmental, social and economic impacts.

Anders Wijkman (Member of European Parliament) addressed the vision where there is no need for an EU SDS anymore, as SD will be integrated into all other policy strategies and transition will have been achieved. He suggested that unless the neo-liberal macro-economic framework is not challenged, it will be difficult to achieve this vision and the proposed governance solutions will not work. Generally, the heart of the matter is the policy framework, regulating macro-economic processes; thus it is not only changing the markets, but changing the rules for markets. He also argued that the EU SDS does not form the overall framework for the EU but the Lisbon Strategy that deals with economic competitiveness. Lisbon is driven by neoclassical economists, is based on economic growth, assumes that natural capital can be substituted by economic capital, and operates with linear discounting. Mr Wiman argued that this approach needs to be questioned in order to change the EU's policy framework.

Alexia Flowerday (DEFRA, UK) suggested that the main challenge is managing the risks of not achieving the current objectives of the EU SDS. The current economic situation is an issue which was not sufficiently addressed before. In addition, increasing the impact and visibility of the SD strategies and how they influence policy-making is necessary, by e.g. making decisions cutting across policy areas and working across ministries, particularly involving the Ministries of Finance, to include fiscal policies that will have the support of other ministries. She also

reconfirmed that short-term decisions should not have negative long-term impacts. Moreover, she argued that biodiversity, natural resources and food security are topics which have not been addressed sufficiently in the current EU SDS.

John Hontelez (EEB) pointed out that the key challenge is to make the future EU SDS more recognised. It needs to set of clear visions for policy areas such as agriculture. The EU SDS is now too far removed from the daily concerns of EU citizens; in order to gain support, it needs to highlight how it addresses quality of life issues. Moreover, the policy/governance principles are very important and should be kept in the future versions of the EU SDS. Mr Hontelez pointed out that defining how to achieve a low-input economy is an important objective for the future EU SDS. Although carrying capacity is a frequently mentioned concept, it needs to be operationalised for sectoral policies in terms of future availability of minerals, soils, assimilation capacities, etc. Some knowledge and instruments of how to achieve a low-carbon economy or low-energy economy do exist, but a low-input economy would be more problematic as it requires dealing with issues like water scarcity on a global dimension.

During the panel discussion, several conference participants suggested that the key challenges of the EU SDS should not be altered radically, because some stability in the key challenges and related objectives is important to achieve effective implementation and to harmonise the NSDSs with the EU SDS.

5. Governance mechanisms & institutional structures for the future EU SDS

The third theme of the conference comprised a reflection on governance mechanisms & institutional structures for the future EU SDS and on impact assessment for SD. These topics were addressed in keynote presentations, a presentation of the results of the survey among SD coordinators of the EU Member states, discussions in parallel working groups and a panel discussion.

Keynote presentations

Anders Wijkman, Member of the European Parliament, stressed the need to discuss policy and ideological issues before putting in place efficient governance and institutional structures for the EU SDS. Mr Wijkman believes that the EU SDS requires a lot of rethinking, e.g. the organisation of science and education, the economic policy framework, the role of finance, social inclusion, etc. Moreover, he argued that it would be necessary to rethink conventional growth and he used several examples to underline his argument: our society's ecologic footprint is continuously increasing, the current economic model is based on the assumption of infinite resource capacities of nature, eco-systems are being destroyed, etc. Mr Wijkman pointed out that neither short-term nor long-term environmental concerns are currently adequately addressed. He then went on to outline some proposals for an economic reform and for reforming governance structures. As regards economic reform, Mr Wijkman argued that 'Beyond GDP' is important, in particular to measure welfare in a more intelligent way. Moreover, he believes that resource efficiency is a key objective for the future. As regards governance mechanisms, Mr Wijkman argued that a closer link between the Lisbon Strategy and the EU SDS is vital. Additionally, he suggested the following: more effective horizontal

policy integration is needed at all political levels and in all policy sectors (including legislation); the responsibility for SD should lie with the highest political level, e.g. the Prime Minister's Offices; the European Parliament should play a stronger role in the development and implementation of the EU SDS; the objectives of the EU SDS and the NSDSs need to be harmonised and governance processes better coordinated; an EU SDS committee at the EU level would be important as 'inspiration and clearing house'.

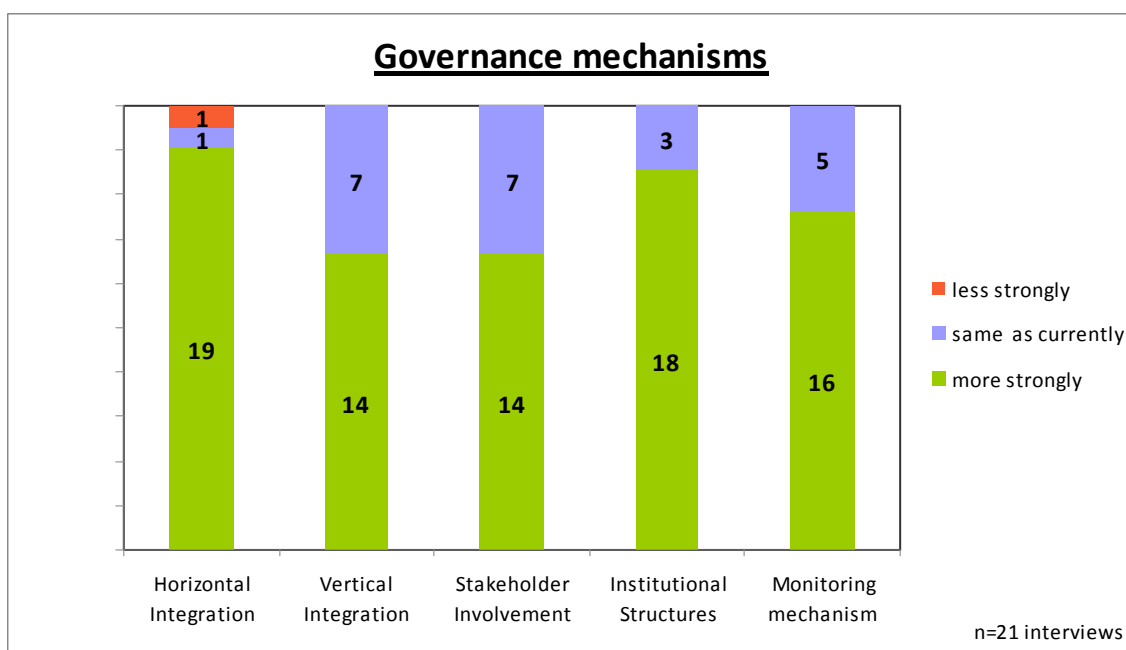
Annika Lindblom, Finnish National Commission on SD, introduced the topic 'impact assessment for SD' and raised the question of the contribution of SD evaluation to policy development and implementation and the role of science in policy-making. She argued that the role of evaluation lies generally in increasing policy-makers' control over set targets and on legitimization. However, the focus should also lie on shared knowledge and developing knowledge for SD and policy learning. Ms Lindblom then outlined some challenges for SD evaluation: creating a process which pulls together knowledge (science), strategies (governance), indicators (monitoring) and assessments (analysis); developing an assessment approach where environmental, social and economic perspectives are considered in an integrative/balanced way; giving guidance to policy planning: how to manage the long-term goals with uncertain impacts and complexity of the societal challenges; adding value to the transparent, participatory and future-oriented SD policy planning tradition; and helping politicians to make justified and sound decisions.

She then introduced the Finnish model of SD policy-making and the assessment scope for evaluating the implementation of the Finnish NSDS of 2006. The outcome of the assessment of the NSDS will be an evaluation report that comprises the following: analysis on the implementation of the objectives of the NSDS as a whole and on a thematic basis; assessment on the impacts and on the state of SD in Finland; review of the key future challenges and scenarios; recommendations for future steps and priorities; introduction of a toolkit for the state administration in considering SD targets in their policy-planning. Ms Lindblom concluded by outlining some expected added-values of the impact assessment to policy-making in general: increased knowledge on the potential conflicts and synergies across the economic, environmental and social domains; more coherent, informed and sustainable planning & decisions across the government departments; demonstrating thematic societal priorities for immediate action and future target-setting; providing concrete instruments for the sector ministries to mainstream SD into national policy-making.

Presentation of survey results (part 2)

Gerald Berger, ESDN Office, presented the results of the survey among SD coordinators of the EU Member States on governance mechanisms & institutional structures:

Governance mechanisms & institutional structures:



Graph 3: Governance mechanisms in the future EU SDS

Regarding horizontal policy integration, sectoral policies should be better connected and balanced with respect to EU SDS; there should be a stronger coordination between DGs and national ministries; and institutions that foster horizontal integration should be established. In terms of institutional structures, some SD coordinators said that an SD committee at EU level with clear mandate (raising profile for SD, act in exchange with Commission & Council) should be established, while others argued that existing institutional structures should be used more efficiently (SD Coordinators group should be more active). Generally, a strong coordination between EU and the Member States is seen as important. As regards monitoring mechanisms, the SD coordinators argued that the EU SDS progress report should also include implementation efforts on the Member States and sub-national levels; there should be common guidelines and structures for individual Member State reports; and the EU SD indicator set should increasingly be used at Member State level. In terms of vertical policy integration, the SD coordinators argued that EU SDS key challenges/objectives should be included in NSDSs and that clear responsibilities for political levels for implementing EU SDS objectives should be established. Finally, the SD coordinators consider it as important to involve stakeholders at all stages of policy cycle and to involve the European Parliament and national SD councils more actively in the development and implementation of the EU SDS.

Lessons from implementing NSDS:

- Inter-ministerial committees and national SD councils are important to foster horizontal policy integration: each ministry should be aware of the strategy and contribute to its effective implementation;
- Inclusion of capacities of societal stakeholders in strategy development and implementation are considered as very important;

- Cooperation among the different political levels for implementing strategy objectives (measures, actions) is vital;
- SD Action Plans in several Member States that define concrete measures and actions for strategy objectives across ministries and sub-national authorities;
- Concrete mid-term targets of NSDSs helped to better communicate strategy and to increase the understanding of SD in society.

Future EU SDS as added-value in NSDSs of Member States:

- The future EU SDS should be a strategic and guiding document for the Member States and their efforts to move towards more SD: objectives of future EU SDS and NSDSs should be harmonized;
- Translate objectives of future EU SDS into concrete actions and targets for implementation in the Member States: fostering implementation through benchmarking / exchange of good practices and best ideas;
- Future EU SDS should outline clear responsibilities for the different political levels: should be developed through an intensive dialogue between EU and Member States;
- More detailed outline of horizontal policy integration: guidance of how to establish coherence between policy sectors important for implementation phase;
- Better link and more coordination between future EU SDS and post-2010 Lisbon Strategy: would help the Member States to coordinate the two strategies on national level.

Improving coherence between EU SDS and NSDSs:

- Strong political commitment for SD on all political levels necessary to foster implementation of objectives of future EU SDS and NSDSs;
- Better coordination and coherence of key challenges and objectives of future EU SDS and NSDSs;
- Strong monitoring mechanisms on implementing the future EU SDS would foster coordination between EU SDS and NSDS processes: EU SD indicator set should be further developed and used in EU and MS.

Working group results

The conference participants discussed two topics, 'governance mechanisms & institutional structures' and 'impact assessment for SD', in parallel working groups.

Five parallel working groups discussed several **governance mechanisms** and what is necessary or should be avoided in each of them in the future EU SDS. Below we present the results of the working group discussions:

(i) Horizontal policy integration

Necessary for the future EU SDS: High-level political commitment; SD Task Force in European Commission with all Commissioners taking part; SD Committee at a high level; SD contact person in every DG; translation of SD topics in all sectoral policies.

What should be avoided: Joint strategies; weak SDS Coordinators Group; non-independent committees; lack of rules and processes for integration at all levels.

(ii) Vertical policy integration

Necessary for the future EU SDS: implementation plan with clear division of responsibilities of political levels; stronger position of national/sub-national levels; SD contact person in every national ministry; coherent indicators on all levels.

What should be avoided: different powers and influence of Member States and regions; not enough coordination and communication among the political levels.

(iii) Stakeholder involvement

Necessary for the future EU SDS: stronger role of EU Parliament; stronger involvement of stakeholders (e.g. enabling environments; citizens' fora); stronger role at EU level for national SD Councils.

What should be avoided: not including the capacities and knowledge of stakeholders; intransparent processes.

(iv) Institutional structures

Necessary for the future EU SDS: better use of existing structure (e.g. SDS coordinators group); establishment of SD Committee at EU level; new body at Council and Commission level.

What should be avoided: institutions with no real mandate and responsibility; no sectoralisation of SD (e.g. SD Ministry).

(v) Monitoring & review mechanisms

Necessary for the future EU SDS: progress report should have better follow-up, EC Delegation to Member States, recommendations (points to watch); progress reports be issued yearly and should be more comprehensive; more quantified targets, linked to indicators and better follow-up to strengthen actions; exchange of best practices and good ideas

What should be avoided: benchmarking; goals that cannot be measured (lack of data, inadequate indicators).

Three parallel working groups discussed three issues in relation to **impact assessments for SD**:

SD criteria for impact assessment:

- Unified system of criteria needed for 3 SD pillars;
- Inclusion of additional aspects like public participation, long-term effects, local-global, etc;
- Stakeholder involvement in definition of assessment criteria;
- Transparency about valuing methods.

Managing SD strategies:

- Installing permanent inter-ministerial working group for sustainability impact assessment (SIA)
- Installing entity for ensuring quality of SIAs
- EU requirements (e.g. structural funds) trigger activities, but there no plans for phasing out

Informed decision-making:

- Benchmarking makes assessments interesting to policy-makers;
- Timely, targeted, short, specific language;
- Publishing evaluation reports;
- Installing a process of continued information and training about SIA, also to enable to monitor evaluation quality;
- Institutional arrangements like SIA boards, help-desks, etc;
- Difference between the scientific (objective) and political (normative) stages needs to be made clear.

Panel discussion on the governance mechanisms & institutional structures for the future EU SDS

The panel discussion was moderated by **Gerald Berger** (ESDN Office). The panel consisted of **Marcel Haag** (European Commission, Secretariat-General), **Annika Lindblom** (Finnish National Commission on SD), **Naoko Kubo** (Coordinator Horizontal Programme on SD, OECD), **Pavel Šremer** (Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic) and **Kirsten Mortensen** (Prime Minister's Office, Sweden).

According to Marcel Haag (European Commission), the greatest challenge within the next five years will be to develop a vision for a post-crisis Europe and link this vision to concrete policies and strategies. The EU SDS will now open a new chapter as it is at a critical junction. Mr Haag pointed out that it is a good time to launch a reflection on the priorities of the EU SDS as well as its governance mechanisms. He also made clear that horizontal policy integration is a vital and comprehensive topic. Views on it would depend on the different institutions – for the European Commission, horizontal integration represents a different challenge than for the European Parliament, the European Council or national institutions. Mr Haag argued that there would be no one-size-fits-all solutions. Horizontal integration is a permanent task for the Commission, and it has recently achieved a lot of progress, e.g. in the form of mid-range integrated strategies specific enough to ensure that policy outcomes are consistent but general enough that the cross-cutting issues can be taken on board (such as the Baltic Sea Strategy, energy strategy, etc). Another powerful tool to achieve horizontal integration is provided by impact assessments. Mr Haag added that vertical policy integration is viewed differently by the Commission compared to some years ago. One of the unresolved challenges of the EU SDS is the linkage between local, regional, national and European levels. In this context, the role of the EESC and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) as observers in the EU SDS process could be strengthened.

Naoko Kubo (OECD) presented how SD has been addressed by the OECD since 1997 through various instruments. Initially, the Secretariat General of the OECD was the SD leader within the organisation but over time, the OECD has seen changes in high-level commitment and the SD agenda was later placed under the Environmental Directorate. Now the annual SD meeting with experts is of high relevance, as its results are fed back into different OECD committees and program areas. In addition, the mandate of the expert meeting lasts only until the end of 2010 and the OECD needs to find ways to serve the SD needs of its member states after the current period ends. Currently, several areas are of high priority at the OECD, among them the definition of SD relevant targets and their monitoring & evaluation and finding ways how sectoral peer reviews could be strengthened concerning SD. Ms Kubo also stated that the challenge is to ensure that SD is reflected in measures designed to overcome the current economic crisis.

For Annika Lindblom (Finnish National Commission on SD), the most important success in horizontal policy integration in Finland has been the long-standing commitment of the inter-ministerial network secretariat – although it is still difficult to push SD issues forward in the sectoral ministries. She stressed that it would be important to have one body for process management with political value. Preferably, such a body should be anchored in the Prime Minister's Office. In Finland, the Ministry of Environment needs to get reconfirmed commitment of other sectoral ministries every year, and pushing for the SD agenda is not one of its core areas. Horizontal integration is successful in Finland because each ministry has the obligation to consider the strategic guidelines of the NSDS in their own strategic sectoral programs. Ms Lindblom also argued that in order to prevent sidelining of the EU SDS, stakeholder involvement would be crucial. An SD strategy should be a comprehensive cyclical and knowledge-based process, supported by effective governance institutions, including appropriate indicators, monitoring and impact assessment mechanisms and should enable learning and the sharing of best practices.

Pavel Šremer (Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic) referred to the challenges associated with the review process of the Czech NSDS. He regards the current horizontal policy structure and practice as very weak and in need of strengthening. He suggested the establishment of inter-ministerial committees at the national level and an SD coordination committee at the EU level. He also stressed the importance of professional structures in the administration – there should be staff working full-time on SD issues. Mr Šremer mentioned the performance criteria in the Czech NSDS, which he suggested might be interesting also for the EU SDS. He argued that in order to better address the current economic crisis, a new hierarchy at the national level is needed – the future EU SDS should serve as a long-term strategy clearly defining also growth objectives, and the Lisbon Strategy should serve as the medium-term implementing strategy.

Kirsten Mortensen (Prime Minister's Office, Sweden) presented the priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency: (i) preparing for the Copenhagen Conference and reaching a positive agreement on climate change measures; (ii) getting the EU on track after the economic crisis and continue the efforts of the Czech Presidency, including better surveillance of financial institutions; (iii) endorsing the new EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region by the Council in

October 2009; (iv) adopting a work programme for the Copenhagen vision for a safer Europe; (v) preparing a position paper for the new Lisbon strategy (to be adopted in March 2010 under Spanish Presidency) entitled “Eco-efficient growth in the age of globalisation”; and (vi) review of the EU SDS. As for the last point, one of the key challenges is to secure high political commitment. Ms Mortensen argued that the current lack of interest in the EU SDS is also exemplified by the fact that in the Presidency Conclusions of December 2007, the EU SDS was reflected in only one paragraph. The Swedish Presidency also feels the need to influence the Lisbon Coordination Group, but a forum for discussion between the EU SDS and the Lisbon Strategy and coordinating the two strategies is lacking at the moment.

6. ESDN – Network perspectives

In the final session of the ESDN Conference 2009, several announcements about future activities of the network were made.

Elisabeth Freytag, ESDN co-chair, informed the conference participants that the ESDN Conference 2010 will be hosted by the Belgian EU Presidency. A date for the 2010 conference, however, has not yet been fixed. The next ESDN workshop will focus on horizontal policy integration and governance and will take place in Brussels on 3-4 November 2009, following a Friends of the Presidency meeting. The other Friends of the Presidency meetings will take place on 15 September, 27 September, 13 October, 3 November and 17 November 2009. Finally, Ms Freytag informed the participants about the topic of the ESDN Quarterly Report September 2009, ‘SD strategies beyond Europe’.

André Martinuzzi, ESDN Office Coordinator, announced that CORPUS, an FP7 funded research project which is directly linked to the ESDN, is currently under contract negotiations. CORPUS will deal with developing and testing novel approaches to knowledge brokerage between policy-makers and researchers in three areas of sustainable consumption: food, mobility and housing. After outlining the detailed actions planned in the project and the consortium, Mr Martinuzzi described the benefits of CORPUS for the ESDN: (i) knowledge, support and networking in an important field of SD policy; (ii) additional workshops and internet-based information for ESDN members; (iii) increased visibility of the ESDN to policy-makers and researchers outside the ESDN community; (iv) the full scope and quality of the ESDN Office support will be maintained.

Finally, the ESDN co-chair **Elisabeth Freytag** thanked the Czech EU Presidency for hosting and the Swedish EU Presidency for co-hosting the ESDN Conference 2009. She also thanked Jaroslava Hlavackova (Czech Ministry of Environment) and the ESDN Office for organising the conference. Ms Freytag invited all participants to regularly visit the ESDN homepage and attend the forthcoming ESDN events.