

*ESDN Conference 2011*

**Conference Proceedings**

**“Framing and Focussing: European Resource Policies  
in the Context of Sustainable Development”**

**27-29 June 2011 in Szentendre, Hungary**

**Hosted by the Hungarian EU Presidency**

**prepared by**

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## Introduction

The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) Conference 2011, “Framing and Focussing: European Resource Policies in the Context of Sustainable Development”, took place in Szentendre, Hungary on 27-29 June 2011. It was hosted by the Hungarian 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 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), members of OECD’s Annual Meeting of Sustainable Development Experts (AMSDE), NGO representatives as well as SD experts and researchers. In total, 105 participants from 19 countries attended the ESDN Conference 2011 (the list of participants can be found in the [ESDN Conferences section](#) at the ESDN website).

This year’s conference was the 10<sup>th</sup> in a series of similar events. Previous ESDN conferences were held in Ghent/Belgium (2010), Prague/Czech Republic (2009), Paris/France (2008), Berlin/Germany (2007), Salzburg/Austria (2006), Windsor/UK (2005), Kinsale/Ireland (2004), Vienna/Austria (2003), and The Hague/Netherlands (2002). For a full documentation of all ESDN conferences, please also go the [ESDN Conferences section](#) at the ESDN website.

The ESDN Conference 2011 had two main objectives:

- **To broaden the discussion on resource policies in Europe, advocating a more comprehensive approach from a sustainable development perspective** (e.g. addressing the link between resource efficiency and the rebound effect, tackling cross-sectoral pressures and challenges resulting from resource availability and accessibility and exploitation/utilization patterns, inter-relationship between resources, and governance challenges).
- **To develop recommendations for the EU and Member States on integrated resource policies in the context of sustainable development**, particularly with regard to the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#) flagship initiative, “[A resource-efficient Europe](#)” (COM(2011) 21), and the Road Map that will be developed to implement this flagship initiative.

These objectives were explored in three sessions:

- Session 1: Resource policies in Europe – framing of key issues in the context of sustainable development
- Session 2: Working Groups – different dimensions of resource policies in Europe
- Session 3: Developing recommendations for the EU and Member States level

Similar to previous ESDN conferences, the 2011 event dealt with the conference themes in different formats: Keynote presentations highlighted general issues and key aspects of the conference theme; panel discussions provided an overview of experiences and standpoints of different actors and institutions; parallel working groups discussed specific aspects of the

conference theme in-depth; and summaries of the results of the working group discussions were used for immediate reactions and further discussions during the conference.

The full documentation of the ESDN Conference 2011 can be found at the [ESDN homepage](#) and includes

- the Conference Programme,
- the Conference Discussion Paper,
- the Conference Proceedings,
- the ESDN Recommendations on resource policies in Europe,
- the PowerPoint slides of the keynote presentations and all other presentations,
- the list of participants, and
- a photo documentation.

## Welcome addresses

In his welcome address, **Wolfram Tertschnig** (ESDN Co-chair, Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management) welcomed the conference participants on behalf of the ESDN Steering Group. He stressed that a turning point is approaching regarding resource policies in Europe, both in physical and political terms. Very high material throughputs and ecological rucksacks in the EU, together with the ‘peaks’ (e.g. oil peak) approaching or already met mean, that a wake-up call is needed in politics. He argued that an integrated EU resource policy is required which would explicitly address limitations of resource use (and not only resource efficiency). He stressed that the aim of this ESDN conference is to come up with very concrete recommendations for re-framing and re-focusing EU resource policies as well as their governance frameworks.

**Erzsébet Gergely** (Ministry of Rural Development, Hungary) welcomed the participants on behalf of the Hungarian EU Presidency. She added additional emphasis to Wolfram Tertschnig’s welcome address by referring to recent UNEP work which suggests that, if current trends continue, resource use would triple until 2050. Such a development is clearly not only unsustainable but probably also impossible. She pointed out that the discussions and recommendations at the ESDN Conference 2011 are an important contribution on how to develop a more integrated approach of resource policies in Europe and on general discussions of SD governance.

## Session 1: Resource policies in Europe – framing of key issues in the context of sustainable development

Session 1 of the ESDN Conference 2011 included (a) several keynote presentations about the challenges of an integrated resource approach, perspectives to move forward in resource policy in Europe as well as resource policy approaches of the OECD and the EU; (b) Q&A sessions with keynoters; and (c) a political discussion on ‘smart framing’ of resource policies in the context of sustainable development. The PPT slides of the keynote presentations can be found in the [ESDN Conferences section](#) of the ESDN homepage.

## ***Two keynote presentations on the challenges of an integrated resource approach and the perspectives to move forward in resource policy in Europe***

**Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker** (Co-Chair of the UNEP International Resource Panel) keynoted on the topic of “Resources as subject of economic, social and ecological systems – challenges for an integrated resource approach in Europe“. Firstly, he congratulated Budapest to have been the place of constitution of the UNEP’s International Resource Panel 3.5 years ago. He then presented data showing that there is a ‘natural’ trend of decoupling GDP from resource extraction in several categories. This trend can be explained by saturation, e.g. in densely populated areas of, for instance Japan or Netherlands, it is not possible to continue with urban sprawl due to the lack of physical space. However, this saturation phenomenon is not effective enough (various recent reports, such as the [International Resource Panel’s report, “Decoupling natural resource use and environmental impacts from economic growth”](#), suggest that decoupling is not generally occurring) and, therefore, seemingly painful policy solutions are needed.

He suggested that, for the first time in history, we will need a technology cycle which will consume fewer resources – and this represents a completely different approach than those of the five previous technology cycles (Kondratiev cycles). According to Mr. von Weizsäcker, the underlying philosophy should, therefore, be based on increasing resource productivity instead of increasing labour productivity as was the case before. From previous cycles, we can learn that labour productivity rose in parallel with labour costs – therefore, he suggested that an increase in prices of resources is urgently needed. However, resource prices have been falling over the last 200 years, which was caused by e.g. decrease in mining costs. It would also seem that in countries where energy prices were high – such as Japan – this has led to high economic performance (i.e. efficiency, growth and competitiveness). By this he emphasised the role of technological solutions presented in the Factor 5 report.

Mr. von Weizsäcker concluded that the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 should not make the mistake of the Johannesburg 2002 World Summit, which totally avoided binding commitments and left everything up to voluntary action. He argued that Rio +20 must resurrect the states and public policies to set the rules of the game; states, in turn, should serve as advocates for resources and ecosystem services. And Europe should play an active role in resurrecting the role of the state and indeed of supra-national authorities defining rules that are binding for their member states.

**Jacqueline McGlade** (Executive Director, European Environment Agency) presented an underlying metaphor of the recent 2010 State of the Environment Report by EEA. In this metaphor, individual sectors compete through markets for space within the ‘exploitation envelope’, which represents limits to sustainability vis-à-vis the natural system. Under specific conditions, some resources can be evaluated in monetary terms and placed on the market (see, for instance, the reports of [The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity study initiative](#)) which would allow some sectors to creep into the natural system envelope without market distortions. Ms. McGlade pointed out that the key challenge seems to be that – even assuming a success in cutting GHGs and lowering the ecological footprint, followed by a gradual restoration of natural capital – it is far from certain what would happen with human well-being, as there seems to be no guarantee that it will grow.

Ms. McGlade sees as a particular challenge to coordinated policy the fact that there is no clear definition or a generally accepted understanding of the terms 'resources' and 'resource efficiency' and that only a few countries (e.g. Hungary and Spain) formally define the term 'resources' in their policies (please see the [EEA country reports on resource policy](#)). Therefore, there are currently many interpretations of how the new Europe 2020 priority of resource efficiency relates to other concepts and areas, such as sustainable consumption and production, sustainable use and management of resources, green economy, decoupling, etc. Ms. McGlade further stressed that in Europe, the education of the young generation toward resource efficiency is crucial.

### **Q&A Session**

Mr. Anders Wijkman (former Member of the European Parliament) raised the issue of dealing with the rebound effect, especially at the company level. He raised doubts whether increasing resource prices would be enough. Mr. von Weizsäcker responded by agreeing about the insufficiency of the effect of price rises and stressed the need for engineers with proper technologies. Ms. McGlade stressed another leverage point of individuals' care for their own health (as a foundation for changing consumption pattern) which is also to a large extent independent from prices.

Mr. von Weizsäcker also addressed the challenge of poverty in the context of resource efficiency. He suggested that in the vein of the concept of the [Blue Economy by Gunter Pauli](#), there should be jobs created for the poor as well as 'lifeline pricing' of energy and resources for the poor (i.e. at affordable prices recognising that they are needed as basic necessities, as an exception to otherwise higher resource prices).

Mr. Joachim Spangenberg (SERI Germany) raised the issue of commodification of biodiversity (through its pricing, see the TEEB initiative mentioned above) which makes it substitutable for other commodities. Inclusion of biodiversity in resource efficiency concepts, therefore, is a particular challenge. Ms. McGlade added that price distortions in valuing biodiversity are enormous (e.g. the biodiversity worth of forest in Spain is € 300 per hectare, while in the UK it is € 4.200). It would be important to understand the role played by land taxes and land prices in affecting biodiversity.

At the end of the Q&A session, both Mr. von Weizsäcker and Ms. McGlade, stressed unemployment as the biggest challenge of the current time. They recommended for the ESDN to work on the reduction of the fiscal load on labour and shift of the tax burden to resources instead.

### ***Three keynotes on resources as subject of policies in Europe, policy instruments for resources policy developed by the OECD and the policy approach of the EU***

The title of Ms. [Miranda Schreurs'](#) (Chair of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils-EEAC and Free University of Berlin) speech was on "Resources as subject of policies in Europe – key issues in the context of sustainable development and the question of consistency". She also voiced significant concerns about the uncertainties related to treating biodiversity as a resource, and pointed to water as a quite specific resource. She also emphasised the deepening inequality in resource use – the popular 20/80 ratio (a statistics

describing that richest 20% of the population is responsible for 80% of resource use or emissions) has worsened to a current ratio of 7.5/50. As a concrete example, she mentioned that the richest 15% emit close to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Ms. Schreurs showed on examples of the [EC communication, “Tackling the challenges in commodity markets and on raw materials”](#), the [EU Raw Materials Initiative](#) and the [Europe 2020 strategy](#), that resource issues are getting a higher priority in the EU agenda. She emphasised that in terms of recycling, it is more important to focus on resources which are nearing shortage instead of resources which are easy to recycle (such as glass or steel).

At the end of her presentation, Ms. Schreurs argued that there is a need to think about the need for new measures (problems with GDP, so thinking about a Happiness Indicator and Sustainability Indicators), new understandings (In which areas of the economy are limits real? How to evaluate production based on renewable, versus non-renewable resources? How to maximize dematerialization, green growth, decoupling?) as well as new policies and approaches (new approaches to investment and planning, reconsidering what is subsidized, rewards for sustainable production and pricing of unsustainable production, greater need to look at entire systems and their ecological impact, greater international cooperation, etc.)

[Helen Mountford](#) (Deputy Director of Environment, OECD) focussed in her keynote on the OECD’s Green Growth Strategy (GGS) and how resource policies are addressed at the OECD. The GGS was requested by Ministers of Finance, Economy & Trade in 2009, when they agreed on a Green Growth Declaration, and was developed as a multi-disciplinary inter-governmental process within the OECE, involving 25 OECD committees. The report, [“Towards Green Growth”](#), was published in May 2011. Ms. Mountford then defined Green Growth according to the OECD’s understanding and outlined the links between Green Growth and SD.

She went on to outline the work of the [OECD on Sustainable Materials Management \(SMM\)](#). SMM is an approach to promote sustainable materials use, integrating actions targeted at reducing negative environmental impacts and preserving natural capital throughout the life-cycle of materials, taking into account economic efficiency and social equity. The range of policy instruments the OECD suggests for sustainable resource use include economic instruments, ‘command and control’ instruments as well as information provision and voluntary approaches. Ms. Mountford pointed out, however, that the mix of policy instruments is key, because (a) often there is no silver bullet, a mix of instruments is necessary; (b) there is a need to co-ordinate instruments to ensure they are complementary; and (c) the questions is important if overlapping instruments provide additional benefits for environmental effectiveness and economic efficiency, e.g. landfill tax & landfill diversion targets. She concluded by pointing out the key challenges in OECD countries regarding resource policy: (i) lack of data on resource use, material flows and waste generation; (ii) very little ex-post analysis is done of economic, environmental and social outcomes; and (iii) shifting to the life-cycle approach of SMM.

[Carina Vopel](#) (European Commission, DG Environment’s Strategy Department) replaced Robin Miège and presented the policy approach of the Europe 2020 Strategy concerning resource efficiency and sustainability. She pointed to the currently unsustainable patterns of resource use, by illustrating that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, resource use (e.g. water, fossil fuels, ores/minerals) has increased at a significantly higher rate than population, although economic output has

increased at an even faster rate. This increasing trend in resource use will lead to an intensified global competition for resources, which bears a couple of risks for Europe's economy by becoming increasingly dependent on imported raw materials, and some of the consequences from overexploitation of natural resources are already well recognised, such as biodiversity loss, climate change, water scarcities, etc.

In order to address these challenges, the European Commission has put forward the concept of Resource Efficiency, meaning to "achieve more [economic value] with less [material resources input] whilst using those resources in a sustainable way (within the planet's long-term boundaries)". Ms. Vopel highlighted that the opportunities from resource efficiency would be manifold, including growth and job creation, increased competitiveness (through clean technology investment), fiscal benefits (by shifting the tax burden from labour to resources), economic and environmental resilience, as well as an increase in quality of life and in global stability. To this end, a resource efficient economy must save resources, reduce material flows ("dematerialization"), substitute resource-intensive products and processes with "greener" alternatives, value resources correctly, and increase reuse and recycling. In the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, these issues are mainly addressed through the [flagship initiative, "A resource-efficient Europe"](#). Under this initiative, a number of key policy proposals for the medium-(2020) and long-term (2050) have already been published, including the low-carbon economy roadmap, the White Paper on the future of transport, the "Energy 2020" strategy, and the 2020 EU biodiversity policy and strategy. Mrs. Vopel also pointed to the recent Rio+20 communication that outlines the Commission's view on potential concrete outcomes for the Rio+20 conference, including proposals on "what, how and who" for a transition to a green economy. A consolidated EU-position is expected to be issued in November 2011.

The main pillar concerning resource efficiency in the EU, however, will be the ["Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe"](#) that will be published on 20 September 2011. It will outline the key challenges and opportunities, and present a positive 2050 vision, objectives within the 2020 perspective, and priority areas for starting action. The roadmap will address the key resources and functions at stake, tackle production, consumption and waste, outline the necessary framework conditions, and set governance and monitoring structures (including indicators). The policy measures foreseen in the roadmap will aim at specific areas as well as cross-cutting actions, and will involve a mix of instruments such as existing legislation, market based instruments, and voluntary schemes. In order to achieve the necessary governance changes, Mrs. Vopel concluded that resource efficiency could be integrated in the European Semester for the implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy, and the analysis of EU and Member States' policies could be part of the Annual Growth Survey exercise.

## **Q&A Session**

In this session, Mr. Tertschnig raised a question on the innovativeness of the toolkit of the Green Growth Strategy, suggesting that basically no new policy measures beyond those re-emphasised during the last 40 years are introduced. Ms. Mountford agreed, but pointed at the difference in the political context: now the process is led by the economic ministries and they are increasingly take SD into account. At the end of the session, all three keynoters used the opportunity to formulate key messages for the ESDN: Ms. Schreurs suggested that ESDN



should engage in establishing goals in 'catchy ways'; Ms. Mountford recommended that ESDN should make an effort to better engage national ministries in resource efficiency issues; and Ms. Vopel commented on the hampering effects of the silo structure of policy-making and what influence the choice of leading ministries might have.

### ***Political discussion: 'Smart framing' of resource policies in the context of SD***

**Anders Wijkman** (former Member of the European Parliament) started his contribution by looking back and criticizing how much time has been lost over the last 40 years as well as the lack of influence the environmental discourse has had on the fundamental mechanisms of the workings of our societies. He strongly advocated for the need to rethink our economic model – but also our education system towards more trans-disciplinarity. He pointed to the importance of the formal training of economists but also critically pointed out that it is still possible to graduate, e.g. at the London School of Economics, without learning anything about the topics of this ESDN conference.

He also raised the importance of the international dimension of the resource efficiency policy discourse and practice – in particular the question of how the countries of the South, often economically dependent on extraction, will respond to the EU's resource efficiency direction. Referring to Franz Josef Radermacher's "Global Marshall Plan", he advocated a contract between the North and the South. With regard to the EU's policy agenda, Mr. Wijkman's dream would be to leave aside GDP growth as the policy objective and focus instead on well-being or other indicators, since GDP is strongly coupled with resource extraction. With regard to specific EU targets, he appreciated the importance of the climate and energy targets, considering the -20% target for greenhouse gas emissions as the best target since many years.

In view of moving towards more resource efficiency, Mr. Wijkman listed construction, electronics, textiles, food, transport as the most problematic sectors. He advocated to change the focus from production to utilisation, by applying the so-called "3R approach" (reuse, recycle, reduce), which would mean less manufacturing of new stuff and less mining, but creating jobs in repair instead. Eventually, this would mean that we will increasingly lease stuff which we are currently buying. Mr. Wijkman acknowledged that this perspective would mean a change in lifestyles, but he believed that it would be possible to move society in this direction. Taxes could be an important instrument in this context, by shifting taxes from labour to resources, by putting no VAT on products that are recycled, and by changing the way of how we depreciate things in company books. In addition, public procurement should be used much more, and research related to "sustainable innovations" should be the only research that is supported by the next EU research framework programme (FP8 or 'Horizon 2020').

**Benedek Jávor** (Member of the Hungarian Parliament and Chair of the Sustainable Development Committee) added some reflections on how policies and politicians are judged, which is currently solely based on GDP growth. It is, therefore, crucial to re-think the indicators and indices used for measuring progress, as politicians are currently mainly trying to increase GDP. In Mr. Jávor's view, the best way of decreasing resource deprivation would be to reduce the level of consumption, an approach that would however nourish conflicts in societies and in policy-making. Crucial questions would, therefore, be how to convince people that decreasing

consumption is something to support, and whether what is good for people/society is what is right in terms of SD? It would be important to convince people that intra- and intergenerational equity is important, since a shift in politics and decision-making will not happen without active cooperation of society. Mr. Jávör argued that “if we don't open up politics and decision making-systems, we won't be able to make people join us”. In order to include SD in the general legal system (rights of future generations, rights of non-human beings, etc.), a change the whole legal system (not only of specific regulations) would be necessary. This would also include new institutions that represent those new interests.

Answering the moderator's question for “advice for being smart on the noble course to SD that people will thank us for”, Mr. Wijkman argued that it won't work as long as SD is only seen as part of environment ministries, and that at least financial ministries should be on board. Recent reports (e.g. Stiglitz Commission, TEEB, beyond GDP communication) have shown that we will not only be hampered by costs in the future, but we will also miss opportunities. It would, therefore, be crucial to ‘use’ the economists to come on board and to create allies. Mr. Jávör highlighted the importance of convincing decision-makers that we need a sustainable economy to solve the current crises, and reiterated that it won't be possible to change anything without having society on board.

Before leaving for the lunch break, the moderator **asked the participants to write their first ideas regarding resource policy in Europe** and the role of the ESDN on moderation cards and stick them on pin walls. The inputs of the participants can be found on the [ESDN homepage](#).

## **Session 2: Working groups – different dimensions of resource policies in Europe**

Like in previous ESDN conference, the participants split into parallel working groups (WGs) to discuss the conference topic more in-depth. This year, each of the four WGs were kicked off by a flashlight presentation that provided a short overview of the respective dimension/topic of resource policy and presented first recommendations. After the flashlight, the participants of each WG had a general discussion on the respective topic and brought in their own experiences and thoughts. The participants in each WG then split into smaller groups to discuss the recommendations presented in the flashlight and worked on additional recommendations. After this discussion in sub-groups, the participants shared their recommendations and voted on the most important ones.

The recommendations of each WG are presented in the following pages.

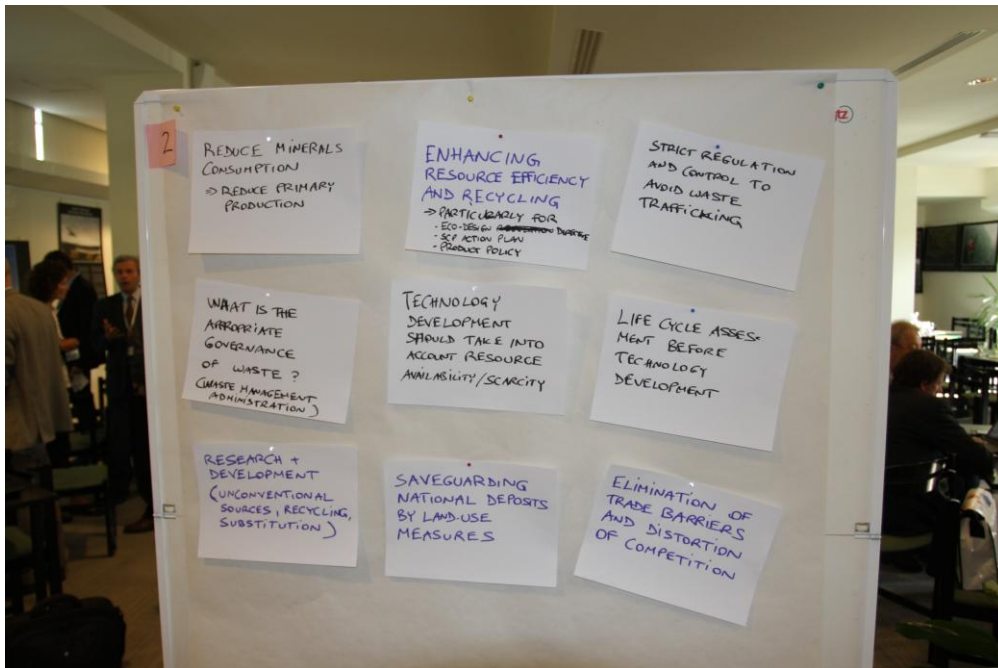
**WG 1 on the “innovation dimension”** was started by flashlights from [Inge Lardinois](#) (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, Netherlands) and [Luisa Prista](#) (European Commission, DG Research and Innovation). The participants of this WG developed the following recommendations:



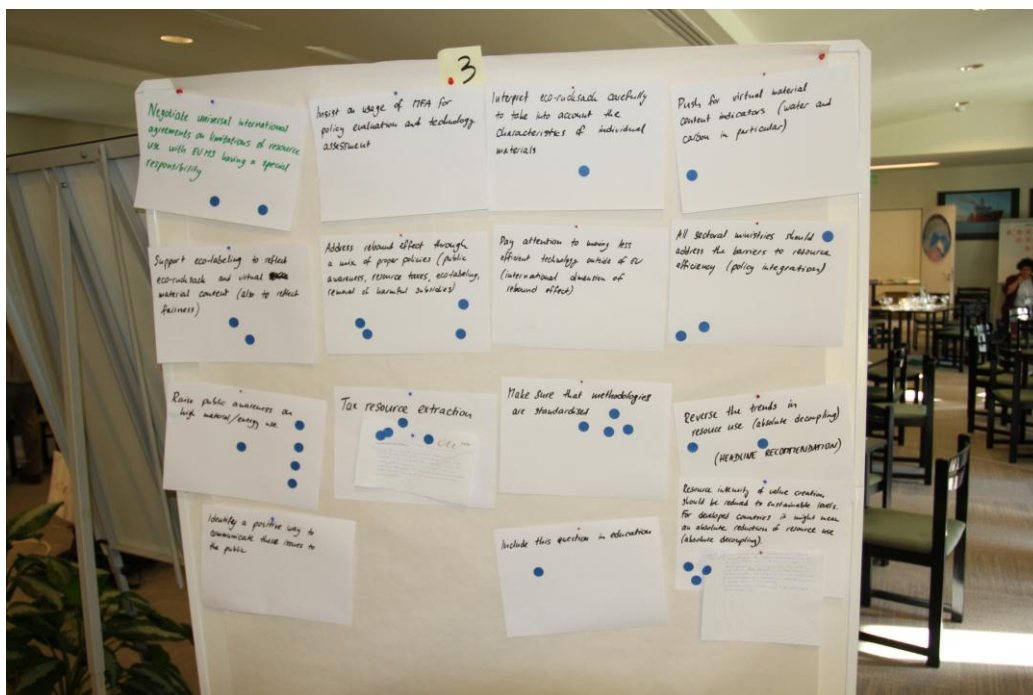
The voting for the most important recommendations brought the following results:

- 1) Support trans-disciplinary research and education (9 votes)
- 2) Better understanding is needed of consumer behavior and the influence of life-styles (7 votes)
- 3) Develop new business models (6 votes)
- 4) Develop a long-term vision (2050) for SD; build innovation also on cultural diversity and traditions; first pillar subsidies (agriculture) should be re-oriented towards SD + investments to SD; and develop indicators for resource efficiency and indicators (all 4 votes)

WG 2 on “security of supply and resource security” was introduced by [Robert Holnsteiner](#) (Ministry of Economy, Youth and Family, Austria). Due to the small number of WG participants, there was no voting on the recommendations developed.



WG 3 on “ecological and social rucksacks and rebounds” was kicked off by [Tibor Fargo](#) (St. Istvan University & Hungarian Society of Nature Conservationists). The following recommendations were developed:



These are the results of the voting on the most important recommendations:

- 1) Raise public awareness on high material/energy use (5 votes)
- 2) Address rebound effect through a mix of proper policies (public awareness, resource taxes, eco-labeling) and removal of harmful subsidies; taxing resource extraction; making sure that methodologies are standardized (all 4 votes)
- 3) All sectoral ministries should address the barriers to resource efficiency (policy integration); resource intensity of value creation should be reduced to sustainable levels – absolute decoupling in developed countries (both 3 votes)

**WG 4 on “resource policies and governance challenges”** was introduced by [Daniel Wachter](#) (Federal Office for Spatial development, Switzerland). The participants developed a number of recommendations:



The following recommendations achieved the highest voting:

- 1) European leadership via targets to inspire Member States, incl. indicators and monitoring; making use of independent bodies (such as courts of auditors) to safeguard coherence/synergies between existing sectoral and cross-sectoral approaches (*both 7 votes*)
- 2) New design and hierarchy for different sectoral and cross-sectoral policy planning instruments and institutions (*5 votes*)
- 3) Improving communication to the public at large – urge politicians (*4 votes*)

### **Interlude: Sustainable consumption in Europe – RESPONDER and CORPUS**

In an interlude session, two projects funded by the European Commission under FP7, both with close connections to the ESDN, were presented: RESPONDER was presented by its coordinator [André Martinuzzi](#) (Research Institute for Managing Sustainability-RIMAS, WU Vienna) and CORPUS was presented by [Gerald Berger](#) (RIMA, WU Vienna) on behalf of the coordinator Gerd Scholl (IOEW, Germany). More information these projects can be found on the [RESPONDER](#) and [CORPUS](#) project websites.

### ***Panel discussion: How are stakeholders driving the agenda?***

In the final session of day one, the representatives of several stakeholder groups provided an overview of how they drive the agenda on resource policies and management in Europe

**Luisa Prista** (Head of Unit, Environmental Technologies, DG Research & Innovation) first presented the activities of her institution. She emphasised that resource efficiency and climate change are among the priorities in line with the EU flagship initiative on resource efficiency. She suggested that research on policy tools is needed to identify which policy tools work best, to identify policy inconsistencies and trade-offs, and to support systemic thinking on resource efficiency. She also emphasised the need for a bridge between science and the public and the involvement of CSOs under the heading ‘public engagement in research’. Among additional research priorities are research on new indicators and encouragement of eco-industries to create new jobs.

**Salla Ahonen** (Director, Environmental Policy at Nokia) provided a perspective of Nokia in the context of resource efficiency. She suggested that, from a mobile phone, theoretically 85% can be recycled and the rest can be recovered as energy – but only around 3% of the produced mobile phones return back to them. As the reason for this, she cited consumer habits – consumers, for instance, have the feeling that they or someone close to them might need their replaced telephone and, therefore, see it as valuable. Among the improvements introduced by Nokia, she mentioned the increased efficiency of the mobile device chargers, education of consumers (e.g. the telephone announces that after full charging, the consumer should unplug the charger), the list of substances prohibited throughout the whole production chain as well as subcontracting conditions (the suppliers agree to fully disclosing the substances used in the production process – although not their origin), energy efficiency labelling of mobile chargers, participation in the [EC’s IPP Pilot Project on Mobile Phones](#) as well as a web portal where the consumers can monitor the conditions under which individual materials are extracted.

**Jeremy Wates** (Secretary General, European Environmental Bureau) stressed that Europe 2020 has now become the overarching framework for development in the EU and this puts a question mark over the continuing existence of the EU SDS. However, he underlined the position of the EEB which is not convinced that Europe 2020 can serve as an SD strategy, although the Road Map on Resource Efficiency as part of Europe 2020 may have positive environmental implications. He suggested that a sufficiently robust Environmental Action Plan (EAP) could be the EU framework for environmental issues. Also the European Semester (the new system of economic governance) is an opportunity for measures, such as removal of environmentally harmful subsidies and taxes. To avoid missing a whole year, the ESND should use the opportunity of the October 2011 Environmental Council to push for developing a set of indicators for the survey. The EEB would like to see the following represented in the Road Map on Resource Efficiency: a clear set of indicators; a set of targets to reduce the use of resources; push and pull instruments for product policy; stringent eco-design requirements addressing not only energy aspects; standard producer responsibility; and eco-labelling. Mr. Wates also addressed the North-South issue: he suggested that a possible way might be to import fewer resources from the countries of the South, but at higher prices.

**Marta Szigeti Bonifert** (Executive Director, Regional Environmental Center (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe) argued that about 21 years ago, many countries underwent a transformation, and as a result those countries' societies have changed themselves completely. For her, the question therefore was not whether change (now towards a more sustainable society) was possible or not, but whether we are willing to do so? In addition, politicians often don't dare to consider long-term views, because of the associated costs in the short-term. In her opinion, it is attitude and behaviour that should be tackled, even though the results will not be visible for a long time. More effective policy implementation and policy innovation would be required, including lobbying, creative tools (such as eco-design), awareness raising, and communication tools (including consumer information campaigns). With regard to the activities of the REC, Ms. Szigeti Bonifert illustrated that the center is a member of many European initiatives concerning resource efficiency, and sees itself as one of the "agents for change". She concluded that it is not possible any more to "act before it's too late", but to "act because it is too late".

**Iván Gyulai** (Director, Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development, Hungary) pointed out that a closer look should be taken to investigate what it is that is going in the wrong direction, in order to distinguish the drivers from the effects. He argued that the current economic model is problematic, and that we have to return to the earth's carrying capacity. However, because we have already exceeded the carrying capacity, it has decreased, which would mean that we would need to return to a level lower than before. In order to achieve this, he proposed to set caps on resource (and land) use, and to establish quota systems within the national caps.

At the end of day one, the conference moderator asked the participants to discuss with the colleagues at their respective tables which **new ideas and suggestions that have emerged during the day**. The results of the discussion can be downloaded from the [ESDN homepage](#).

The ESDN Steering Group gathered before the evening reception to summarize the inputs of day one and to come up on the next day with draft recommendations on resource policies in Europe.

## Session 3: Developing recommendations for the EU and Member States level

The second conference day was kicked off by a moderated presentation of resource policy strategies and initiatives in selected EU Member States (Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary and the Netherlands) and an interactive discussion on the national experiences. This was followed by table discussions on the draft ESDN Recommendations on resource policies in Europe that has been prepared by the ESDN Steering Group.

### *Resource policy strategies and initiatives in EU Member States & interactive discussion on national experiences*

Christopher Manstein (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria) presented the Austrian Resource Efficiency Action Plan (REAP) that will be adopted after the summer 2011. The REAP is mentioned in the Austrian government's coalition agreement and constitutes a main element of the Austrian NSDS. Mr. Manstein pointed out that the REAP is the national implementation of EU Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, and that it also answers to the Europe 2020 Strategy and its Resource Efficiency Roadmap. The REAP defines quantitative targets concerning the increase of resource efficiency (GDP/DMC) by 50-60 % between 2008 and 2020, and the reduction of resource use (DMC) by 20 % over the same period. The aim is to consequently achieve an absolute decoupling of resource use from economic growth. The REAP's main action fields are (i) resource efficient production, (ii) recycling and use of secondary materials, (iii) resource efficiency in public procurement, and (iv) resource efficiency and awareness raising. A number of stakeholders, including representatives from industry, are involved in a so-called "resonance group". It is also aimed to produce an "Austrian Resource Report" as solid data foundation for the REAP.

Sauli Rouhinen (Ministry of the Environment, Finland) pointed out that Finland's national economy is strongly linked to global material cycles, with strong forestry and minerals sectors that also use a lot of energy. A key question, therefore, was how Finland can act strategically, agile and in a forward-looking position in relation to natural resources? As a first step, a draft strategy on resources ("Using natural resources intelligently") was prepared, which was followed by two sub-strategy processes on bio-economy and on minerals. A "Natural Resources Report" was prepared by the Finnish Government based on these two sub-strategies, which was eventually considered as the final (government) strategy. The first part of the strategy outlines a comprehensive natural resources policy, including first steps for action, and the second part deals with sector-specific issues and measures related to bio-economy, mineral economy, water economy, and ecosystem services. Mr. Rouhinen noted that after the recent elections, the new government will very likely re-draft some parts of the strategy.

Birgit Schwenk (Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany) presented the German national programme on resource efficiency, "ProgRes". She pointed out that Germany already has a target on resource efficiency in its NSDS, which aims at doubling resource productivity (GDP/DMI (direct material input, refers to abiotic materials only)) by 2020 compared to 1994. Until 2009, resource productivity has increased by 46.8%, which is, however, not enough to reach the target in 2020. The "ProgRes" process had been



initiated in October 2010, when the German Raw Materials Strategy had been presented and the environment ministry had been given the mandate to draft a national programme on resource efficiency. A first working draft has been prepared by early 2011, focusing on abiotic materials only, and a second draft will be produced after a stakeholder consultation process. The current structure of “ProgRes” consists of (i) guiding principles, (ii) actions along the entire value chain, (iii) examples (sectors/material flows), and (iv) an annex listing all activities on resource efficiency in Germany.

[Erzsébet Gergely](#) (Ministry of Rural Development, Hungary) presented some reflections concerning resource efficiency policies and strategies in Hungary. The overarching goal – but at the same time one of the biggest challenges – was the integration of the three dimensions of SD. Another important issue is related to the definition of resources, leading to the identification of “capitals” such as human/social capital, natural capital and economic capital. Ms. Gergely outlined that natural capital involves non-renewable (minerals, fossil energy sources), conditionally renewable (inter alia soil, water, biodiversity), and renewable (sun, wind, geothermal energy) resources, but that it is not yet clear how to deal with dynamic stocks. These conceptual issues were followed by a presentation of the National Environmental Programme (NEP), which provides a comprehensive framework for Hungarian policies. The 3<sup>rd</sup> NEP runs from 2009-2014 and has the long-term target to fulfil the environmental requirements for SD and aims at strengthening subsidiarity and decentralization, includes efforts to “green” public procurement policies, and foresees a share of tasks and responsibilities between government, municipality, economic sector, citizens, etc. Specific objectives of the NEP relate to (i) environmental quality of settlements, (ii) preservation of natural resources and values, (iii) sustainable consumption and production, and (iv) environmental safety. Recent activities related to resource efficiency include the “pannon seed bank project” aimed at establishing a joint seed bank of the agricultural and wild flora (linked to the CBD), the “money back through the window” project, which is a collection of case studies from different companies to prove that money spent on the environment is actually paying back, and the “national industrial symbiosis programme”, which aims to demonstrate industrial symbiosis as an innovative tool for fostering prudent management of natural resources.

[Inge Lardinois](#) (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, Netherlands) presented the Dutch national resource policy strategy/initiative. The initiative consists of the national programme on natural resources (based on EU strategy on sustainable use of natural resources) from July 2010 and a resources policy paper (to be adopted in summer 2011). The key objectives are (i) to make resource use in the Netherlands sustainable over the whole life cycle, (ii) to avoid that ecological debts are passed on to next generations, and (iii) that scarcity is seen as a challenge and an opportunity. Ms. Lardinois pointed out that environment and sustainability issues are seen as an opportunity which provides a good momentum to push SD in the Netherlands. National actions concerning resource efficiency include a biodiversity policy programme related to the sustainable use of (biotic) resources, a policy agenda on sustainable food systems, the sustainable trade initiative, and a bio-based economy programme (linked to EU renewable energy directive). With regard to challenges, Ms. Lardinois argued that the most important global problems are climate change and the deterioration of ecosystems (including loss of biodiversity). Scarcity is not a problem for abiotic resources, but the situation is different for biotic resources, for which competing land claims have a negative impact on

global ecosystems and biodiversity. The lessons learned so far are that a national supply security requires a European approach and creating synergies between sectors (industry, agriculture, transport, energy), and that a mix of policy instruments is needed, including innovation and market-based instruments, to establish a resource efficient Europe.

After the presentations, the participants were invited for an **interactive discussion** on the national experiences with resource policies in the context of SD. Significant attention in the discussion has been given to the role of businesses. Ms. Inge Lardinois stressed the importance of the policy-makers paying attention to resource-efficiency and sustainability-oriented activities of the business sector (e.g. the Dow Jones Sustainability Index). Ms. Birgit Schwenk emphasized the role of not only large businesses, but also the importance of SMEs as a potential partner for policy-makers. Christopher Manstein shared the experience of Austria where, in resource policy, collaboration in strongest with small companies.

Mr. Jan De Smedt (Federal Council for Sustainable Development, Belgium) returned to one of the issues from the day before and raised the question of whether the potential consequences of resource efficiency on the achievement of employment targets are already known. It would seem that with the exception of Germany (where several studies have been made on areas/sectors where the green economy is growing significantly) no country has conducted proper analyses. Mr. Aldert Hanemaaijer (Environmental Assessment Agency, Netherlands) has observed that the green jobs agenda seems to differ according to the country context. As contradicting examples, he listed Spain with 20% unemployment rate and the Netherlands with 5% unemployment rate. He also warned to clearly distinguish in the analyses, which of the jobs listed as newly created are truly additional. Mr. Joachim Spangenberg (Sustainable Europe Research Institute-SERI, Germany) warned from a potentially rising demand for scarce resources as a result of resource efficiency measures and optimising of selected products. He also identified a need for the support of coordination between businesses across the whole lifecycle of a product.

### ***ESDN Recommendations on resource policies in Europe***

Based on the results of the parallel working groups on day one and the additional inputs from participants during day one, the ESDN Steering Group developed draft ESDN Recommendations on resource policies in Europe. The draft recommendations were distributed to the conference participants on day two and discussed by them on their respective tables. The participants' inputs on overarching objectives, the recommendations and the role of the ESDN are listed below.

Overarching objectives:

- What does the EU SDS stands for and what should it stand for in the future?
- EU SDS provides a comprehensive and cohesive approach - but reality in Member States looks different
- Clear political signals are needed
- Comply to the goal of "absolute decoupling"

Recommendations:

- EU SDS should be revisited after Rio+20

- Clarification and definition of “resources” and “resource efficiency” needed
- Resource efficiency aspects should be included in European Semester
- Measureable targets and performance indicators are needed urgently; measures need to be coherent
- Highlight the role business in promoting resource efficiency, support business models that support SD goals
- In the long run, Europe should rely on renewables or closed loops
- EEA should provide data on resource stocks and flows
- Resource management policies must not be done by bureaucrats alone; national resource panels should be established that provide for broader acceptance of the developed solutions (and their implementation)
- “Putting the prices right” has been part of the discussion since a generation, but (almost) nothing has happened
- Integrate RMI and resource efficiency initiative
- Make use of existing SIA procedures, resource efficiency aspects should be included in the methodology

ESDN role:

- ESDN could play a role in monitoring the SD-related objectives and targets of the Europe 2020 strategy (as part of the European Semester)

On the basis of this feedback, the draft recommendations were amended and, in a final round, discussed by the ESDN Steering Group after the conference. The final [ESDN Recommendations on resource policies in Europe can be found on the ESDN homepage](#) and will be forwarded to the European Commission in autumn 2011.