



NEWSLETTER

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<http://www.srseuropa.eu/eng/regnewsletter.php>

Sustainability Revamping Systems

The *Sustainability Revamping Systems*, network and on-line platform, promoting participation in sustainable development processes through:

- the evolution, dissemination and mainstreaming of methods and tools in sustainability policy and strategies
- the promotion of networks, collaborations and partnerships between partners and decision makers
- the resolution of commitments and requirements of projects carried out at European and local levels

THE IRISH REFERENDUM AND THE EU CHALLENGES

With the positive result of the second Irish referendum (2/10/2009) and after the Polish President signature (10/10/2009), all EU 27 Member States have approved the Lisbon Treaty, waiting for the final decision of the President of the Czech Republic.

Nearly two years have passed since 13 December 2007 when the Heads of State or Government of the 27 Member States signed the Treaty in Lisbon. The Treaty will provide the EU with more adequate institutional arrangements and working methods to face the world-wide globalisation of economic, social and environmental issues. These issues call for clearer, more robust and participatory strategies for sustainable development to tackle the key challenges of climatic and demographic changes associated with poverty, pervasive environmental disruption, social inequalities, wars and disrespect for human rights. The progress made so far towards the Millennium Development Goals is still unsatisfactory (see below), while a large number of experts describe the Earth's carrying capacity as compromised.

In November 2008, the EU Commission launched the Recovery Plan to face the international financial and economic crisis, with a focus on green growth (1). In the post-2010 period, a closer connection and a greater synergy should be ensured between three key EU Strategies (see the SRS Newsletter No 2): for Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS); for "growth and jobs" (Lisbon) Strategy); for social inclusion (Social Agenda and Social OMC).

The assessment of the progress made so far (2) underlines the complementary nature of the Lisbon Strategy and the EU SDS: the former being "a dynamic strategy in which sustainability has been taken on board"; the latter providing a framework to follow the long-term path and to define short-term policy actions towards sustainability, in which "economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection go hand in hand and are mutually supporting". However, "despite considerable efforts to include action for sustainable development in major EU policy areas, unsustainable trends persist and the EU still needs to intensify its efforts".

(1) CEC, *A European Economic Recovery Plan*, COM(2008) 800 final, and *Driving European Recovery*, COM(2009) 114

(2) CEC, *Mainstreaming sustainable development into EU policies*, COM(2009) 400 final)

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Further information on the initiatives quoted in this newsletter can be found in the web site of *Sustainability Revamping Systems*.
<http://www.srseuropa.eu/eng/SRSsystem.php>

All persons who become member of the network of *Sustainability Revamping Systems* have free access to its tools, including a demo of customised on-line systems, while the general public is permitted to download the associated examples.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs) – 2009 UN Report (3)

The UN (United Nations) Millennium Declaration, approved by 189 nations in September 2000, identified eight Goals:

- 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2) Achieve universal primary education
- 3) Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4) Reduce child mortality
- 5) Improve maternal health
- 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7) Ensure environmental sustainability
- 8) Develop a global partnership for development

Climate change and economic crisis are the two main global factors that hamper progress made towards the MDGs, as underlined in the 2009 UN Report.

As a consequence, main challenges still remain:

- preserving natural resources and environmental basic services
- reducing poverty and improving the living conditions of the urban and rural poor (sanitation facilities included)
- eradicating hunger and improving nutritional status of children and mothers
- reducing maternal and child mortality
- achieving universal primary education
- eliminating education inequality based on gender, ethnicity, income, religion, language, disabilities and so on
- achieving gender equality and empowering women
- mobilising resources for endogenous development

“At the top of the agenda is the climate change problem, which will have to be regarded as an opportunity to develop more efficient ‘green’ technologies (...). Achieving the MDGs will also require targeting areas and population groups that have clearly been left behind – rural communities, the poorest households and ethnic minorities, all of whom will have a hand in shaping our common future” (Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs).

(3) UN, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009*, New York, 2009
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

BRAZIL: A CLEAR COMMITMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“The issues at the core of our concerns – the financial crisis, new global governance and climate change – have a strong common denominator. It is the need to build a new international order that is sustainable, multilateral and less asymmetric, free of hegemonies and ruled by democratic institutions. Above all, however, both before and after the crisis broke out we implemented anti-cyclical policies. We intensified our social policies, particularly income-transfer programs. We raised wages above inflation rates. We used fiscal measures to stimulate consumption and keep the economy moving. We will arrive in Copenhagen with precise alternatives and commitments. We have approved a National Climate Change Plan that includes an 80% cut in deforestation of the Amazon by 2020. We will reduce CO2 emissions by 4.8 billion tons, more than the sum-total of all developed country commitments. In 2009, we can already show the lowest deforestation rate in 20 years”. (4)

The Brazilian government (5) incorporated the Brazilian Agenda 21 in its Multi-Year Plan (PPA 2004-2007), enforced by law in 2004, to formulate and implement national and local policies by means of decentralized and participatory planning of key strategy priorities such as:

- knowledge society
- social inclusion and solidarity
- urban and rural sustainability
- natural resources (e.g. water, biodiversity and forests)
- governance and ethics to promote sustainability

The process of updating the Brazilian Agenda 21 is, above all, linked to the National Plan about Climate Change, with the intention of construction of synergy and to boost the actions.

(4) Statement by the Brazil President (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva) at the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York, 23 September 2009

(5) www.presidencia.gov.br or www.brasil.gov.br

BEYOND GDP – 2009 EU Commission orientation (6)

The European Union (EU) Commission fully recognises that “GDP is not meant to be an accurate gauge of longer term economic and social progress and notably the ability of a society to tackle issues such as climate change, resource efficiency and social inclusion. There is a clear case for complementing GDP with statistics covering the other economic, social and environmental issues, on which people’s well-being critically depends”. To this end, the Commission takes stock of the international debate on sustainable development and the associated indicators (see the SRS Newsletter No 3). The Commission identifies 5 actions:

1. complementing GDP with environmental and social indicators, e.g. through a comprehensive index on environmental pressure within the EU territory, associated with a comprehensive indicator of environmental quality while improving the Ecological Footprint and other indicators outside the EU territory
2. near real-time information for decision-making (e.g. more timely environmental and social indicators)
3. more accurate reporting on distributional issues and inequalities to address the link between social exclusion and environmental deprivation in order to support far-reaching reforms such as those required to fight climate change and to promote new patterns of consumptions
4. developing a European Sustainable Development Scoreboard, based on the already developed set of EU Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI)
5. extending national accounts to environmental and social issues

“When the European Council endorsed the European Recovery Plan it recognised that the crisis should be also taken as an opportunity to set our economy more firmly to a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy. The response to the crisis should seek to protect the hardest hit and the most vulnerable in society. These challenges point to the need for more inclusive markers than just GDP growth; for indicators that concisely incorporate social and environmental achievements (...) and losses (...). The reflections on indicators (...) could contribute to setting new strategic goals for the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy”.

(6) EU Commission, *GDP and beyond. Measuring progress in a changing world*, COM(2009) 433 final

SHAPING OUR FUTURE (7)

Is Féidir Linn is an informal ad hoc grouping of individuals with a commitment to, or involvement in, community work, social inclusion, anti-poverty, human rights and equality issues: “We want to be part of a sustained movement committed to bringing about a better society. We believe now is the time to develop an alternative political, economic and social model of development for Ireland”.

A Manifesto outlines values and goals of an alternative model of development towards an inclusive, equal and sustainable Ireland.

Values are:

- Balance between economic, social and environmental objectives
- Participation to enable all in society to have a real say in decisions that impact on them
- Equality for all groups and individuals in society (e.g. distribution of resources and services, recognition of diversity)
- Global Solidarity to contribute to independence, equality and development for the disadvantaged regions of the world.

Goals are:

- Sustainability (to ensure economic and social security, to eliminate environmental risk, to accommodate a variety of different economic structures and forms of ownership and to recognise global interdependence)
- Income, Taxation, Wealth (to ensure that income and resources are distributed more equally so as to avoid poverty, inequality and excesses of wealth. This requires high levels of taxation and social expenditure and high quality public services)
- Public Services (to prioritise, invest in and develop high quality, efficient and effective public services for all)
- Equal Status (to ensure that society and its institutions appropriately and adequately value the diversity and eliminate all forms of discrimination)
- Democracy (to enable greater diversity of influence through an enhanced system of representative democracy and a more inclusive, participatory and active democracy including an autonomous and critical civil society).

(7) www.communityplatform.ie

<http://communityplatform.ie/space-for-most-current-piece-of-work-event.html>