# Sustainable development: towards a global partnership

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PURPOSE : to present the Commission communication on the 2005 Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy: Initial Stocktaking and Future Orientations.

CONTENT : in 2000, the EU engaged itself in a compelling agenda for change, to ensure that we start to face up to unsustainable economic, social and environmental trends. In 2000 the Lisbon Strategy set out an ambitious agenda of economic and social reforms to create a highly dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy. In 2001 a broad Strategy for Sustainable Development was launched by the European Council in Gothenburg and in 2002 its external dimension was defined in Barcelona, ahead of the UN's World Summit on Sustainable Development in the summer of 2002. Each of these steps has been accompanied by important decisions and action to fulfil the commitments made. However, despite all this not enough progress has been seen; unsustainable trends have yet to start to reverse and the international stakes remain high.

The combination of the start of a new Commission and the arrival of a new European Parliament provides the right moment to take stock of progress and to push to accelerate the pace of change.

The first steps have been made. The Commission in proposing the Strategic Objectives for the Union over the next five years has reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development. It has just proposed in the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy to make a renewed Lisbon agenda our strategy for growth and jobs; allowing us to use the motor of a more dynamic economy to fuel our wider social and

environmental ambition. As the Commission affirmed in the mid-term review: "Both Lisbon and the Sustainable Development Strategy contribute to ensuring this goal. Being mutually reinforcing, they target complementary actions, use a range of instruments and produce their results in different time frames."

Moreover, the review of the Lisbon strategy is accompanied by the launch of an updated EU Social Agenda; an agenda mapping out the policies that can help to ensure a more cohesive continent and the further development of our social model in response to unsustainable trends.

This Communication represents the Commission's first step in reviewing the Sustainable Development Strategy in 2005. This report provides an initial assessment of the progress made since 2001 and outlines a number of future orientations, which can guide the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy which will be presented in a separate Communication to the European Parliament

and Council later this year.

The communication makes clear that the revised Sustainable Development Strategy will need to adopt a broader approach highlighting the structural changes in the economy needed to move towards more sustainable production and consumption patterns and covering unsustainable trends. With a further strengthening of the new approach to policymaking, the revised Strategy will reaffirm its three dimensional approach and also ensure the full integration and reinforcement of the external aspects of sustainable development. It will furthermore confirm the commitment made in the proposal on the

financial perspectives 2007-2013 that sustainable development will be a guiding principle for EU policies.

Lastly, the Commission invites the European Council, the Council, the European Parliament, Member States, regional authorities and all parts of civil society to comment on the proposed orientations for the strategy. An initial opportunity for discussion will be the holding of the stakeholder forum organised by the European Economic and Social Committee on 14 and 15 April 2005. The Commission will then

present a proposal for a revised sustainable development strategy for the Union later this year.