



## **10 TESTS for the Austrian Presidency from the EEB January 2006**

### **1. AN AMBITIOUS AND EFFECTIVE EU SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

- A critical assessment of the Commission's draft for an SD Strategy, on the basis of the March 2005 European Council demand for a *"new, more comprehensive and more ambitious (Sustainable Development) strategy, comprising targets, indicators and an effective monitoring procedure, [which] should be based on a positive long-term vision and should fully integrate the internal and the external dimensions."*
- A final SD Strategy with robust environmental content, based on the Guidelines agreed by the June 2005 European Council, and with a comprehensive set of measures for the short term – including environmental fiscal reforms – and a concrete set of mandates and tasks for the Commission to ensure leadership and coordination.
- Already in the Spring Council, a stronger link between the Lisbon process and an ambitious sustainable development agenda.
- Insist on high environmental quality of Impact Assessments.

### **2. ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND INFORMATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

- Restoration of the right to access to justice in the Regulation on the application of the Aarhus Convention by the EU institutions and bodies, and reduction of the exemptions to access to information and public participation.
- Open finally the negotiations on a Directive on Access to Justice at member state level.
- A second reading agreement on INSPIRE that will include the removal of existing barriers concerning public access to data, sharing of data between public authorities and re-use by third parties – in line with the Aarhus Convention's requirements of access to environmental information.

### **3. CLIMATE CHANGE**

- Consensus on a medium-term EU target of at least 30% reduction in domestic emissions by 2020 – compared to 1990 levels.
- Broadened and deepened discussions with key developing and developed countries for concrete progress at the second meeting of the Kyoto Protocol Parties.
- Environmental integrity in the final Regulation on Certain Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases and the Directive on Mobile Air Conditioning.
- The promotion of bio-energy and biofuels to go hand in hand with a reliable system to control the sustainability of this production, leading to support only for those forms of biomass used for energy that have a substantial positive environmental impact overall.
- Rejection of nuclear energy as a solution for climate change. Insistence on implementation of closure agreements with Slovakia and Bulgaria.
- An initiative to elaborate a roadmap to gradually phase out government support for the mining and use of coal, brown coal and peat.

### **4. CLEAN AIR FOR EUROPE**

- A Council Conclusion on the Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution highlighting urgency for further measures to reduce air pollution and the need for a significantly higher ambition level in order to protect health and the environment.

- A revision of the air quality directives that does not weaken existing air quality limit values, has no time-derogations and relaxation for particles from natural sources, and includes the introduction of an ambitious and legally binding regime for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, leading to concrete reductions of fine particles.
- A Council common position on Euro V leading to a reduction of at least 90% of particle emissions from diesel passenger cars as well as a 70% reduction of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions from diesel cars.
- A strengthened decoupling objective in the Commission mid-term review of the 2001 White Paper on Transport, with emphasis on good practices in modal shift.

## **5. FROM WASTE MANAGEMENT TO RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

- Reconfirmation and strengthening of the central role for the EU in waste policies on the basis of the waste hierarchy, with a clear focus on prevention, reuse and recycling, away from incineration and landfill.
- Rejection of a Waste Strategy that does not respect the 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme Decision, in particular on EU quantitative objectives for waste prevention by 2010 and on continued legislative work on specific waste streams, including biodegradable waste.
- Prevention of a rollback of existing waste policies (in particular the scope of the waste definition) and legislation (in particular on waste oils and hazardous waste management controls).
- The Thematic Resources Strategy to include ambitious overall EU targets for resource productivity and eco-efficiency improvements, a roadmap for specific reductions for 20 priority resources and sustainable harvesting criteria for biotic resources, and for binding obligations, measures and implementation structures.

## **6. ALPINE CONVENTION**

- The European Community to finally sign the Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention.
- Progress on the ratification of the other Protocols, signed by the Community.
- Continuation of the INTERREG “Alpine Space Programme” as a vital source for financing the realisation of the Convention and of sustainable cooperation projects in the entire Alpine region.
- Start networking the Alpine Convention with other mountain regions within the EU of 25 member states.

## **7. RE-LAUNCH AN AMBITIOUS GMO POLICY**

- Work towards uniform and binding EU rules on co-existence, allowing member states the right to set up GM-free zones at local and regional level.
- Review the authorisation procedure – in particular by legally binding the European Food Safety Authority to apply the risk assessment as set out in Directive 2001/18, and improving the transparency of the comitology procedure through stakeholder involvement – so as to put in place a credible decision-making process.

## **8. DELIVER EFFECTIVE BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION**

- An ensured provision of 21 billion Euros for Natura 2000 from EU budgets in the period 2007-2013.
- Securing a clear, concise, precise and ambitious Biodiversity Communication from the Commission, building on the “*Malahide Message*” and the conclusions of the Bergen op Zoom conference on the Birds Directive.

- Start of discussions on an EU initiative to better prevent forest fires, in particular in the Mediterranean region.

#### **9. PROTECTION OF GROUNDWATER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- Prevention of a roll-back from existing protection to maintain a clear and legally binding obligation to prevent input of hazardous substances, including pesticides and heavy metals, without exempting activities like agriculture or dredging.
- Rejection of exemptions of applicability of the nitrate standard and trend reversal rules to agriculture.
- Acknowledgement of the value of groundwater ecosystems.

#### **10. SOIL**

The launch of Council discussion on the Commission's proposal for the Soil Thematic Strategy, including the Soil Framework Directive, and inclusion of targets and timetable in the legal text.