



Environment for **EUROPEANS**

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GREEN WEEK 2004

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Working together
to change
our **behaviour**



Introduction

Green Week 2004 (1-4 June) once again justified its claim to be one of Europe's most important diary dates for environmental policy and networking.

In total, 3,299 people attended the 27 sessions covering citizens' involvement *From a single to a shared view*; environment and the economy *From an economic environment to an environmental economy*; the 25th anniversary of the Birds Directive *From idealism to action*; and oceans and seas *From the Baltic to the Black Sea*. There were 166 experts and speakers to share their knowledge and answer

questions, and the European Commission published a daily newspaper to keep participants up to date with all the events.

In the exhibition areas, 62 companies, local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations displayed their work. There was also a

green stock market, where participants could put their investor's skill to the test. And at the second Environmental Awards ceremony, Commissioner Margot Wallström handed out prizes in recognition of outstanding achievement.

Apart from these Brussels-based events, Eurosite in cooperation with the Nature Unit organised Green Days in Natura 2000 sites, and ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) coordinated Urban Green Days in some 150 locations.

The full *Green Week* programme and information on all these activities is available at:

www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/index_en.htm



➤ Green Week Awards

Green is the word

With the first bars of their revamped, environmentally aware version of the theme song from *Grease* (remember the youthful John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John?), the eight singers and dancers who performed in the musical *Green* set the upbeat tone of the *Green Week* awards ceremony.

Music, rhythm and humour were in the air on the evening of 1 June 2004 at the Collège Saint-Michel Theatre in Brussels. Eight young performers were the perfect backing for EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström and the well-known Belgian TV presenter and musician Jan Leyers, who jointly hosted the event.

Hollywood set the tone as the *Green Week* organisers offered their audience an Oscar-style celebration, with trailer videos, nominees sweating on the podium, winners smiling with their trophies and the odd technical hitch that brought some humorous exchanges between the Swedish Commissioner and the Belgian entertainer.

European Business Awards for the Environment

Four outstanding European companies – winners of the prestigious European Business Awards for the Environment – claimed their place as unrivalled pioneers in protecting the environment and received their trophies from Margot Wallström.

The top firms come from Hungary, France, the UK and the Netherlands. They range from the European subsidiary of a giant Japanese motor-parts supplier, to a firm working with manufacturers in India

to transfer potentially life-saving water purification technology. What they all have in common is their readiness to develop and try out groundbreaking solutions to environmental problems.

Denso Manufacturing, for example, last year invested €50,980 in environmentally friendly measures, which it estimates saved it over €139,000.

Securing a European Award brings companies international recognition that can boost sales and open up export markets. Rugby Ltd, in the UK, developed a new cement plant that minimises waste and use of raw materials. Dr David Evans, the Environment Director, said: "This justifies the confidence we had and the risks we took in developing the plant. We hope the new design will influence other cement producers when they come to renew their plants."

French paper company Matussière & Forest has been committed to advancing recycling technology since the 1960s. "We shall continue implementing our sustainable development policy," promised spokeswoman Christine Guillemin. And Dutch company Nedap was equally delighted to win Europe-wide acclaim for its simple, cheap, solar-powered water purification unit. "It's great to be involved with something that is environmentally friendly and also has the potential to help

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European Mobility Week Award

Winner:

- **Ljubljana, Slovenia**
Launch of permanent mobility measures.
Contact: zvone.milkovic@ljubljana.si

Short-listed:

- **Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain**
High quality communication strategy.
Contact: aperez@laspalmasgc.es
- **Almada, Portugal**
Offering experiences in new mobility culture.
Contact: cfreitas@cm.m-almada.pt

so many people in the developing world," said Tonnie Telgenhof.

"The reactions of the public at Green Week confirmed our strategy," added Paul de Reus. "Consciousness of our environment is a daily process within the Nedap organisation."

The companies that came top in the four award sections were selected from among 12 final nominees that all achieved outstandingly high environmental performances. All of them earned their place in the European competition through entering and winning their national business award for the environment schemes.

The European Mobility Week Award

The European Mobility Week Award goes to local authorities that make outstanding efforts to promote sustainable methods of transport and raise public awareness of the benefits of reducing private car use in towns and cities across Europe, in the context of the annual European Mobility Week in September. In 2003, 723 towns and cities participated in this fast-growing scheme. Ten cities were selected from the 40 entries for this year's competition, and three nominees reached the final shortlist: Almada (Portugal), Las Palmas de

Gran Canaria (Spain), and Ljubljana (Slovenia). The final winner, Ljubljana, made environment one of the key themes of the week's activities in 2003. On 22 September – a working Monday – it closed the city centre from 5h00 to midnight and encouraged people to travel *In town, without my car*, using environmentally friendly methods of transport.

The Clean Marine Award

In 2002, a Commission Communication announced a new strategy to reduce airborne emissions from shipping. The Clean Marine Award is a brand new EU initiative designed as an incentive to ship and port operators and users. It offers recognition and positive publicity to the leading innovators that have made low-emission initiatives a priority, and helps to spread their examples of good practice across the EU.

The Award is designed to encourage shipping owners and operators to reduce the harmful emissions that damage air quality and contribute to acid rain and smog. Emissions from shipping are a growing problem worldwide. A recent European Commission study estimated that by 2010, sulphur dioxide from ships in EU waters could be equivalent to 75% of the combined output from land-based sources including cars, trucks and industrial plants.

A five-strong jury chaired by Rolf Saether, former President of the Norwegian Ship-owners' Association and founder of the Thor Heyerdahl International Maritime Environmental Award, selected the winners from two shortlisted nominees in each category. The operator's award went to Reederei Rord Braren, from Germany, which has led the way in developing criteria for environmentally friendly shipping, while the two Swedish prizewinners have pioneered green technologies and operations.

Schools competition

The schools competitions are by now a familiar and much-appreciated part of Green Week. This year, over 5,700 youngsters aged six to ten and 11 to 16 submitted drawings, paintings and photographs on the theme of birds, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the EU Birds Directive. The winners, both from the EU's new Member States in the Baltics, gained an all-expenses-paid trip to Brussels to attend the award ceremony. ■



Zlata Zarova, 10,
Lithuania

Paulius Dirgincius, 10,
Siauliai 'Juventa' school,
Lithuania

The winners

Drawings/paintings 6-10 years

■ Winner:

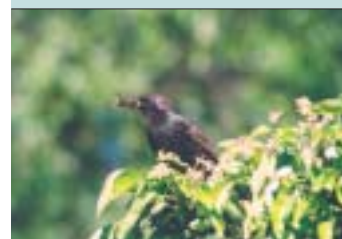
Zlata Zarova, 10,
Klaipeda students
self-expression centre,
Lithuania

■ Runners-up:

Victoria Milenova Gromova, 6,
Zornitsa
Kindergarten,
Bulgaria



Victoria Milenova Gromova, 6, Bulgaria



Madis Tuul, 15, Estonia

■ Runners-up:

Klara Laux, 12,
Ataraxia Musik-
und Kunstschule, Germany
Eliska Belasová, 13,
Masarykova základní skola V
Lipkách, Czech Republic

Photographs 11-16 years

■ Winner:

Madis Tuul, 15,
Viimsi Keskkool,
Estonia

Klara Laux, 12, Germany



European Business Awards for the Environment

Winners

Management Award

■ **Denso Manufacturing Hungary Ltd**

A pioneer of sustainable development in the automotive sector

Product Award

■ **Matussière & Forest**, France

100% recycled coated paper 'V Green'

Process Award

■ **Rugby Ltd**, RMC Group plc, UK, A novel technique for reducing sulphur dioxide emissions in the cement-making process

International Cooperation Award

■ **Nedap N.V.**, Netherlands, UV solar system 'Naïade'

Rugby Ltd, RMC Group plc, UK



▶ Revised lyrics of *Grease*

Green is the word

*I see the problem and I see the light
We've got a greener goal, we got to feed it right
There ain't no danger we can go too far
We start believin' now that we can change who we are -
green is the word
(Green is the word, is the word that you heard)
It's got a groove, it's got meaning
Green is the time, is the place, is the motion
Green is the way we are feeling
This is a life of consumption, a life we lead all
Mixed with pollution – what are we doin' here
(Green is the word, is the word that you heard)
It's got a groove, it's got meaning
Green is the time, is the place, is the motion
Green is the way we are feeling
They think with green there's less to gain
Why don't they understand? It's just a cryin' shame
Their eyes see gold, but the earth needs more
We start the fight right here, we got to do what we feel (need) –
green is the word
(Green is the word, is the word that you heard)
It's got a groove, it's got meaning
Green is the time, is the place, is the motion
Green is the way we are feeling
We take the pressure, and we throw away conventionality,
belongs to yesterday
There is a chance that we can make it so far
We start believin' now that we can be who we are -
green is the word
(Green is the word, is the word that you heard)
It's got a groove, it's got meaning
Green is the time, is the place, is the motion
Green is the way we are feeling
This is a life of consumption, a life we lead all
Mixed with pollution – what are we doin' here
We take the pressure, and we throw away conventionality,
belongs to yesterday
There is a chance that we can make it so far
We start believin' now that we can be who we are -
green is the word
(Green is the word, is the word that you heard)
It's got a groove, it's got meaning
Green is the time, is the place, is the motion
Green is the way we are feeling
(Green is the word, is the word, is the word...)*

Nedap N.V., Netherlands

Nominees

Management Award

■ **J.Schmalz GmbH**, Germany

Comprehensive corporate environmental protection

■ **Gorenje d.d.**, Slovenia

Building partnerships for sustainable development

■ **Morrison Bowmore Distillers**, Scotland – Ecological production methods and community responsibility

Product Award

■ **ELPA d.o.o.**, Slovenia, Rail brake anti-noise system BREMEX-ANNSYS

Process Award

■ **Cognis Ireland Ltd**, Ireland, Distillation of processed toluene with energy recovery

■ **Cotinfi NV**, Belgium – Development of new glue-free/adhesive-free carpet manufacturing technology

International Cooperation Award

■ **Aquadev**, Belgium, Pilot wastewater treatment station, Niamey (Niger)

■ **SolarFrost Research**, Austria, SolarFrost: an alternative cooling technology



Clean Marine Awards

EU ship operator with low-emission operation beyond regulatory requirements

■ **Winner:** Reederei Rord Braren, Germany

■ **Runner-up:** Netherlands Bijlsma shipyard & Knutsen Shipping

EU shipper that uses low-emission ships to transport its goods

■ **Winner:** SCA Transforest, Sweden

■ **Runner-up:** Sweden Volvo Logistics Corporation & Wallenius Wilhelmsen

EU authority that facilitates low-emission shipping or shore-side activity in port

■ **Winner:** Port of Gothenburg, Sweden

■ **Runner-up:** Port of Stockholm, Sweden

Further information

European Business Awards for the Environment
www.eu-environment-awards.org/

Awards ceremony
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/award_en.htm

➤ **Green Week session:**
Two sides of the coin

Environment and **enterprise:** two sides of the same coin

At Green Week on 2 June 2004, a workshop entitled *Two Sides of the Coin* debated the question of whether – and how – environmental sustainability can be made compatible with profitable business and the competitiveness of the EU in global markets. The conclusion was that companies can be both green and profitable.

In an introductory presentation to the *Two Sides of the Coin* workshop, Catherine Day, Director-General of the Environment DG, suggested that the euro coin itself offers a good analogy for the widely held, polarised view of sustainable development. "One side is the same throughout the EU, while the other bears the symbols of the individual Member States," she said, and people see only what they want to see.

"In fact," she continued, "the Gothenburg priority of sustainability is not an alternative to that of Lisbon (a competitive, knowledge-based society). As the examples seen at this conference are showing, companies can be both green and profitable."

"The challenge for businesses is to review the sources of their inputs and pay greater attention to performance throughout the product life cycle," Ms Day said. "In addition to gains in resource and energy efficiency, the benefits can include image improvements that make it easier to attract the best employees and to retain

the loyalty of both shareholders and customers. It is equally important for environmental protagonists to recognise the needs of industry: a stable framework, with clear objectives and a realistic time frame. In addition, regulators must also take a longer-term view so as to stimulate the innovation necessary to ensure a future world in which citizens will want to live."

Key to success

Bjorn Stigson, President of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), a coalition of 170 major global corporations, stated that 'eco-efficiency' is the key to success. The concept whereby focusing on the environment leads to improvements in economic efficiency and the bottom line was first propounded at the United Nations Rio Earth Summit 12 years ago. It is now widely

seen as a 'win-win' process, and has been adopted as a policy objective by the Dutch Presidency of the EU.

"With oil prices at today's high levels, market forces will provide an added push for greater efficiency," he concluded. "We should seize the opportunity to integrate environmental and commercial interests."

Stigson identified seven principal ways to achieve this goal:

- Innovate – in a world where assets are changing from the tangible to intangibles such as brand image and reputation;
- Practise eco-efficiency;
- Move from stakeholder dialogue towards broader partnerships to tackle common problems;
- Educate consumers;
- Improve market framework conditions – by adopting constructive legislation;
- Establish the worth of the Earth – for example, with pricing more directly related to the effects of consumption;
- Make the markets work for everyone – because an uneven distribution of wealth will foment eventual backlash.

Is eco-efficiency enough?

"Eco-efficiency alone will not necessarily bring environmental improvement," warned Professor Wolfgang Sachs of the

Wupperthal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy. "For instance, more efficient central heating means that, instead of saving energy, we now tend to make use of more living space within our houses. Similarly, the improved fuel efficiency of automotive engines has not brought an overall reduction in oil consumption, but rather has led to a proliferation of faster, more comprehensively equipped – and thus heavier – vehicles.

"In a competitive business climate there is a strong incentive for growth – and aggressive marketing is constantly encouraging people to acquire more and more goods.

"Theoretically, it would be feasible for an organisation such as WBPSD to propose to its automotive industry members that they all agree to produce cars capable of only, say, 120 km/h," Sachs suggested. "This would undoubtedly save fuel but would inevitably be branded as anti-competitive.

"The real solution is for the public to be educated and persuaded to adopt sustainable patterns of consumption. This would



Catherine Day, Director-General of the Environment DG: Companies can be both green and profitable.

permit a truly ecological use of technology – with everyone enjoying a lifestyle of *elegant sufficiency*, while living within self-imposed limits."

Level playing-field

Reflecting the view of US businesses with €540 billion invested in Europe, Darcy

Nicolle of the American Chamber of Commerce entered a plea for legislation to establish more uniform market conditions across the European Union. Given that patterns of product distribution are not constrained by national frontiers, he suggested that variations based on Member State preferences can be extremely counter-productive. They impose high compliance costs that small companies, especially, find it difficult to support. And, ultimately, they reduce the global competitiveness of the region.

In a round-up discussion, Catherine Day acknowledged that the future definition of success must differ from that of the past. "Post-industrial society is at a crossroads," she said. "Most of us agree that more consumption is not the answer, and that we must all take account of the needs of other present and future world citizens. Sustainable production and consumption could be central elements in the eventual solution." ■

➤ **Green Week session: Vote with money**



Environmental **cost** accounting

When organisations formulate their budgets, they do not always consider the long-term environmental costs of their decisions. European governments – which spend over a sixth of their national income – can lead the way in green budgeting.

Public authorities can set an example by buying green. They can save money for taxpayers and encourage others to follow suit. Spending some 16% of the EU's GDP, they are powerful allies in achieving a cleaner environment.

The notion of assessing the environmental costs of a product over its whole life is a key factor. But thinking in the long term

"seems to be contrary to human nature", said Scott Mc Dougall, from a Canadian environmental marketing firm Terra-Choice, at the *Vote with your money* workshop (2 June). Organisations may want to go down this road but there are many hurdles, he claimed. Public budgets are set and have to be spent annually. There is no incentive to pay more today so as to save in the long term.



"Managers of capital expenditure budgets will opt for the cheapest product, even if it is not the cheapest to operate or dispose of – that is not their problem. Operational costs often involve a different set of people and budgets. As each tries to reduce costs, irreconcilable differences arise," explained McDougall.

He suggested a radical overhaul of budgetary procedure. "Reward efficiencies and not quota spending, consolidate capital and operating responsibilities, extend financial periods and help buyers see the benefits through tools to assess the life-cycle cost of each alternative." But, he warned, "the onus remains on the vendor and marketer to find creative ways of communicating the message that the long-term benefits justify the short-term premium."

Taking the lead

Eva Persy, from the Vienna Ombuds-Office for environmental protection, was confident that public authorities can take a lead. She said her city has made an annual saving of €1.5 million by installing water-saving valves in official buildings and schools, and has cut 10% off the bill for cleaning products by using environmental criteria in calls for tenders.

As a general rule, she explained, Vienna only buys environmentally friendly products, purchasing on the basis of eco-labels and using the life-cycle approach of calculating the cost.

Christoph Erdmenger, from ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) in Germany, warned that green procurement does not always lead to savings – it can also mean higher costs. The end result is

"financial neutrality" and a cleaner environment, he said. A safer message to public bodies is "more environment for the same money".

Private initiative

Public authorities can spur innovation by rewarding environmental performance in their tenders, said Silvio Weeren, from IBM. "Industry will find more efficient solutions if there is a clear demand."

IBM saves \$36 million annually through energy management, he explained. "This has involved an overhaul of its products as well as the way it organises its offices – open plan, no fixed desks, and centralised facilities. The office changes have resulted in 7% savings in electricity, 20% savings in heating and cuts in CO₂ emissions, despite a staff increase of 7.5%," he added.

"Products can be designed to be environmentally friendly and cheaper," claimed Rene Kemma, from VHK a Dutch industrial product design consultancy, giving the example of a redesigned washing machine that could save nine litres of water and improve the wash. "In many areas, these types of options are there but we have to break the traditionalist thinking," he said.

Government power


Governments should focus on areas where they can have influence, such as education, setting minimum standards for information provision and product performance, introducing tax incentives, and using their public purchasing power to buy green, said Bob Ryder, from the UK's Department of Environment.

He claimed eco-labelling has been effective beyond its market visibility acting as a "silent benchmark" for product design and influencing the whole production chain, although it is best left to the industry and NGOs to manage.

When looking to influence choices, the focus is on retailers and consumers. Yet there are many transactions along the chain of production that can also affect environmental choices involving, for example, the producer, the manufacturer and the wholesaler. "If we fail to understand the complexity, then we can come up with badly designed policies," he warned. ■

Further information

DG Environment GPP website
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/gpp/index.htm



Investors cash in on their ethics

For those who associate high finance with low morals and believe that business and ethics do not mix, *Green Week's* 'stock market' had a few surprises in store. Final trading statistics revealed that the most principled of the virtual investors became the richest. This ethical windfall has also been observed among socially responsible investment funds in real capital markets.

Conventional wisdom, many brokers will tell you, dictates that the stock market is more about mathematics than morals. Investment decisions should be based solely on such measures as risk/benefit analyses, portfolio spread, expected yields, etc. But, as investors on *Green Week's* virtual stock market demonstrated, it makes financial sense to blend ethics with equity.

After a week of competitive trading, Sylvia Goettinger emerged in pole position. Delivering a return on her investment that was more than 20% above the market benchmark, the Austrian's financial wizardry earned her over €90,000 in virtual profits. Goettinger's portfolio was made up almost entirely of ethical stocks – her strategy had been to replace her non-sustainable shares with sustainable ones.

Other daily winners included Friso Noordhoek from the Netherlands and Groth Laursen from Denmark. Noordhoek's three-fifths to two-fifths blend of sustainable and non-sustainable stocks bagged him nearly €68,000, while Laursen's 'buy and hold' strategy for sustainable stocks – as well as investing in an arms manufacturer – enabled him to scoop up more than €85,000.

Bourse simulations

Although the money was virtual and the companies were invented, the simulated

market was designed to behave realistically. The Green Stock Market was powered by Xycoon exchange, which was developed by Patrick Wessa of the Lessius Hogeschool in Antwerp, Belgium, to train brokers to use modern statistical simulation techniques. It aimed to demonstrate whether or not ethical investments make economic sense by comparing the returns on various types of company stock.

Such an approach is known as socially responsible investing (SRI). In addition to conventional financial decision-making processes, SRI also includes the selection and management of investments based on issues of sustainability or social responsibility. There are three basic approaches to socially responsible investment: positive and negative screening; community investment; and shareholder advocacy.

Taking stock of green investments

Research into real financial markets backs up the *Green Week* simulation findings that trading in sustainable stocks reaps similar or better rewards than more conventional investments. This flies in the face of investor fears that managing sustainable investment funds will leave them more exposed because they are riskier and less profitable than other, more conventional, equity. Some also believe that lowering the

range of firms they can invest in compromises their ability to hedge risk.

Research carried out between 1999 and 2001 by the Lessius Hogeschool revealed that there was no real difference in the returns or the downside risk between sustainable and non-sustainable investment funds. A 2002 study by Avanzi SRI, a research and consultancy centre, came to similar conclusions. In a review of existing academic research, it found that socially responsible funds "demonstrated the absence of significant differences in the long-term performance/risk features of SRI products... historically, performances have been very close and often higher than the comparative financial benchmarks." The research also highlighted the fact that the range of socially responsible funds available in Europe should be able to satisfy each potential investor's personal risk/return preferences.

The strong performance of ethical funds may be due to the fact that investors gather a wider range of information – ethical, social and environmental – on a company, which gives them an edge. The value of ethical funds worldwide stood at an estimated €3,000 billion in 2001. ■


 Green Week session: Greening the Lisbon Agenda

A healthy economy for a healthy environment

European economic and environmental policies must work in harmony, creating an innovative framework for resolving problems, European Enterprise Commissioner Erkki Liikanen told participants at the workshop on *Greening the Lisbon Agenda* (3 June).

Erkki Liikanen, European Enterprise Commissioner

The Lisbon Strategy for economic, social and environmental renewal, agreed by European Union leaders in March 2000 as a ten-year plan for making Europe the world's most competitive knowledge-based economy, was criticised by some green campaigners for putting economic growth above its other two agenda priorities.

But Mr Liikanen was anxious to stress the key role of a competitive and innovative economy in promoting investment in environmental protection. If it is true that economic growth should have a minimal impact on the environment, then it is also important for environmental policies not to stand in the way of competitiveness.

"If Europe is a cleaner place than it was two decades ago, it is because countries have been able to generate the wealth needed to tackle environmental problems," he argued.

"Contrary to what is believed, growth in manufacturing output has gone hand in hand with environmental advances. Over the past 20 years, European industry – more successfully than US companies – has been able to decouple environmental impacts from production growth."

Growing costs

The Commissioner said the cost of protecting the EU environment has risen in recent years to 2% of GDP, and will continue to grow. "These costs cannot simply be ignored," he warned. "It's not a question of

refraining from pursuing environmental objectives, but we must find ways of attaining them at the lowest expense." He highlighted impact assessment procedures, close stakeholder involvement, and voluntary and self-regulatory instruments as key tools for future progress.

"Stakeholders must be consulted in the policy process, to allow those affected to contribute their experience and knowledge," he explained.

The Lisbon Strategy links the three crucial policy areas: economic, social and environmental. But Friends of the Earth European Director Martin Rocholl expressed the concern that, faced with economic stagnation, rising unemployment and the threat of terrorism, many EU policy-makers may be tempted to say, "The environment will have to wait".

"This argument is wrong," he insisted. "Waiting for the economy to pick up before protecting the environment will be a very expensive approach." He called for higher taxes on resources and energy rather than labour, and more balanced indicators – covering areas like health and biodiversity – for assessing progress on the Lisbon Agenda.

Greenpeace EU Policy Director Jörge Riss questioned whether EU actions are always consistent with its stated objective of a competitive, knowledge-based economy. He criticised the use of European and Member State funds to subsidise "the outdated coal and nuclear industries, at the expense of renewable energy". Investment in nuclear

research was three times as high as in renewables, he added.

From the coal face

From the industry side – or the "coal face" as he put it – Unilever Vice-President Charles Laroche said companies would not be able to meet consumers' demands if they exhausted natural resources. "People need clean water to cook our soup, use our toothpaste and wash their clothes," he pointed out. Philippe Wolper, from the steel packaging industry, outlined how innovation has enabled manufacturers to use less iron ore and energy, and cut CO₂ emissions by 25%.

Catherine Day, the European Commission's Environment Director-General, said that in an EU of 25, environmental policies remain just as valid but must be implemented in a different way, focusing on target-setting and cooperation rather than prescriptive legislation.

"We must take account of our dependence on the environment for social and economic development," she concluded. "Greening the Lisbon process is one of the requirements for success." ■

Further information

Lisbon Strategy
www.europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/index_en.html

EEA Signals 2004

A European Environment Agency update on selected issues

➤ European Environment Agency

The warning signals

The responsible management of Europe's environmental and natural capital is crucial also to its social and economic welfare, says the *EEA Signals 2004 report*, launched at *Green Week*. We all have a role to play.

The *Signals* report gives up-to-date facts and figures in a selected range of areas including agriculture, nature, waste, sustainable energy and air pollution.

In 1992, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development warned: "The bottom line is that the human species is living more off the planet's capital and less off its interest ... this is bad business." Existing economic and welfare systems, designed primarily to promote economic growth, must now be adapted to take account of the value of natural resources, argues the report. The main obstacle to sustainable development is often the complex, multi-faceted nature of issues and the fragmented, uncoordinated response from different sectors and institutions.

In areas such as climate change, the outlook is bleak enough. "The major events in Europe's environment during 2003 were weather and climate-related," pointed out EEA Executive Director Professor

Jacqueline McGlade. The hot summer claimed as many as 35,000 lives, and forest fires killed 15 people in Portugal alone, causing damage worth €925 million. Glaciers are in retreat across Europe, with estimates pointing to a loss of 75% of glacial mass in the Swiss Alps by 2050.

On land and sea

Marine environments are changing, with the plankton in the North Sea, on which fish feed, altering gradually from cold water to warm water species. Farmland birds have declined substantially over the last ten years, and over one-third of European groundwater exceeds nitrate concentration guidelines.

The production of packaging waste is closely linked to growth in personal consumption, and rose by 7% between 1997 and 2001. The revised EU Directive sets a target of at least 55% of packaging waste to be recycled by 2008, but some countries will have to more than double their current recycling rate to meet this goal.

But it is not all bad news. Enlargement has brought a wide range of natural species into the EU, partly due to less

intensive farming methods in the new Member States. Reductions in air pollution highlight the success of European regulations and technologies.

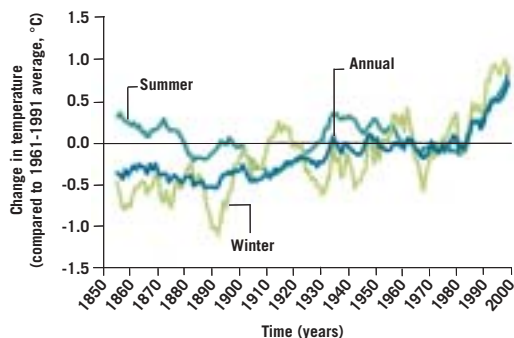
"We can now see clearly the consequences of our actions. We need to use these signals to understand the consequences of future inaction," concluded Professor McGlade.

Grabbing attention

Welcoming the *EEA Signals report*, Environment Director-General Catherine Day described it as 'very timely'. "It comes out as we prepare for the mid-term review of the EU's Lisbon Strategy and for the new Commission taking over in November. We have to find a way of grabbing the attention of policy-makers across the board," she declared. "This report helps us to see where we are making progress and where there is still work to be done."

In a separate workshop session on *Fighting Climate Change beyond 2012* (2 June), participants argued for locally based and flexible solutions to the global problem. "Countries are at different stages of economic and industrial development and this makes it impossible to impose a single, rigid pattern for controlling climate change," explained David Warrilow, head of science policy at the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Later that day, Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström revealed that the European Commission has already held talks with the aviation industry on limiting emissions from air travel. "We have to address the aviation and shipping industries if we are to be effective," she insisted.



EEA Signals 2004 will be available in 24 languages. It can already be downloaded in 14 of them at <http://reports.eea.eu.int/signals-2004/en>

➤ Evening session: Green Talk

Grasping the climate change challenge

"If you ask me for an issue that could end human civilisation, climate change would be top of the list." This sobering message came from Dr Steve Howard, head of the newly formed Climate Group in the UK, during his 'hard' Green Talk with Karen Carstens, at the end of day two of *Green Week* (2 June).

The next ten or 15 years will be decisive in indicating whether or not people are capable of acting in the long-term interests of humanity and changing their lifestyles to cut emissions of damaging greenhouse gases – the main cause of global warming – said Dr Howard.

"The Kyoto Protocol is vitally important, but it is a stepping-stone." Over the coming eight years, developed countries have already pledged to reduce their greenhouse gas output by at least 5%. But during the next 'commitment period' after 2012, they will have to set new targets for emissions cuts. "We need an extremely strong level of ambition in that period," he emphasised. Even if we act now, global concentrations of CO₂ will continue to rise for some time, before reaching a peak and starting to fall, but Dr Howard predicted emissions reductions of 50-60% will be needed to bring climate change to a halt. "It has already killed people. It's already dangerous," he warned.

The Climate Group is an independent charity, launched by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in April 2004, aiming to strengthen links between governments, business and other stakeholders and to build up the political momentum to speed reaction to climate change.

High stakes

At the *Green Week* session, Dr Howard spoke in the informal setting of a ques-

tion and answer session with Karen Carstens, environment correspondent of the Brussels-based *European Voice* newspaper.

Despite the alarmingly high stakes, he declared himself to be optimistic about the long-term outcome for humanity. "I think that, as climate change creates a growing impact, it will boost awareness," he explained. Even in the United States, where the government has so far refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, pressure is growing at state and city level, with local initiatives such as emissions trading schemes already getting off the ground. "If life there becomes a series of floods and droughts, that will drive public opinion," he predicted. "There will be a strong imperative to act."

Indeed, Dr Howard said jokingly that his aim is to "work himself out of a job" over the next ten years. "If most countries are not seriously committed to reducing greenhouse gases in ten years' time, then we are in trouble," he warned. But there will still be an organisational job to do, for example, in collecting and sharing examples of good practice.

It can be done

The Climate Group works on a 'name and praise' principle – using existing successes to inspire companies and public authorities to intensify their own efforts to reduce emissions. Dr Howard gave the

example of the small town of Woking, outside London, which has lowered pollution levels by 75% since 1990, and companies like Lafarge and Du Pont, which has made a 67% reduction in its total greenhouse gas output over the same period.

Congestion charging of drivers, introduced in the eight square miles of central London in February 2003, has already produced a 17% reduction in vehicle use and a 30% cut in congestion, with 15,000 more bus journeys. Aviation is another sector requiring firm but sensible action. "We don't want to deny people the opportunity to travel abroad on their holidays," admitted Dr Howard.

"We need to make climate change real to people. It's about all of us, now – not about five centuries in the future. We need to empower people, and to make energy-saving ideas so easy that they fall over them. Green electricity is a good option, and everybody likes recycling. These activities may not deliver the solution by themselves, but they allow the public to do something about their environment and make it tangible in people's daily lives." ■

Further information

Climate change
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/home_en.htm



➤ **Green Week session:**
Your Environmental Rights

Laws of nature

Europeans have a right to live in a clean and healthy environment. This basic human right is being recognised increasingly in European law, as shown by a number of recent milestone victories. Nevertheless, the question still remains how best to protect both the citizen and the environment.

Maguelonne Dejeant-Pons, from the Council of Europe, who opened the *Green Week* workshop on environmental rights (1 June), defended the individual's right to a clean and healthy environment.

She said the European Court of Human Rights has tried its best to defend environmental rights in cases brought by individuals and organisations under the European Convention on Human Rights. To succeed, they relied on the provisions guaranteeing the right to privacy, family life and the home as well as the right to life.

Emissions from a waste disposal plant in Spain, a methane explosion at a Turkish household-refuse tip, and the noise from night flights at London's Heathrow airport formed the focus of just some of the environmental rights cases successfully taken before the European Court of Human Rights, said Eva Brems, a professor at Belgium's University of Ghent.

But many cases have failed because the Convention cannot give "satisfactory protection as long as the environment is not expressly recognised in it as a human right", explained Ms Dejeant-Pons.

Valerio Onida, a judge in the Italian Constitutional Court, took a different line, arguing that it is the environment that has rights vis-à-vis the individual and not the other way round. Environmental interests can limit human rights, he said.

For example, environmental protection laws control how we use our land.

The environment "must be protected", he continued, but this right belongs to the community as a whole rather than to individuals. The best way to protect it is through stronger environmental laws.

The right to know

All the speakers agreed that there should be a right to information about the environment and consultation on future planning. The right to know is key, but Ludwig Kramer, from the European Commission, said although this is recognised in European law, in practice only lip-service is paid to it and there are no sanctions for those who abuse it. "The right to know may well exist but cannot be enforced effectively."

Nonetheless, there is some progress. The public can already access a number of useful tools such as the European Pollutant Emission Register (EPER). Available on the Internet since 2004, this is the first European-wide register of industrial emissions into the air and water. It covers some 50 pollutants and 10,000 industrial facilities in the EU-15, Norway and Hungary.

REACH, proposed by the Commission in 2003, is another important instrument which aims to bring chemicals within a

regulatory framework. Currently, there is little or no information on some 100,000 substances in use, revealed another Commission speaker, Yvon Slingenberg. "Most chemicals have never been properly tested", she explained.

Public authorities often lack the details they need to assess the risks while those who use the chemicals "do not have the necessary information to be sure that the products are safe". For example, clothes manufacturers may not know which chemicals were used to treat their textiles, while a GSM manufacturer may not be aware of the chemicals in the plastics being used.

"Those who know the chemicals best – the manufacturers – do not always communicate this information," she concluded. REACH will change this as it will put the responsibility for chemical safety on the industry and better inform the consumer.

Ms Slingenberg said the Commission has tried to keep a balance between the interests of the public to know and of manufacturers to keep their commercial processes secret. "We should keep in mind that while the secret information is not always attractive to us as consumers, it has incredibly high interest for competitors. REACH is not intended as a database for industrial espionage." ■

Further information

EPER
www.eper.cec.eu.int

REACH
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/chemicals/reach.htm



➤ Exhibitors

Taking a stand

Thousands of *Green Week* participants visited the exhibition to see the latest in environmental ideas and innovation. Here, contacts were made, experiences exchanged and new inspiration sought.

The 62 stands not only represented environmental organisations and networks but also businesses, consumer bodies, schools, universities and public authorities. They illustrated the number of public and private sector organisations across Europe that are now aware of and active on green issues. Most of the nominees for the European Business Awards for the Environment were present.

"It was good to exhibit our project to a wide European audience and to communicate that business and the environment can co-exist in harmony," said Ciaran McCabe, whose company Cognis Ireland was an award nominee.

Exhibitors were overwhelmingly satisfied with the interest their stands aroused. It was a "perfect event" for promoting the company's green research activities, said Sigrid Mostofi-Stemberger of Austrian-based SolarFrost, another business award nominee.

Sophie Lachaud-Lambert, from Paris-based firm Lafarge, was eager to present its environmental programmes and discuss emerging topics such as sustainable construction. Representing Hungary's Denso Manufacturing Ltd, which took the Sustainable Management Award, Gartner Szilvia appreciated the opportunity to make contacts across the EU Member States.

Enriching and creative

Public authorities and non-governmental organisations shared this positive reac-

tion. Magali Potiron, from the Région des Pays de la Loire in France, described the lessons gained from other projects as "an enriching experience". On behalf of Italy's Umbria Region, Nicoletta Tasso highlighted the opportunity to meet potential European partners with similar interests.

"*Green Week* reinforced our work," agreed Patricia Morales, from Belgian NGO Terra Curanda. "It generated a creative place for environmental issues."

Some of the exhibition items took visitors by surprise. "The real nappies on display generated a great deal of curiosity," remarked Caroline Fernandez from the Women's Environmental Network. "*Green Week* helps us to promote our message that there are simple, practical alternatives for sustainable living."

The European Public Health Alliance carried out its own survey on children's health among *Green Week* visitors, and found respondents surprisingly well informed. Asthma and allergies were highest on the list of environmental health concerns, followed by cancer.

"We were particularly attracted by the theme – changing our behaviour – which matches our aspirations as a local authority. We felt this was an ideal forum to promote our work," said Hilary Lowson, from Surrey County Council in the UK. "My colleagues were delighted with the range of contacts they made, finding this week of networking to be very worthwhile – if hard work!"

Claire Warmenbol, from the Regional Office for Europe of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), welcomed the range of participants, from environmental consultants to EU commissioners and ministers. Parul Khandelwal, from the London Borough of Islington, echoed this sentiment. "A lot of people visited our stand from a whole variety of backgrounds. It was interesting to gain a different perspective of our project when compared to other initiatives in Europe."

Ready to go again

A measure of the event's success was exhibitors' enthusiasm about returning. "We would love to exhibit again next year if given the opportunity," said Irene Lucius, from EUCC, the Coastal Union. "It helped us promote our work beyond the borders of the Netherlands and Belgium."

Some made their own suggestions for future innovations. Hilary Lowson proposed a parallel *Green Week* for school children. "It would be refreshing to hear responses from Commission officials and other panellists to the sort of direct and challenging questions our seven to 11-year-olds pose," she explained. ■

Further information

Green Week exhibition
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/exhibition_15_en.htm


 ➤ World Environment Day

Calming troubled waters

Green Week celebrated the protection of our seas and oceans, which was the theme of this year's United Nations World Environment Day, on 5 June 2004.

The sustainable management of our seas and oceans is an issue that is vital to the future of our planet. Seas and oceans represent some 71% of the surface of the Earth and 97% of the Earth's water resources. They are an immense wealth of biological and natural resources, comparable or even superior to that of tropical forests. They are also an economic resource, a reserve for energy sources, and are essential in shaping the Earth's climate. However, our seas and oceans are under attack from all sides.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has identified a number of major threats, all of which relate either directly or indirectly to man's misuse or overuse of our natural resources. They include: land-based *pollution*; accidental oil spills and oil pollution; *over-exploitation* of marine resources; and *coastal degradation* through urbanisation. It is also predicted that *climate change* will affect sea levels with resulting implications for flooding and the movement of marine water masses.

Global problems, European solutions

At EU level, the Water Framework Directive¹ aims to reduce pollution of the maritime environment from land-based sources, and new legislation has been introduced to help increase maritime safety and prevent oil spill accidents.

In addition, the European Commission's Communication *Towards a strategy to protect and conserve the marine environment*², provides a good basis for future action and clearly recognises the need to promote a more sustainable use of the sea and to restore and conserve the marine environment.

Working on it

The problem of protecting the oceans from the pollution caused by oil spills was addressed during the *Green Week* workshop entitled *Broken up, cleaned up* (4 June). The shipping industry, and now also the Commission, have established specialist organisations to facilitate international co-operation on mitigating such disasters. The carriers themselves have banded together to form the International Tanker Owners' Pollution Federation (ITOPF), which provides technical support and advice to industry members, insurers, international agencies, and governments.

With the enlargement of the EU, Europe-wide coordination on these issues is considered to be a pressing necessity. Consequently, in April 2004, the Commission established the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). In addition to the monitoring of ships and coastal facilities, the training and certification of seafarers, and a security advisory function, EMSA includes pollution prevention within its remit.

For future reference

The *Dazzling diversity* workshop (also 4 June) highlighted the problems but also the improvements that are taking place as a result of tougher European and international regulatory measures. Human overuse of the oceans is taking its toll, be it depleted fish stocks, the threatened extinction of the whale, or the pollution caused by ports and busy shipping lines. However, EU port authorities' perception of the environment is changing and many European ports now have environmental plans plus teams responsible for implementing and monitoring them.

The predominant message to emerge from such discussions is that the seas and oceans are a common and essential resource to all the nations of the world. Therefore, it is our combined responsibility to ensure that greater care is taken in the management of this precious resource for the future. ■

¹ 2000/60/EC

² COM/2002/0539 final

Further information

EU water policy
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/water/index.html

United Nations Environment Programme
www.unep.org



European birdlife

Flying high

Green Week celebrated the 25th anniversary of the EU Birds Directive, which has provided an invaluable framework for the protection of wild birds in Europe.

The Birds Directive, adopted in 1979, identified 181 endangered bird species and sub-species requiring special care. As a result, some endangered populations have begun to recover, and public attitudes to the hunting and shooting of wild birds have changed in many countries.

The Directive marked a turning point for Europe-wide nature conservation. It signalled a shared determination among the Member States to safeguard an invaluable part of our natural heritage. With the enlargement of the European Union, the challenges have increased along with the diversity and size of Europe's bird population. The aim now is to ensure that the EU Directive continues to provide the invaluable support for bird conservation in Europe that it has done in the past.

To celebrate its silver anniversary, coinciding with EU enlargement, the European Commission invited each of the now 25 Member States to nominate a 'national' bird and a slogan reflecting the character of the bird or the country. The initiative is intended to illustrate both the successes of the past and to reflect the particular challenges of bird conservation in Europe today.

Maintaining diversity

As an eloquent illustration of both our natural heritage and its need for protec-

tion, *Green Week* participants had the opportunity to view the award-winning nature film *With Beak and Claw* in the presence of its Polish director Krystian Matysek. The film, which took three years to complete, provides a unique insight into the "enchanted beauty of the world of birds". Remarkable footage captures the golden eagle hunting its prey, the mating rituals of black grouse and crane, the family life of eagle owls, and much more.

Workshops held during *Green Week* also aimed to promote a better understanding of one of the greatest challenges before us – namely to maintain the variety and richness of birdlife in Europe. The message from the *Youth workshop: Birds our common heritage* (3 June) was to venture out and take a closer look at the wonders of nature. The need to involve young people in conservation is clearly pressing and attitudes to this were examined. As one young enthusiast observed: "First you have to change your own attitude, proving that you can be both 'green' and 'cool'." Ongoing educational initiatives are beginning to make progress in this direction.

Hunter and hunted

Another workshop witnessed the growing mutual accommodation between conservationists and hunters (also 3 June). Opening

the debate on *Harvesting nature*, FACE – the hunting and conservation federation's Yves Lecocq – and Claire Papazogiou from BirdLife International shared the podium for a joint presentation on a proposed *Charter for a sustainable hunting initiative*. The Charter contains ten key points that would enable hunting to continue within a well-regulated framework, while fully respecting the provisions of the Birds Directive. Drafting of the text is currently at an advanced stage, and Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström has expressed a wish that it be ready for signature by October 2004.

The message that emerges is that, in many cases, protecting the environment comes down to making the right choices and finding an equitable balance between the different stakeholders – the people who live from the land, those who use it for pleasure, and the wildlife depending on it for survival. ■

Further information

EU Birds Directive
www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature/nature_conservation/focus_wild_birds/25year_birds_directive/anniversary_index.htm


 > *Fête de l'environnement*

The **green** message goes out to the people

Green Week 2004 concluded on Friday 4 June. But it was not the end of an exceptionally busy week for the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment. Officials were out and about in Brussels on Sunday 6 June, the day after World Environment Day, taking part in the Belgian capital's *Fête de l'environnement*.

The environment festival took place amidst the natural beauty of Brussels' Woluwe Park. Fine weather brought out many visitors to look at the stands and exhibitions celebrating many aspects of nature and the environment.

The Commission selected birds as the theme for its stand, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the EU Birds Directive (see page 15). On display were the 25 birds selected by the 25 Member States of the Union as their national emblems. Officials from the Environment DG were on hand to answer questions from members of the public and give information about EU policies on the environment.

Visitors tested their knowledge of birds through quiz questions relating to the exhibition, such as:

- Which bird represents Slovenia?
(Answer: the Great-backed Shrike).
- Which country do the 'ambassadors of the Polders' (Pink-footed Goose) come from? (Answer: Belgium).
- Who is the 'ruler of the mountains'?
(Answer: the Lammergeier from Greece).

School's collaboration

The stand was also decorated with colourful and imaginative pictures of birds drawn by children from *Les Aigrettes* kindergarten school in Watermael-Boitsfort in Brussels. "It is very encouraging to know that children as young as five or six are learning to appreciate the birdlife around them," said EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström, who afterwards wrote a letter congratulating the children on the high quality of their work, and thanking the school for its excellent collaboration.

Finding out

The *Fête de l'environnement* is organised each year by the Environment and Energy Department of the Brussels regional government to give a promotional platform to all environmental organisations in the Brussels region.

It comprises exhibitions and performances designed to enable the public to learn more about their environment and what they can do to protect it. Demonstrations covered issues such as garden composting,



sorting of waste, sustainable development and ecoconstruction. In 2004, it also offered a wide range of attractions including jugglers, clowns and musicians to entertain the children, prize competitions, and an opportunity to try 'in-line' roller skating and skateboarding. ■

Further information

Fête de l'environnement
www.ibgebim.be/francais/content/content.asp?ref=1918

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