COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 28.9.2005
SEC(2005) 1197

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER

Annex to the:

COMMISSION WORKING PAPER

”Better Regulation and the Thematic Strategies for the Environment”

{COM(2005) 466 final}
THE THEMATIC STRATEGIES – AN OVERVIEW

The relationship of the thematic strategies to the 6th Environment Action Programme, the Sustainable Development Strategy and EC Treaty objectives is shown in the following diagram. It shows how the main environmental media policies (air, water, soil etc) relate to the four overarching priorities of the 6th EAP (climate change, biodiversity, environment and health and resources and waste). The thematic approach is not new in environmental policy – it was developed in the 1990s and has been applied in the area of climate change and water. The European Climate Change Programme has developed a thematic approach to climate change, developing cost effective measures which can be taken by different economic sectors as well as households in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, the Water Framework Directive takes an integrated approach to water management through the concept of integrated river basin management. The Seven Thematic Strategies required under the 6th EAP largely complete this process of moving environment policy towards integrated approaches. The thematic approach ensures that the necessary connections have been made between different parts of environment policy and other policy areas.
EU’s Sustainable Development Strategy
Priorities directly related to Environment Objectives

- Climate change and clean energy
- Public health
- Natural resource management
- Mobility, land use and territorial development

EU’s Environment objectives (EU Treaty)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protection of the environment, including biodiversity</th>
<th>Protection of human health</th>
<th>Rational utilisation of natural resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Impact-based policies

- Nature & biodiversity
  - Biodiversity strategy
  - Birds & Habitats Directives
  - Natura 2000 network

- Env., Heath & quality of life
  - Environment & Health Strategy
  - Urban TS
  - Chemicals legislation
  - Pesticides TS
  - Noise policy

- Climate Change policy
  - European Climate Change Programme
  - Emissions trading
  - Stratospheric ozone

- Resources & waste
  - Resources TS
  - Waste Prevention and Recycling TS
  - Integrated Product Policy
  - Waste legislation
  - IPPC

Environmental media & policies

- Water Framework Directive & water legislation
- Air TS & air quality legislation; National emission ceilings
- Marine TS & international conventions
- Soil TS
The Thematic Strategies are under preparation and are scheduled for presentation to the Commission in the coming months. The following outline reflects the current state of preparation but does not prejudge the content of the final documents.

The thematic strategy on air pollution (‘Clean Air for Europe’) will bring together scientific, peer reviewed evidence on the health and environmental impacts of air pollution. It will examine the kind of air quality which the EU would have in 2020 if no further action were to be taken. It is likely that adverse health and environmental impacts will be significant. It will then examine a number of alternatives designed to lead to further improvements in air quality by 2020 and suggests appropriate measures to achieve these goals. It will suggest streamlining current air quality directives, particularly in the light of new evidence on emerging health threats and with a view to facilitating improved implementation. It will also look at further efforts needed to integrate environmental concerns into other policies and programmes.

The thematic strategy on the marine environment will aim at improving the status of EU seas to maintain their sustainable use for human activities, while ensuring the protection and enhancement of the chemical and ecological quality and biodiversity of the marine environment. The strategy will set overall qualitative environmental protection objectives for the EU. The definition of the management measures needed to meet these general objectives will be decided by Member States so that the specificities of different marine eco-systems can be taken into account. The Strategy should be seen within the broader context of the development of a new EU Maritime Policy to which it will directly contribute. In developing improved co-ordination in relation to environmental issues, the Strategy will deliver the environmental pillar of the future Maritime Policy. On the other hand, some of the problems identified in the preparation of the Marine Strategy – e.g governance - cannot be solved by the Strategy only and will therefore also be dealt with in the future Maritime Policy.

The thematic strategy on resources will set out a framework for policy analysis and integration on sustainable resource use. It will look at how to support the policy development process such that the negative environmental impacts of resource use in a growing economy can be adequately taken into account. In practical terms this means providing analytical tools to measure the environmental impacts per unit of resource use. Reducing these impacts will improve resource productivity, using fewer resources for the same economic output thus improving competitiveness. For renewable resources this means also staying below the threshold of overexploitation. Rather than detailed measures and binding targets, the strategy will set out an analytical approach that allows for the source of significant negative environmental impacts to be pinpointed so that targeted, effective measures can be taken to tackle these threats in the most cost-effective manner.

The waste prevention and recycling strategy will be developed within this framework, using life cycle approach to suggest a strategic, targeted approach to waste policy. The strategy will look at revising the waste framework legislation, clarifying definitions and contributing to setting-up common standards for recycled materials so that the Internal Market in recycling can function. It will set up a framework for national waste prevention programmes.

The thematic strategy on pesticides aims at reducing risks to human health and the environment while at the same time allowing necessary crop protection. The strategy will build on existing Community law, which already covers pre-market authorisation and residue monitoring, to deal with how risks can be reduced in the use phase. Measures should enable pesticide users (in particular farmers) to use pesticides more efficiently and to avoid overuse...
and unnecessary pollution of the environment without reducing their output. The strategy will look at training of professional users, inspection and better maintenance of sprayers, restriction of dangerous practices such as aerial spraying, and the collection of empty packaging and obsolete pesticides. Provisions on comparative assessment and substitution of the most dangerous pesticides, the promotion of low pesticide input agriculture such as organic farming and integrated crop management will be incorporated into existing instruments. Progress in risk reduction will be measured through using risk indicators.

European soils are facing major threats: erosion, contamination, sealing, compaction, reduced organic matter, landslides, biodiversity loss and salinisation. The Soil Thematic Strategy will define common principles to achieve the protection and sustainable use of soil through the identification of areas at risk and the adoption of measures to halt soil degradation combining action at EU and Member State levels.

The urban environment thematic strategy will examine factors that affect the quality of the environment in urban areas and focuses specifically on sustainable urban management, transport and construction.