

DRAFT LETTER SENT TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

Dear **Sir/ Madam**,

We are very pleased that the European Commission and UNEP have agreed to work together to further implement sustainable consumption and production in Europe following the commitments made in Johannesburg in 2002.

On November 24th-26th the European Commission, UNEP, and the Federal Government of Belgium organised a European Stakeholder Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP). The meeting gathered over 120 experts from governments, business, trade unions, consumer organisations, environmental organisations, science and other relevant sectors. A productive discussion among the various interest groups resulted in a set of encouraging and concrete conclusions which point out the way towards a consistent European strategy for sustainable consumption and production.

Now it is for the **European Commission/European Parliament/European Council** to take action. We would like to strongly encourage you to take the conclusions from Ostend (see co-chairs summary attached) as a starting point for a coordinated effort throughout Europe to implement the commitments on sustainable consumption and production made during the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Europe now has the chance of implementing sustainable consumption and production to deliver win-win solutions for sustainable development. Sustainable consumption and production can become a driver of economic renewal, job creation, and global economic leadership. In addition it can realise positive effects for the consumer through less pollution, more disposable income (via efficiency savings), more time, etc. Overall, sustainable consumption and production is the backbone, or engine, of sustainable development for advanced economies such as Europe. The challenge is to use strategies and measures which enhance the required transformations.

In particular, we would like to draw your attention to the following issues arising from the results of Ostend including, what we consider to be, structural necessities for appropriate follow up and crucial elements of an adequate content:

- **The conference called for coherent strategies for sustainable consumption.** This means that sustainable consumption and production must be a designated topic and an overarching goal within both the EU Sustainable Development Strategy and the Lisbon Strategy. Thus, take advantage of the Spring Summit 2005 of the European Council to integrate SCP into the strategies and ensure endorsement and guidance from the highest political level. This will enable the European Union to reaffirm Europe's sustainable development leadership role both within Europe and in its external relations.
- **Sustainable consumption and production has to be anchored at a high political level.** For the EU this means that a committee has to be established involving DG's dealing with employment, consumer, environment, finance and education working on synergies between their policies. The

committee should include industry, expert, and non-governmental representation as well as high level national representatives.

- **Indicators, timetables, benchmarks and alarm bells have to be agreed upon to monitor progress on sustainable consumption.** A regional/EU framework how to integrate sustainable Consumption and Production into national and EU policymaking has to be developed, build on content related targets and timetables towards better quality of life and indicators to evaluate the material and physical success of these activities.
- **National action must be stimulated in Member countries.** Each level of decision making has to contribute to the development of SCP patterns in its specific way. Expansion of already installed programmes and processes such as the UNEP SCOPE programme, setting up national policy 'coalitions' across the pan-European region, have to be fully supported in Eastern and Western European Member States.
- **Consumer rights transparency and accountability have to be improved.** Consumers have to be legally entitled to information about aspects that are relevant for the sustainability of products and services, specifically as regards social and ecological aspects of the production chain. This includes promoting sustainable development labelling and other product information tools (using the life cycle perspective) in co-operation with business, including the retail sector and strengthening Corporate Social Responsibility activities by use of economic incentives for improved transparency and accountability.
- **The financial sector has to be involved in the SCP agenda.** The financial institutions can become a driver for SCP via the increase of investment on sustainable infrastructure. This include addressing market failures and getting prices right (tax reform in support of sustainability, i.e. shifting tax burden from labour to material input). Building a clean, clever and competitive Europe helps to ensure that companies can exploit the first mover benefits.
- **Education and learning are essential elements of chance for societies.** They are paving the way for sustainable consumption and production decisions by individuals, by promoting a change in mindset and behaviour. To this end, a comprehensive communication, education and information strategy is urgently required at local, national and EU level.
- **Finance needs to be made available for advancing work on sustainable consumption and production.** New funding needs to be supplied for research directed to examining and further developing SCP policy; for action stimulating win-win actions for SCP (including investment for industry re-tooling and new-market development); and for national coalitions for sustainable consumption and production.

In due time, we would welcome a monitoring of the results achieved in Europe in implementing the commitments from Johannesburg in this area. Meanwhile we would be most pleased to hear from you how you intend to move forward in the area of sustainable consumption and production and whether you have any ideas and suggestions how we and others might be able to assist.

Yours sincerely,



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Co-ordinator ANPED Working Group on Sustainable Consumption and Production