



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES DG

The Director-General

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Brussels,  
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Ms Sylvia Lorek  
ANPED, The Northern Alliance  
for Sustainability  
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Dear Ms Lorek,

Thank you for your letter of 26<sup>th</sup> January 2005, in which you draw my attention to the results of the European Stakeholder Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), held in Ostende in November 2004.

As you know the Commission has in the mean time confirmed its commitment to sustainable development as "an overarching concept which underpins all Union policies, actions and strategies, and requires economic, environmental and social policies to be designed and implemented in a mutually reinforcing way" (COM(2005) 37 final).

The recently published Social Agenda (COM(2005) 33 final) sets out to lend contribution to this goal by promoting the modernisation and development of the European social model against a background of far-reaching economic and social changes. We have emphasised the complementarity between the Social Agenda and both the Lisbon Strategy and the Sustainable Development Strategy, which makes it necessary to ensure close dovetailing with other Community policies. This approach implies taking full account of social and employment dimensions in other Community policies, and vice versa. The integrated Impact Assessment tool will provide a valuable methodological contribution to this end.

I share your view that implementing an agenda for sustainable development, including SCP, gives us the prospect of reaching win-win solutions and contributing to the main objective for EU employment policy, namely the creation of more and better jobs. The Commission endorsed this progressive approach in its recent Communication on the new Lisbon Strategy (COM(2005) 24), advocating a stepped up promotion of eco-innovation "which can bring substantial improvements to our quality of life as well as to growth and jobs, e.g. in areas such as sustainable resource use, climate change and energy efficiency".

Education and learning are indeed essential elements to achieve the changes in mindset and behaviour which are needed. To complement that argument, I would also underline the need for sustainability considerations to be taken into account in lifelong learning and training systems, as well as in active labour market policy measures. After all, well-trained, environmentally aware workers are better able to adopt new innovative and integrated approaches that match sustainability requirements.

I also share the view expressed in your letter that Corporate Social Responsibility can give a valuable contribution, and the Commission intends to put forward initiatives designed to further enhance the development and transparency of CSR. In this regard let me also draw your attention to the conference which DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is organising together with AccountAbility, on "Responsible Competitiveness" on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2005. To register or to obtain more information I kindly invite you to contact us electronically at [csr@cec.eu.int](mailto:csr@cec.eu.int).

Above I have merely picked out and responded to a few of the rich results of the Ostende SCP Meeting, but I believe to have been able to reassure you that DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is committed to doing its part to advance this important and promising agenda.

Yours sincerely,



Odile QUINTIN