

**Opening of the Stakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development in the EU
Thursday, 14 April, 9.00 a.m.**

Opening remarks by Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund, President of the European Economic and Social Committee

Ms Sigmund welcomed all participants to the Stakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development explaining that this would not be a conference in the traditional sense, but an open dialogue, using the "Open Space" method. There would be no set agenda with specific topics, instead it would be up to the participants themselves to decide which issues they would like to discuss. Since this was a non-conventional approach, it was clear that the EESC was taking a risk, but Ms Sigmund stressed that as the European Economic and Social Committee was an instrument of dialogue and democracy, this was a useful experiment in "live" participative democracy, in which participation was voluntary, but highly encouraged.

Ms Sigmund noted that in her position as the President of the EESC, she thought a lot about questions of European identity, such as what was the binding force holding us all together and what made us European. She welcomed the Stakeholder Forum as a unique opportunity to give direct input to the European decision-making process and to influence the future of the Sustainable Development Strategy in Europe. Ms Sigmund said she hoped the participants would make full use of the "Open Space" method to make their views known and that it would be an enjoyable process.

Opening remarks by Ms Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission

Ms Wallström said that sustainable development was a subject close to her heart. She remembered how as a teenager she had a very positive view of the future. Her generation saw only opportunities: better education, new possibilities to travel and an open new world. The economy was booming, technology developed every day and everything seemed possible. The millennium shift was seen as the target, when it would all happen. Then the millennium shift came and went, and we had somehow returned back to the future. The future seemed no longer only bright. We started to see the problems and learned that we could not continue the way we did without ruining our planet.

Ms Wallström also referred to a strong image from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. There she had seen what a difference the drilling of a well had made to the life of a small village. Not only did it bring clean water, but it also saved the women time, which they could use to discuss how to improve their lives. The well in fact brought democracy to the village. This illustrated how sometimes small, inexpensive actions would make a large difference.

Ms Wallström underlined the timeliness of this conference on sustainable development coinciding with the start of the Commission's work of revising the sustainable development strategy. In this context, she also referred to the initiative underway to produce a statement of sustainable development principles and underlined the importance of the question which policy areas the sustainable development strategy should cover – in other words whether the strategy focused on the right priorities, whether there should be fewer priorities to create a better focus or whether for example

security should become a new priority issue. This needed to be discussed, and Ms Wallström concluded that her task today was to listen to the stakeholders and take on board their ideas.

Ms Wallström's draft speech has been published by the European Commission at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/sustainable/docs/Wallstroem-final.pdf>

**The EU Sustainable Development Strategy: main achievements and shortcomings
Thursday, 14 April, 9.30– 11.30 a.m.**

Mr Kay Walter, journalist, **hosted a talk show with:**

Ms Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission

Mr Lutz Ribbe, Rapporteur of the European Economic and Social Committee on the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy

Ms Mona-Lisa Norrman, Rapporteur of the Committee of the Regions on the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy

Ms Madi Sharma, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee

Mr Günter Bachman, Head of Office, German Council for Sustainable Development

Mr Joël Decaillon, Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation

Mr Tony Long, Director, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) European Policy Office

Mr Alexandre Pasche, Chairman of Eco&co, Consultancy for communication on the environment and societal questions

Mr Walter introduced the debate reminding the participants that four years had passed since the Sustainable Development Strategy had been issued. He asked the participants, if they were satisfied with the progress made to date.

Ms Wallström replied that a lot more needed to be done. However, positive achievements had been made, such as making sustainable development an established policy. Nobody questioned its place among other policy areas and the objective of integrating sustainable development into all other policy areas had become accepted. However, real implementation was still lacking and it was important to demonstrate that the “European way”, i.e. economic growth in combination with social integration and environmental protection, really worked. It had to be accepted that this would take time. She underlined the positive role of impact assessment for this purpose. **Mr Long** said that no real progress had been made. He saw the reason for this in the ecological and economic worlds being too far apart. We were still striving to increase GDP, without looking at the constraints. To overcome this we would not need more regulation and tools such as impact assessments, instead we would need a sense of urgency. We would need the atmosphere of the 70’s, when people talked about the risks of running out of resources and the great dangers of pollution. **Ms Wallström** replied that there was a risk that people perceived these warnings as “crying wolf”. The Club of Rome’s estimation that we would run out of oil and other natural resources had not come true.

Mr Walter stated that enlargement was now a fact. He asked if the ten new countries had had enough time to consider sustainable development and how they were looking at this issue.

Mr Ribbe replied that they had of course had as much time as any other country. Rio and Johannesburg had been international events, involving all countries. There had also been a long pre-

accession negotiation period with the EU, leading to adjustments of policies and legal frameworks in the accession countries. The problem was rather the difference in ways of perceiving the problem. The new member states had probably not considered sustainable development as an important issue, since catching up economically had been their main goal. It had to be made clear that wealth came at a price, often paid by the environment.

Mr Walter asked if ordinary people really cared about sustainable development.

Ms Norrman said that it was difficult to read strategies and to follow debates, which meant that most people did not even try. It was difficult for people to understand that the sustainable development strategy was meant seriously, when looking at the unsustainable society they lived in and how little was actually changing. She also stressed the difficulties of communicating sustainable development. The EU could make sustainable action easier for local and regional authorities by, for example, encouraging green and local procurement. To be sustainable we needed to adopt another view on trade and the free market economy. **Ms Sharma** said that environmental policy only meant costs for companies. For a small or medium sized enterprise (SME) having to raise environmental standards meant having to raise prices, which meant in turn that consumers would prefer to buy from China or other low-cost countries. **Ms Wallström** reacted by asking why countries with the highest living standards also had the highest environmental standards, if the situation really corresponded to Ms Sharma's description. **Ms Sharma** said that SMEs could not afford expertise in environmental policy. Large multinational could, but on the other hand they tended to leave the EU for China or India.

Mr Walter raised the question of how to communicate the sustainable development strategy.

Mr Pasche pointed to a strong willingness among companies to move towards sustainable development. Often they lacked the right motivation and the knowledge to really go ahead. This was most obvious among SMEs. It would have to be made clear that there were economic advantages in implementing an environmental plan. He underlined the difficulty of communicating the term sustainable development and the terms surrounding it, such as “ownership”, “governance” and “stakeholder”. They were vague and could mean anything or nothing. **Ms Wallström** said that improved communication was clearly a job for the Commission. We would have to make people understand and convince them. Very few consumers today acted out of ecological conviction. It also had to be clear, especially for companies, that there was a cost of non-action.

Mr Walter asked at what level decisions should be made and whether all regions and countries could be treated in the same way.

Ms Norrman said that some environmental problems were common for all. But in addition every region had its specific problems to deal with. If there were legal possibilities of taking local aspects into consideration in public procurement, local problems could be better dealt with and would support local SMEs. **Ms Sharma** said that consumers did not necessarily want to buy local or ecological goods. They wanted to buy cheap goods. **Mr Long** responded that we were in a time of change with

an increasing demand for ecological food. One problem was that the real costs were not included in prices of all goods. He criticised the failure to internalise environmental costs, which meant that non-ecological food was cheaper than it should be. **Mr Ribbe** emphasised that we still had the approach that sustainable development should not cost us anything. We expected that everything should remain the way it was and that the environment should become healthier at the same time. He underlined that things would clearly not work that way.

Mr Walter asked if eco-business really was possible and profitable.

Mr Pasche pointed to many advantages of “going green”. Companies needed to break out of the vicious circle of believing that being environmental cost more – that prices would have to be raised and that costumers would leave for low-cost country products. Some of the advantages of being green included: decreased liability risks by respecting rules and laws; the possibility to get other important clients by demonstrating a higher standard (schools, ministries etc.) and the opportunity to be a first-mover in a niche market. **Ms Sharma** responded that, instead, the cost of complying with EU standards could be saved: companies could move to China and still keep European market share by exporting to it. **Ms Wallström** said this had to be looked at in a constructive way. The way forward could no longer be to lower our standards to China’s. One way to help SMEs could be to give financial support for environmental advice or to encourage SMEs and non-governmental organisations to work together to find solutions. **Mr Bachmann** said that we were underestimating the success stories we already had on eco-business in the EU. Corporate social responsibility and environmental awareness in companies were increasing rapidly. The renewable energy sector, for example, was a real “job creating machine”. He also pointed out that China and many other new-economies had increasingly strict environmental rules and laws.

Mr Walter asked the members of the panel if they thought the sustainable development strategy should concentrate on fewer issues.

Ms Wallström replied that this question was currently being considered. The current six main issues were important, but it was possible that some should be exchanged. One important issue possibly to be added was security. **Mr Long** said that the six topics were useful as a guide. The focus had been right, but the level of ambition had been too low. In the future the big issues would remain climate, energy and transport. **Mr Ribbe** agreed that the topics were the right ones, but recommended to look further. Rules and norms tended to be set for large enterprises and did not favour SMEs and local production. As an example he mentioned hygiene rules for food processing that clearly put local production at a disadvantage and therefore did not favour sustainable development. **Mr Bachmann** also agreed that the issues were the right ones, but that better benchmarking tools were needed to measure progress. Security was, and would continue to be, an important issue for sustainable development. **Ms Norrman** said that security was important, but rather from a social point of view. Extreme events such as floods and terrorism were costly and difficult but the real security problem was to be found in inter-personal violence, such as domestic violence. This was an important issue linked to jobs, wealth and equity. **Ms Wallström** agreed that violence was an important issue to be dealt with which, however, did not have its place in the debate on sustainable development. She

warned of losing focus as a result of trying to fit everything into sustainable development. Talking about the security aspects of sustainable development meant mainly geopolitical instability because of shortage of oil, gas or other natural resources, or refugees from environmental phenomena. When talking about sustainable development we would have to keep the timeframe in mind. SMEs had a short-term perspective having to manage payments at the end of the month, while sustainable development policy was very much a long-term perspective, spanning a generation or more.

Ms Sharma said that we would have to create wealth in Europe or else we would have nothing. She noted she was the only member of the panel with an activity generating wealth for society. Competitiveness was the most important aspect to consider because we could not afford to lose more companies in the EU. Policy makers had to understand the SME perspective. **Ms Wallström** admitted this to be partly true, while pointing out that if we did not consider the environment while creating wealth, we would also end up having nothing. **Mr Long** said that the concept of wealth as a measurement of a good and healthy society was part of the problem. Instead we should talk about welfare, which included not only economic growth, but also education, quality of life, etc. **Mr Pasche** noted that we all took the view that there was a conflict between profit and environmental protection. This might stem from a Catholic philosophy in which virtue and profit could not co-exist. Maybe that was why it had been easier to introduce sustainable development with win-win arguments in Protestant countries. **Mr Decaillon** said that to be able to implement sustainable development we needed a lot of new research and innovation. In order to achieve this we needed open minds and space, in the sense that we needed dialogue, negotiation and broad views. The Nordic countries were ahead in considering sustainable development, perhaps because of their tradition of negotiation and democracy. It was important to remember that there would never only be one model for sustainable development.

Mr Walter asked the members of the panel for their vision of the sustainable development strategy.

Mr Bachmann hoped that we would start producing more than papers so that implementation could really get going. The Millennium Development Goals were up for review this year and while we were far away from actually meeting them he expressed his hope that we would remain ambitious and not back away from the goals set. He deplored that this was the case for the Lisbon strategy. When we saw that the targets would not be met we lowered them. It would be very sad to do the same with the Sustainable Development Strategy and the Millennium Development Goals. **Ms Norrman** said she wanted more of the money in the research programmes to go to research on sustainable development, including issues such as gender policy, public health and SMEs. Every policy area should integrate sustainable development, but to better focus the actions priorities should be identified within each policy area. **Mr Pasche** was optimistic about progress with sustainable development because almost all actors were saying that they were willing to do something. It was important to help people get together, to communicate, so that things could start happening. **Ms Sharma** said her vision of the sustainable development strategy was one that protected the environment and helped create a strong social society. However, it must also allow for profit for SMEs and to take account of SMEs' special needs. **Mr Decaillon** said a sustainable development strategy must take account of citizens and

respect them. That was why the social dimension was so important. The social partners must have a strong role in the process. **Mr Long** said his vision was a socially just, equitable EU where wealth would be shared. He said we needed real commitment to sustainable development and to the Millennium Goals.

Making Sustainable Development a reality – from policy words to policy actions
Evaluation and prioritisation of the results of the working sessions – next steps
Debate and concluding session
Friday, 15 April

Remarks by Mr Stavros Dimas, Member of the European Commission

Mr Dimas said that sustainable development remained at the heart of the Commission's policy agenda. The strategic objectives, which were setting the Commission's priorities for the coming five years, recognised the need for sustainable development and stressed that actions that promote competitiveness, growth and jobs could be mutually reinforcing with social cohesion and a healthy environment.

Mr Dimas said that unfortunately the environmental situation in the EU was getting worse, not better. For example the negative impacts of climate change were growing, and ecosystems were being increasingly exploited. The revised sustainable development strategy must therefore be made more ambitious. He said we needed to set detailed targets, milestones and indications on how to measure progress. There needed to be effective monitoring procedures put in place. In addition, we needed concrete actions, and one of the most important would be to change consumption and production patterns. Examples of how this could be done included to promote green procurement, develop further the concept of Integrated Product Policy, and setting prices right, so that they reflect the full cost to society. He also mentioned the need to reform harmful subsidies, and to get REACH adopted. Finally, Mr Dimas said that the Commission was working on the seven thematic Strategies for the environment, which would be adopted this year.

Mr Dimas emphasised the importance of involving all actors in the work of revising the sustainable development strategy. He said that sustainable development was a concept elusive to many citizens. The idea of a declaration could make it more comprehensive by focusing on some important aspects in a short concise text. He added that events like the Stakeholder Forum were particularly important since they helped to focus on issues that people believed being most important. Mr Dimas concluded by saying that the best ideas from this Forum would certainly be picked up by the Commission in its final proposal.

Mr Dimas' draft speech has been published by the European Commission at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/231&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

Remarks by Ms Ulla Sirkeinen, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee

Ms Sirkeinen said the EESC had been active on sustainable development for many years now, starting even before the Göteborg Summit. She considered the EESC to be very well suited to deal with sustainable development because of its composition of three groups of members, employers, employees, and other interests, including environmental interest groups. Ms Sirkeinen pointed out that

this composition mirrored the three pillars of sustainable development and all of its aspects could therefore be well represented and defended. She mentioned that the EESC was pleased to see that the Commission had often taken up ideas included in the opinions of the EESC.

Ms Sirkeinen said that when we were talking about sustainable development there were in fact two different approaches: the first was the horizontal approach where sustainable development had to be considered in all policy areas, at all policy levels; the second was to look at the six prioritised areas in the sustainable development strategy to see how to improve them. The EESC had mainly looked at the first approach, the horizontal, since it has been necessary and important to try to break down the barriers between different policy areas. Ms Sirkeinen emphasised that what we now needed to focus on was how to achieve results. She said that most people agreed on the goals but we would have to find tools to achieve them. Particularly important, according to Ms Sirkeinen, was to search for win-win solutions, or at least balanced solutions, and she therefore highlighted the importance of involving stakeholders. She concluded by saying that to make things happen we would also need leadership and that we would particularly be looking to the Commission for that.

Debate hosted by Mr Willy De Backer, Editor-in-Chief of Euractiv.com

Mr De Backer wondered if there was not a problem having two strategies, the Lisbon strategy and the sustainable development strategy, running in parallel, and partly over-lapping?

Mr Dimas answered that the two strategies were indeed partly over-lapping but that they were also substantially different. He explained that the Lisbon strategy would run until 2010. It had been put into place to solve a relatively short-term problem; to kick-start Europe by putting focus on growth and jobs. The sustainable development strategy on the other hand was a permanent strategy. He said that it had a much broader scope. It was enshrined in the Treaty as one of the priorities of the EU and it was global. **Ms Sirkeinen** said that the economic pillar of the sustainable development strategy was weak and that this had been compensated for by the Lisbon strategy. The sustainable development strategy had indeed a much broader scope. She added that it could be described as a moving target, since no clear targets had been set.

Mr De Backer said that if the sustainable development strategy was considered an overarching principle and one of the main priorities of this Commission, would there then not be a problem when the Commission called itself the “Lisbon Commission” and very strongly promoted growth and competitiveness?

Mr Dimas answered that it was true that the main focus was on increased growth and more employment. However he explained that this did not mean that the social and environmental parts of the sustainable development strategy were being downgraded.

The participants in the Forum had voted on which five working groups they had found the most interesting. The following persons representing these working groups joined Mr Dimas and Ms Sirkeinen for a discussion:

Mr Richard Howell, UK Environment Agency: *How to use Impact Assessment as a tool for Sustainable Development*

Ms Georgia Nakou, Principal Policy Analyst, Institution of Electrical Engineers: *A Sustainable Energy Future*

Ms Myriam Van Espen, Director, SENIORINNOVATION, Cabinet-Conseil en gerontology: *How to improve the social aspects of the European Sustainable Development Strategy; The fight against poverty and social exclusion – an integral part of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy; Ageing society*

Mr Patrice Christmann, Secretary General, EUROGEOSURVEYS – The Association of the Geological Surveys of the EU: *Sustainable use of natural resources*

Mr Staffan Nilsson, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee: *How should the WTO trade liberalization relate to SD?*

Mr De Backer asked the representatives from the five working groups to present their results and recommendations.

Mr Howell represented the group that had discussed how impact assessments (IAs) could be a tool for sustainable development. The group had given the following recommendations:

- IAs are meant to inform decision makers but in the end the actual decisions must be political.
- The assumptions made in an IA have to be very clearly stated.
- The capacity of institutions to use IAs and to base decisions on them have to be increased.

Mr De Backer pointed out that in the case of REACH around 50 IAs had been made and they all came to different conclusions, depending on who initiated the study. **Mr Dimas** said that all these IAs served a purpose of bringing new pieces of information to the decision-makers. However he underlined that assumptions had to be made explicit and that it had to be clear from what angle the IA had been made. **Ms Sirkeinen** said that an IA was not easy to handle but that it was the best tool available. She added that we would have to work on developing the methodologies and that it was important to include qualitative measurements for all the impacts we cannot measure in figures. **Mr Paul Geraads**, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee, asked at what geographical level an IA should be carried out since a global IA might undermine an IA made on EU level. **Mr Howell** said it was important to limit the scope of an IA and to tailor it to the relevant area and level.

Ms Nakou presented the results of the working group on sustainable energy future. Some of the main conclusions were:

- The timeframe of the energy strategy should be extended to 40-50 years.
- Energy efficiency should have a more prominent role in EU energy policy. That concerned technology development but also education and awareness raising. Pan-European campaigns similar to the one against smoking should be organised.

- There should be more focus on diversity of energy sources for geopolitical reasons, as well as for low-emission supply reasons.

Ms Sirkeinen said that she missed the price aspect. Economic and social aspects were very much dependent on the price policy on energy. **Ms Nakou** answered that this issue had been discussed in the group, especially in relation to supply and to environmentally harmful subsidies. **Mr Alexandre Pasche**, Chairman of Eco&co, Consultancy for communication on the environment and societal questions, asked what action the Commission had taken about cars that consume an excessive amount of fuel. **Mr Dimas** answered that he drove a very small car! He added that it would be impossible to legislate against people's freedom to buy a car of their choice but the full costs to society should also have to be paid by the consumers, which was not always the case today. Taxes and prices would have to take environmental costs into consideration. **Mr De Backer** said that maybe there ought to be a European action plan for energy awareness.

Ms Van Espen presented the results of the working group on the social aspects of the sustainable development strategy. She said that in general the social pillar of sustainable development was far too underdeveloped and needed a lot more attention. She noted that there often were no links between the three pillars. Some of the main conclusions of the group were:

- The EU would have to consider the serious issue of poverty. We would need to reverse the unsustainable trends of today.
- Equality had to be considered a positive opportunity for sustainable development.
- The EU should not look at the ageing of the population as something negative but should also take advantage of experience and qualities.

Mr De Backer asked what specific actions could be taken within the sustainable development strategy, or the Lisbon strategy, to better cover social problems. **Ms Van Espen** said that there had to be awareness of the fact that social and environmental policies and actions also could lead to jobs and growth, even though not always in the traditional sense of economic growth. **Mr Dimas** said that we must not forget the social dimension in a global perspective. He added that poverty in the third world was a very unsustainable factor for the whole globe.

Mr Christmann presented the work carried out by the working group on natural resources. He stressed that natural resources were the basis of everything and that there was a mass-extinction going that was far from sustainable. Some of the recommendations from the group were:

- Harmful subsidies would have to be removed. Subsidies should only be allowed if they were sustainable.
- Taxation should be moved from labour to natural resources. This would discourage excessive exploitation of natural resources and lead to more employment.
- Develop knowledge about resources, use life cycle analysis more systematically.
- Give support for capacity building in third world countries in order to better manage natural resources.

Mr Nilsson gave a brief presentation of the work done by the working group on WTO and sustainable development. Some of the recommendations were:

- The most important aspect would be to get an acceptance for internalising external costs.
- To help internalise costs life cycle analysis and labelling could be useful tools.
- It is important to address the fact that developing countries often perceive environmental concerns as “green protectionism”.
- The issue of global governance needs attention since institutions could be key actors.

Summary of results of the Forum

Mr Ernst Erik Ehnmark, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee, briefly summarised the results of the Forum. He said the work had been very interesting and fruitful and he highlighted the following issues:

- *Political signals*: There needed to be a clear political signal confirming that sustainable development really was an overarching policy for the EU.
- *Governance and leadership*: Sustainable development was a radical concept, which would require some very uncomfortable decisions. We would need an active dialogue to be able to get people aboard and create a willingness to participate in the project.
- *Lisbon strategy and sustainable development strategy*: The connections, the over-lapping and the conflicts between these two strategies would need to be more clearly explored and explained.
- *Impact assessments*: Interestingly, impact assessment as a tool for sustainable development was perceived as the most important topic by many participants at the Forum. This approach still needed to be better developed to win acceptance as a political tool for decision making.
- *Energy, social dimension, natural resources and WTO were other priority areas*: Since presentations had already been made from the working groups Mr Ehnmark did not comment further on these topics.
- *Research*: More investment in research and education on sustainable development would be needed.
- *Communication*: Better dialogue and communication with citizens and stakeholders would be necessary to make sustainable development work in reality. This would be especially important if we wanted consumption patterns to change.

Mr Ehnmark said that this Forum had shown that the stakeholders were willing to take part in the work on sustainable development and that there were lots of valuable and interesting ideas to capitalise on.

Closing remarks by Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund, President of the European Economic and Social Committee

Ms Sigmund said that the open space method had proven to be a very useful approach for this stakeholder forum and that she was very pleased with the results achieved. The Forum was a good example of how the EESC can work as a bridge between the civil society and the EU institutions. She said that the EESC did not necessarily have to stand in the centre but was happy to provide a platform

for dialogue and communication. The participants were assured that the work that had been carried out in these two days would not be lost. The summaries from each working group would be handed to the Commission. She added that the EESC would ensure a follow-up of the work on the sustainable development strategy and would continue giving its input. Ms Sigmund said that EESC would be happy to support the Commission in the monitoring and implementation of the sustainable development strategy. The EESC, together with its network of partners and contacts all over Europe, could play a crucial role in the monitoring and implementation of the strategy.

Closing speech by Mr José Manuel Durao Barroso, President of the European Commission

Mr Barroso said that he would be happy for the EESC to be associated with the monitoring and implementation of the Strategy. There would be a need for more dialogue Forums. He said that looking at sustainable development made us think strategically and enabled us to incorporate the future in our day to day thinking. Sustainable development was not just a strategy for the EU but a permanent objective to be fulfilled by various other strategies of which the Lisbon strategy was one. He emphasised that the political signal was clear: there was a need to decouple economic approach from environmental degradation and focus on sustainable production and consumption.

Mr Barroso said that sustainable development had become one of the buzz words of this century. If it is typed into Google no less than 36,400,000 internet pages on the subject appear. He said we have all heard the word but few have looked behind the jargon to find out what it really means. Looking at this context, Mr Barroso pointed out that this Stakeholder Forum on sustainable development had been important. The participants had worked hard on finding recommendations and conclusions to deliver to the Commission in order to improve the strategy on sustainable development.

Mr Barroso confirmed that he personally attached a lot of importance to sustainable development, and the review of the sustainable development strategy. He had been at the World Summit in Rio in 1992 when Sustainable Development had first been discussed. He mentioned that the Commission had an integrated vision – encompassing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the Union. Ensuring that the renewed Lisbon strategy focused on growth and jobs was an important step towards sustainability. Without increasing our growth potential we would not be able to sustain our unique model of society. However, all measures taken must be informed and guided by our broader vision of sustainable development.

Mr Barroso said that according to him a solid sustainable development strategy would need clear objectives and targets. He took the example of transport and said that it was not enough that Commissioner Dimas had such a small car, even though it clearly was a good contribution! We would need to be specific about what tools and policy measures we want to use. The strategy also needed new instruments and innovative means of delivery. We must make greater use of technology and research. In addition, we would need to clarify the governance of the strategy. Who does what? What could be done at national level and what needs to be done at EU level? Finally, we must monitor the strategy better. We have to set clear targets and deadlines. Mr Barroso said that particularly in

monitoring the implementation of the strategy, the EESC could have an important role and in relation to monitoring the delivery and deadlines.

Mr Barroso thanked the participants at the Forum for their contributions. Almost all the important issues of sustainable development had been covered by the recommendations given by the 50 working groups. He assured the participants that the Commission would take a close look at the conclusions made and the priorities listed. There was a need to be positive and share success stories. He outlined the timetable for future work, building on a declaration on guiding principles to be considered at the June Summit. Proposals would be made in the autumn which would be new and ambitious and linked closely to the international commitments of the EU. The link between the Lisbon Strategy and Sustainable Development would be brought to the fore.

Mr Barroso's draft speech has been published by the European Commission at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/sustainable/docs/Barroso-final.pdf>