



**COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Regional discussions: Europe and others**

- The EU wishes to thank the UNECE Secretariat and UNDESA for organising the Regional Implementation Forum in the run up to this year's CSD session. The UNECE RIF's outcome reinforced our appreciation that countries, also within our own region, experience quite different challenges and opportunities in implementing their commitments on CSD14/15 thematic issues.
- These diverse conditions and situations are well described in the Chair's Summary which is a valuable tool for both this session and CSD 15. Indeed, the results of regional meetings should not be lost when bringing the debate to the global level. The EU places a strong emphasis on achieving global sustainable development, as shown through for instance the EU Neighbourhood Policy and the recently adopted EU Strategy for Africa for instance, the EU places.
- The EU notes with concern the Forum's assessment that the region is not yet on track to deliver its JPOI commitments relating to the four thematic issues as well as to the other cross-cutting issues as identified at CSD 11. An in-depth political dialogue on common policy objectives and specific countries' needs as well as exchange of best practices and lessons learned are therefore very important steps.
- We still face serious difficulties in our region, in particular with regard to access to energy services; energy efficiency and diversification of the energy mix, including increasing the share of renewable energy; and energy security. A conducive investment climate and innovative finance and market-oriented instruments, such as the CDM and JI are essential to tackling this challenge. Working out a framework for progress and co-operation – both between governments and between the private and public sectors – is one of the most important challenges facing us. Action to reinforce research and development and demonstration efforts is urgent.
- On the fight against air pollution, the EU believes that this requires an integrated approach. In moving forward, we should start by building on those areas where we already have made and can make further progress. An example of this is the UNECE Convention on Long-range Trans-boundary Air Pollution, which has already resulted in substantial reductions of air pollution in Europe.
- The adverse effects of climate change are already being experienced, and further change is inevitable. To avoid irreversible impacts, the EU holds the view that the global mean surface temperature increase should not exceed 2°C above pre-industrial levels. For achieving this, a joint global effort is required, with economically more developed countries taking the lead to significantly reduce global emissions of green house gases. This calls for the widest possible cooperation and participation in an effective and appropriate international response to which we are clearly committed.
- Industrial development building on an economically, environmentally and socially sound base is an engine for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring truly sustainable economic growth. The EU sees a mutually reinforcing relationship between environmental protection, competitiveness and social cohesion. The social dimension was stressed by many during the RIF. We also have now committed to producing an EU Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan by 2007.

- The EU was satisfied to see that cross-cutting issues received more attention during the RIF than at previous sessions. The UNECE RIF has allowed us to share our thoughts and listen to the views of others, to exchange experience and to talk about what we collectively and individually see as priority areas where more needs to be done. This in itself is a necessary step, bringing us closer to achieving our WSSD commitments. Concerted action and combined efforts such as for instance expressed through the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development will take us crucial steps further.
- Finally, the EU thinks that some reflection needs to be given here, to optimize the effect of the different RIFs in the CSD process. All RIFs can improve civil society participation, the attention needed for cross-cutting issues, and the necessary coherence with other regional processes running on the same subject matter. At the CSD itself, we need perhaps to find a different way to approach the regional debriefings within the organisation of work avoiding parallel sessions, so to achieve better mutual integration of the outcomes of all regional fora.

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