

6th Environmental Action Programme & some Thematic Strategies

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The Sixth Environmental Action Programme (EAP) adopted by the European Parliament and Council in 2002 runs until 2012, and requires the European Commission to prepare Thematic Strategies covering seven environmental areas (Air Pollution, Prevention and Recycling of Waste, Protection and Conservation of Marine Environment, Protection of Soils, Sustainable Use of Pesticides, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Urban Environment).

Thematic strategies are a new process used by the European Commission (EC) to globally address a specific theme. The holistic approach chosen by the EC leads to long consultations with all stakeholders and should be followed by appropriate political tools, should these be Recommendations, Directives or Regulations. ELO is therefore closely following the 6th EAP work, as the chosen themes are directly related to its members' activities.

Thematic Strategy on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources *(adopted the 21.12.2005)*

ELO actively participated in the consultation process on sustainable use of natural resources, its members being directly involved either in the extraction, production and management of natural resources, or in the recycling of products as raw materials.



The thematic strategy aims at elaborating a policy framework to limit or alleviate negative impacts on natural resource during the production or use processes. The life cycle of products are analysed in depth and it is hoped that the negative impact from the use of Natural Resources can be decoupled from production.

This approach is one of the key element used to limit the environmental footprint of our modern societies. Some crosscutting issues with other EU actions dealing with other media such as soil, air and waste or pesticides and Natura 2000 are obvious.

During this process, ELO clearly stated the viewpoint of landowners and rural entrepreneurs during the process, notably the need to consider river fish stock as a natural resource and the need to offer safe sewage and sludge products as new raw materials also taking into account aspects related to product liability.



ELO believes that existing legislations in the field of agriculture, forestry and rural areas are addressing the issue (e.g. alternative energies such as biomass...). and hopes the Thematic Strategy will help to achieve greater coherence. The Thematic strategy on sustainable use of natural resources was adopted the 21st of December 2005, and ELO will follow its concrete implementation.

Thematic Strategy on Air (adopted 21.09.2005) – CAFÉ process

ELO welcomes the thematic strategy on air, adopted on September 21st, 2005. Some forms of pollution may be detrimental to rural activities, as is the case with regards to particule fallout coming from incinerators. The rural world could help to alleviate some pollution by providing environmental services such as carbon sinks.



The strategy has also launched a programme called CAFÉ, Clean Air For Europe, and one of the subgroups is focussing on ammonia coming from agriculture. ELO will participate in the debate in order to help with defining the most appropriate, integrated and consistent actions to reduce various environmental impacts from agriculture (notably water, air, climate change). ELO will insist on the feasibility of foreseen measures during the process.

Thematic Strategy on Urban Environment (adopted on 11.01.2006)



ELO, in collaboration with Groupement Européen des Fédérations intervenant dans l'Immobilier - GEFI participated to the consultation process of the Thematic Strategy on Urban Environment and was part of the Urban Expert Group.

The theme is important for ELO, as a sustainable development of cities and rural world is needed. Some crosscutting issues, such as urban sprawls were both dealt within the Urban Environment and the Soil Protection processes. ELO will follow the process up until its national application.

Thematic Strategy on Prevention and Recycling of Waste (adopted 21.09.2005)

ELO is indirectly involved in the process as most of the legislation influencing its members are dealt within other processes. Specific pieces of legislation already focusing on waste, namely sewage and sludge, were merged into the thematic strategy on protection of soils. Sewage and sludge are an important component of rural world activities, and ELO insists on the need for clear information on the quality of these products to be used on land, norms for use, clear product liability chain and farm lease review on this aspect. The sewage and sludge directive is to be adopted in 2006-2007.



Interest in the present process is generated by the fact that the life cycles of products are important for providers in rural areas, some rural activities could be an ally in the management of recycling wastes. This Strategy was adopted in September 2005 and is undergoing review of some definitions. ELO will follow the process up to its concrete application on national level.