



Clear recommendations for the EU Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production

The forthcoming EU Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production should include clear sustainability targets, concrete steps to internalise environmental costs into prices and a Directive on green public procurement. These were three top-priority recommendations identified during the discussions last week at the conference “Time for Action – Towards Sustainable Consumption and Production in Europe” which brought together 100 experts from governments in Europe, researchers, NGOs and business.

Timo Makela, Director from the Commission, DG Environment said: "This conference has reconfirmed the need for urgent and concrete measures to change production and consumption patterns. It was a very timely and highly useful event which rounded up the wide stakeholder consultation on this topic. We are very grateful to Slovenia having hosted this important conference".

Discussions focused on the three consumption areas which have been identified by separate studies of the European Environment Agency and the European Commission to have the highest environmental impacts over their lifecycle: housing, food and drink, and mobility.

It was recommended that at the national level, priority action should be taken to internalise environmental costs through an environmental fiscal reform, to identify “beacons” of sustainable living and to develop a long term vision of sustainable consumption and production.

Finally, participants recommended that the United Nations’ process to develop a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production - the so-called Marrakech process - should encourage national governments to integrate sustainable consumption and production objectives into ministries beyond environment. Further the Marrakech process should develop communications strategies and campaigns with national organisations to reach out to consumers for actions and involve financial institutions in its process.

Responding to the recommendations, the EEA will “implement a number of concrete steps, including identifying indicators of sustainable consumption and production, analysing the effectiveness of green public procurement in selected Member States and providing information on the impacts of consumption to citizens across Europe” said EEA Executive Director Prof. Jacqueline McGlade.

The conference which took place on 27-28 September in Ljubljana, Slovenia, was organised by the European Environment Agency, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia and the UNEP/Wuppertal Institute Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production.