Network of

European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils

Jean-Claude Juncker

Prime Minister
Ministère d'Etat
4, rue de la Congrégation
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Berlin/London/Brussels, 10 June 2005

June Summit: EU Sustainable Development Strategy

Dear Prime Minister,

We write on behalf of the Working Group on Sustainable Development of the European network of Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC).

Our Working Group wishes to urge you and your colleagues in the European Council to use the opportunity of the forthcoming Summit meeting of the Council to focus public and political attention on the European Sustainable Development Strategy.

At the present time there is widespread uncertainty among the people of Europe about the future. Our economies are not prospering as they should. Unemployment is high in many countries. Traditional social models are under threat. Our patterns of production and consumption are having damaging effects on the environment and the climate both within Europe's boundaries and beyond.

There is a dangerous polarization of political debate about the appropriate response to this situation. Some argue for exposing our economies to more rigorous competitive pressures, others argue for reinforcement of measures to protect society and the environment. Neither side of the present political debate in Europe provides a sufficient answer to respond adequately to peoples' deepest wishes and values and to shape a successful future.

A concentrated effort to strengthen and deepen the Union's sustainable development strategy could provide an important new collective ambition for the Union. There are many aspects of sustainable development that cannot be effectively advanced at the level of member states acting alone – they need to be elaborated and implemented collectively at European level. In working together on this at European level and in reaching out to all parts of society in our member states to assist in the endeavour we believe that the Union could recapture wider popular interest and support for its work and mission.

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Sustainable development has long been recognized as a central overarching goal for the Union and all its members. It draws together our central objectives in the economic, social and environmental fields and unites them in a powerful and persuasive vision of how Europe could and should evolve in the years ahead, and will take responsibility as a global actor. The Declaration on Principles of Sustainable Development that will be on the agenda of the June Council and this year's revision of the strategy provide a golden opportunity to burnish that vision, to project it and share it much more widely amongst all the citizens of Europe, and to strengthen and implement all the crucial programmes of action that need to flow from it.

The challenge of building a sustainable future for Europe is crucial for every one of us. It is a challenge that needs strong and united leadership from the Council, the Commission and all the European Institutions. We urge you to take up this challenge at your Summit meeting and to make sustainable development a central part of the new way forward for Europe.

We are sending this letter to all Heads of Government and to the President of the European Commission.

Yours sincerely,

German Council for Sustainable Development

UK Sustainable Development Commission

co-chairs, EEAC Working Group Sustainable Development

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