

Commission wants your views on how we can produce and consume more sustainably

By 2050 the global population is set to reach 9 billion people and worldwide demand for food, feed and fibre is forecast to increase by 70%. To thrive in that context, economies will need to use natural resources in a far more efficient manner. The way we consume and produce will be key to Europe's success or failure in this process. This is why the Commission intends to revise the EU's Consumption and Production policies and has launched a public consultation that will remain open until 3 April.



As indicated in the [Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe](#) adopted last September, if we want to be able to meet our needs and maintain the same level of well-being in the future, companies will have to produce more added value with fewer inputs, and consumers will have to adopt more sustainable consumption patterns for products and services. With that in mind, the European Commission is currently reviewing its Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) actions, to ensure that they are helping Europe use its resources more efficiently, and setting it on a course to long-term sustainability.

As part of a review of its SCP policy, the Commission has launched a large public consultation on its actions in four major areas. For the next nine weeks, views are being sought on different options for a more ambitious future SCP Policy. This web-based consultation is part of a broader process of reflection that will feed into policy initiatives that are scheduled for adoption before the end of 2012.

The public consultation invites all interested parties to share their views on the best ways to improve

the EU's policies on Sustainable Consumption and Production in four areas, with the aim of providing targeted feedback on:

- Policies regarding product design, recycling and waste management, etc;
- Green Public Procurement (encouraging public bodies to favour ecologically friendly solutions);
- Actions for improving the environmental performance of products (Product Environmental Footprint – PEF);
- Actions for improving the environmental performance of organisations (Environmental Footprint of Organization – OEF).

The consultation is a broad overview of EU policies, and therefore involves some 50 questions. About half of these are for the general public and the remainder target more specialised stakeholder groups such as governments, industry associations and private companies.

Background

Sustainable consumption and production has been a fundamental target for the European Union since the EU Treaty was signed in Maastricht in 1992. The core idea is to meet our own consumption needs in such a way that we do not deprive future generations' ability to meet their own consumption needs. The Treaty calls for the inclusion of sustainability considerations and targets into all European policies, so that they can contribute in an integrated way to meeting economic, environmental and social objectives.

A first structured and synergic package of actions and proposals to improve the environmental performance of products and to stimulate the demand for more sustainable goods was included in the [Action Plan on "Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy"](#) published in 2008. Many initiatives have since been carried out in this framework, but more ambitious plans need to be developed to address the negative environmental impacts of consumption and to empower consumers to move to resource-efficient consumption.

The actual policy context for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and Sustainable Industrial Policy (SIP) is the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#), which sets out to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and is now Europe's main strategy for generating growth and jobs. SCP policy also contributes to Europe 2020's Resource Efficiency Flagship Initiative by helping to translate macro-level objectives of the Resource Efficiency policy (decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation) to micro-level objectives, thereby driving individual economic actors to achieve the best environmental performance economically possible.

The consultation can be filled in at:

https://www.biooekonomie-bw.deec.europa.eu/environment/consultations_en.htm

Press release

09-Feb-2012

Source: EU Kommission (01.02.2012)