

Sustainability in the EU: Progress and problem areas



In 2008, WU's Research Institute for Managing Sustainability bid successfully on a European Eurostat contract to investigate sustainability in the EU. The Monitoring Report 2009 (Sustainable development in the European Union) was published in early 2010. The report documents progress made and points out areas where prescribed goals have not been achieved. Problem areas include renewable energy, species conservation, and aid for developing countries.

A Monitoring Report on the progress of sustainable development in Europe is published every two years by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. The Report is based on a set of sustainability indicators applicable to all European countries, and on the goals prescribed by the European sustainability strategy. The further development of European sustainability policy in all 27 member states is based on this document. The Monitoring Report 2009 (Sustainable development in the European Union, see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/sustainabledevelopment>), published in early 2010, was compiled by a team from WU's Research Institute for Managing Sustainability, in cooperation with research facilities in Germany (Ecologic), Switzerland (INFRAS), and England (ippr), and with the help of numerous European experts.

Positive developments in selected areas

Progress has been made in a number of areas, particularly in socioeconomic development and sustainable production methods. However, the European statistical data available at the time of compilation does not reflect the entire scope of the financial and economic crisis. For the most part, positive developments were also observed in the field of public health, with the exception of ozone and particulate matter levels, which continue to rise.

Energy consumption on the rise – Renewable energy use stagnating

Unsatisfactory developments were documented in the use of renewable energy sources, species conservation, and aid for developing countries. Household energy consumption continues to rise, and the link between economic growth and freight transport volume remains unbroken. Because of the relatively low percentage of renewable energy sources included in total energy consumption, Europe's dependence on energy imports is constantly increasing, and is currently at over 50% - over half of all energy used in the EU has to be imported from outside Europe. This trend increases the instability of the European economy and makes it more prone to crisis.

Contact:

André Martinuzzi
Research Institute for Managing Sustainability
Tel: 01/ 31 336 – 4698
andre.martinuzzi@wu.ac.at
<http://www.wu.ac.at/sustainability>