

The EU Green Diplomacy Network

Background and Chronology:

The Thessaloniki European Council agreed to launch an initiative aimed at promoting the integration of environment into external relations through the creation of an informal network of environment experts within foreign ministries, the so-called **Green Diplomacy Network**. This was one of the elements included in the strategy on environmental integration in external policies adopted by the [Barcelona General Affairs Council in March 2002](#).

Since the external aspects of European environmental policy are increasingly prominent in the context of international affairs, the Network has an important role in increasing the coherence, consistency and effectiveness of European actions in the field of environment. As Article 6 of the **EC Treaty** stipulates, “environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Community policies and activities”...“in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.” The launch of the ‘**Cardiff process**’ back in 1998 aimed at introducing a horizontal approach to environmental integration into all other Community policies, thus putting into practice Article 6 of the EC Treaty. The renewed **EU Sustainable Development Strategy**, adopted in June 2006, highlights among its key objectives the need for the EU to “actively promote sustainable development worldwide and ensure that the European Union’s internal and external policies are consistent with global sustainable development and its international commitments.”

Since its establishment, the Green Diplomacy Network has made significant progress. The Network held its first organisational meeting under the **Greek Presidency** in Athens on 25 June 2003, and resulted in an initial draft [Action Plan](#) and a [work programme](#).

The **Italian Presidency** held a second a meeting in Rome on 3 November 2003. This meeting allowed for a more concrete discussion on the role of the Network, building upon the conclusions from Athens, and resulted in the endorsement of ‘[Working guidelines for the Network](#)’. In line with these guidelines, the Green Diplomacy Network bases its work on agreed EU positions, and reflects the unity of action as expressed in Council working groups and Conclusions. In this respect, good communications with the relevant Council working groups (particularly the Working Party on International Environmental Issues in its different configurations) are paramount. One of its tools is the organization of “demarches”, to be carried out in troika format, aiming at exchanging information and views on a particular topic or as a preparation to a particular meeting.

The meeting in Rome allowed also to examine specific cases for action by the Network related to forthcoming meetings, such as the Climate Change COP9 (12 December, Milan). See [Conclusions by the Italian Presidency](#). The Network has been able to identify good and innovative practices and potential synergies in the area of environment and foreign policy as a result of a “Questionnaire on Integration of environment”, launched by the Italian Presidency in 2003.

At the GDN’s third meeting in Dublin a preliminary selection of Priority International Events in the Area of Environment was made. This selection provided the activity plan

for the Green Diplomacy Network for 2004. At this meeting it was agreed that, in the run up to the Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition meeting in Bonn, 3-4 June 2004, the Green Diplomacy Network would carry out its 1st formal demarche under the **Irish Presidency**. The organizers of the meeting confirmed the utility of the demarche action.

The 2nd Green Diplomacy demarche was launched in the run up to the 10th Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change, in Buenos Aires. In order to sensitize EU partner countries, the **Netherlands Presidency** - supported by the Commission - launched a Climate Change demarche (5-15.11.04) in 34 selected third countries. The demarche was a success, generating much feedback and the results were collated before the Conference. These insights from the field served as a valuable input to the EU negotiators. The procedures for carrying out GDN demarches were also further refined during the Netherlands Presidency.

Under the **Luxembourg Presidency**, three demarches were carried out. The first one was based on a brochure reflecting the EU's views for the 13th Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and enabled the EU to sense how much support it would be getting for its positions at the CSD. The second demarche was organized in the run-up to the first Conference of Parties of the Stockholm convention on POPs in Uruguay (May 2-6, 2005). The third demarche was organized to prepare the COP MOP2 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

[A report on the first two years of the Network's operation](#) was presented to the European Council in 2005.

The **UK Presidency** in the second semester of 2005 led four EU demarches. The first concerned the agenda of the Millennium Review Summit held in September 2005 in New York. The second one related to the third Preparatory Committee Meeting to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM PrepCom3) and COP2 of the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC). The third was organised ahead of COP7 of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Nairobi Kenya. The last one aimed at sensitising partner countries to the EU position and gather feedback on their views in preparation of COP11 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the historic MOP1 of its Kyoto Protocol.

Under the **Austrian Presidency**, between January and June 2006, also four EU demarches were carried out. The first lobbied on SAICM ahead of the International Conference on Chemicals Management in Dubai. The second advocated for improved international environmental governance through the reform of the United Nations Environment Programme. The third addressed the issue of translating the commitments of the parties into action concerning the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, ahead of its COP8 in Curitiba, Brazil. The fourth concerned specific issues with regard to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, including questions of synergy and enhanced cooperation with the mechanisms of other chemicals conventions and was organized ahead of its COP2.

The **Finnish Presidency** in the second half of 2006 coordinated two EU demarches. The theme of the first was climate change and it preceded COP12 of the UNFCCC and MOP2 of the Kyoto Protocol. The second was carried out ahead of COP3 of the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent (PIC). In both instances messages towards partner countries have been diversified according to their positions and the

corresponding approaches of the EU.

In the first half of 2007 **Germany** held the EU Presidency and carried out demarches in the run up to the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) 15 and on climate change, in the context of developing an international climate architecture beyond 2012. In parallel to the latter demarche public diplomacy events were organised in almost 30 non-EU countries to present the results and implications of the first part of the Fourth Assessment report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In addition, the German Presidency organised a conference on Integrating Environment, Development and Conflict Prevention, highlighting the key role that the GDN can play in linking environmental concerns with matters of foreign policy.

Under the **Portuguese Presidency** during the second semester of 2007, the themes of “Business and Biodiversity” ([the GDN presentation](#)) and “Climate Change and Development Cooperation” ([Development Days](#)) were highlighted. At the Lisbon meeting in July the GDN agreed to support and encourage cooperation in the field in third countries between environment correspondents in Commission delegations and Member State embassies. These local informal Green Diplomacy Networks will act as in-country forums to share information, experiences and approaches to ensure close EU coordination on international environment policy priorities. It was agreed to initially focus attention towards 5 key emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). The Portuguese presidency gave a strong impetus to this initiative through its embassies in Third countries. Formal demarche activity to present the EU views centred around the run up to the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), which targeted over 50 countries and provided substantial and very useful feedback.

Under the **Slovenian Presidency**, in the first half of 2008, a demarche on biodiversity was carried out prior to the Ninth Conference of the Parties (COP9) in Bonn in May on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The demarche targeted over 30 countries and provided well structured and useful input for EU negotiators prior to the COP9. At the GDN meeting in Brdo (January 2008) GDN colleagues further emphasised the importance of the supporting the development of local Green Diplomacy Networks in third countries and agreed to promote a bottom up and flexible approach. In June an overview document was presented to the GDN by the Slovenian Presidency to illustrate that EU liaison on Environmental issues has swiftly developed in a number of countries, particularly on climate change, thus demonstrating the importance of local ownership and the willingness to network among EU colleagues in the field.

The **French Presidency** held its GDN meeting on 21 July 2008 in Paris, where the growth of the local informal networks was commended as an important step to further improve EU outreach capacities in the field. The GDN underlined the importance and urgency to further promote strategically targeted and effective outreach and political reporting in the field through such local informal EU networks. Such mobilization is of particular importance in light of the 18 months leading up to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP15 in Copenhagen at the end of 2009. Two formal demarches were carried out during the French Presidency: one on chemicals in advance of the Rotterdam Convention 4th conference of the Parties in Rome (27-31 October 2008) and the 2nd ad hoc open ended working group on Mercury (6-10 October 2008); the second on climate change in advance of the UNFCCC COP14 in Poznan (1-14 December 2008).

The **Czech Presidency** GDN meeting in Prague in January 2009 further emphasized the need to ensure strong EU information sharing and coordination amongst EU Embassies and Delegations in third countries. Two formal demarches were carried out in the first half of 2009: Chemicals, ahead of the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (4 – 8 May 2009) and 2nd International Conference on Chemicals Management (11 – 15 May 2009); and secondly climate change, ahead of the UN Climate Change Talks in Bonn (29 March - 8 April 2009).

The **Swedish Presidency** GDN meeting in Stockholm focused on how the network could contribute towards supporting the international negotiations on Climate change and related external policy developments. Good discussion was also dedicated to broader sustainable development issues, tasks of the network beyond Copenhagen and strengthening of co-operation of the MFA headquarters in order to share good practices and information. A formal GDN demarche on climate change took place prior to the December COP 15 in Copenhagen.

The **Spanish Presidency** between January and July 2010, was the first following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. From an external outreach perspective, a GDN démarche on biodiversity was carried out ahead of the COP preparatory meetings (SBSTTA and WGRI) in May, taking place in Nairobi, Kenya. The new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty on the external representation of the EU were applied in the course of the démarche. The Spanish term has also launched a stock-taking exercise, a review of the integration of environment and sustainable development in foreign affairs, based on the seven-year experience of the Network.

At the Brussels meeting under the **Belgian Presidency** the outcome of the above mentioned review was presented, giving account of MFA best practices. The semester was dominated by the preparations and delivery of an EU GDN démarche in the run-up to the Cancún climate change conference (UNFCCC COP16) in late 2010

Additional information: websites by theme:

Climate change	EU line	Commission Site	UN Site
Biodiversity	EU line	Commission Site	UN Site
Desertification	EU line	Commission Site	UN Site
Cooperation with third Countries	EU line	Commission Site	UN Site
Sustainable Development	EU line	Commission Site	UN Site
Forests	EU line	Commission Site	UN Site

Water	<u>EU line</u>	<u>Commission Site</u>	UN Site
Energy	<u>EU line</u>	<u>Commission Site</u>	UN Site
Waste Management	<u>EU line</u>	<u>Commission Site</u>	UN Site
Fisheries and Marine Resources	<u>EU line</u>	<u>Commission Site</u>	UN Site