



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is a fundamental EU objective which is set out in the Treaty on European Union. Over the last years the EU showed an explicit commitment to achieve sustainable development and is successfully including it in its policies. The Union's policies on climate change and energy are a proof of the sustainable development strategy's reflection on the political program of the EU.

Sustainable development stands for a better quality of life for us and our children and grandchildren. The concept of sustainability suggests that economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection should go hand in hand and complement one another. Sustainable development is defined as a development which "meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The raging economic and financial crisis showed that sustainable development is of the utmost importance. Restoring the trust in the financial system and the economy's stability is a primary goal in order to come out of the recession and to take the sustainable development path which is stimulating employment, social inclusion, investing in knowledge and technologies for increasing economic growth, long-term prosperity and environmental protection - all of which are sustainable development objectives in the long term. The current crises give Bulgaria the opportunity to turn to an ecologically efficient economy, which is characterized by low levels of carbon emissions and effective use of resources and which is based on sustainable production in all sectors and on a more sustainable way of life. This would improve the well-being of the citizens and at the same time would decrease the consumption of both energy and natural resources and would minimize the negative impacts on health and on the environment, particularly those regarding the ecosystems and climate change.

The creation of the System of Sustainable Development Indicators of Bulgaria is a result of a joint project of Eurostat and NSI with the co-operation of Directorate "Energy strategy" of the Ministry of Economy and Energy. The Swiss Statistical Office was invited to be a consultant on the project. We would like to express our gratitude to Mr. André de Montmollin and Ms. Jana Wachtl whose experience and systematic approach were of great assistance to the Bulgarian team in the development of the indicator set.

The set consists of 10 themes and 64 indicators, which are chosen on the basis of 14 criteria related to data relevance, quality, validity, and others. The indicators affect economic, social, environmental and institutional issues related to sustainable development.

The structure of the indicators' set has two levels, 13 key indicators are defined that meet the key challenges to sustainable development both at national and European level.