

Running business in a resource constrained world

Workshop on possible solutions and cooperation between businesses and NGOs for Achieving EU targets on Resource Efficiency and Biodiversity

The EU Biodiversity Strategy foresees an increased mainstreaming of biodiversity in the business sector. This calls for innovative solutions and approaches, where it is possible to find common interests and goals for NGOs and businesses. The goal of the workshop that took place on March 28 in Brussels was to highlight these new approaches and discuss their pros and cons.

The first part focused strongly on the issue of resources and possible tools on how to reach sustainable resource management and thus support the efforts to stop the loss of biodiversity.

Klára Hajdu (CEEweb for Biodiversity) pointed out the complex relationships between resource use and biodiversity loss, as well as the possible strategies of businesses to reduce the environmental impact of resource use. She stressed the need for systemic solutions for reducing resource use based on the findings of the UNEP's International Resource Panel's Decoupling Report.

Next Stefan Hörmann (GNF) underlined the importance of the relationship between business and biodiversity. Companies can play a significant role in biodiversity protection and can develop new business opportunities around ecosystem services. The presentation highlighted two emerging trends that are likely to become increasingly important: The „no net loss” initiative and corporate ecosystem valuation.

Lastly, Chris Boyd from the European Commission's DG Environment, put the relation of resource use and biodiversity in a wider perspective and made special reference to the EU's Strategy for Biodiversity to 2020.

In the ensuing discussion possible tools to promote resource efficiency were examined. First, (integrated) reporting is seen as crucial as it forces the companies to measure their impacts while at the same time they are held accountable. This also led to the second discussed topic, which was the integration of environmental aspects into financial accounting that can also be used by the financial industry to evaluate a company's environmental performance. The energy quota scheme to limit non-renewable energy use in Europe was also presented, which could stimulate green investments and sustainable production and consumption through a revolving fund and a secondary market.

Even though many different facets could be considered to create the perfect tool a conclusion of the workshop is that one should not wait for the perfect tool and start with what is available and improve them along the way while using the instruments in practice.