Part Three

National and Regional Approaches
Global Poverty and Sustainable Development – Challenges addressed by the EU’s Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy

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I. Introduction

The EU’s explicit commitment to sustainable development is relatively young. For the first time, sustainable development was included in the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) as a general objective of the EU’s policies. The first EU Sustainable Development Strategy, which was adopted by the European Council in Göteborg in 2001 and complemented by an external dimension in 2002, had to be adapted due to new challenges that had emerged meanwhile. On 15/16 June 2006, the European Council adopted a Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy.¹

The key objectives of the Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) are environmental protection, social equity and cohesion, economic prosperity and the adequate fulfilment of the EU’s international responsibilities. Already this listing of key objectives indicates that global poverty counts among the major challenges addressed by the Renewed SDS.

The central question is if the EU’s Renewed SDS will be able to provide an adequate reply to the growing challenges of global poverty and inequality. In order to find an answer to this question, this paper will analyse the concrete objectives stated and measures foreseen. Another focus will be on the hitherto existing implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy. A consultancy report on the implementation of the SDS published in 2008 critically remarks that ‘the impression that emerges from the national reports [of the EU Member States] is that the objective of addressing global poverty and sustainable development is overstretched’.² This chapter will provide a critical evaluation and assessment of the EU’s Renewed SDS, including both the progress achieved so far and further possible improvements in order to successfully meet the challenges posed by increasing global poverty.

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