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Agriculture

[Investigation: The perfect crime? Pesticides - low risk, minimal sanctions](#)

The crime is simple: buy non-authorised chemicals from China for €14 per litre and sell them on the European black market for five times the price. Deduct costs for packaging and transport and the net profit will be close to €70 on each litre, according to Europol, the EU's crime-fighting agency.

Air Quality

[New cars and vans sold in 2018 more CO2 intensive, final data confirms](#)

Average carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from new cars registered in the European Union, the United Kingdom and Iceland increased in 2018 for the second year in a row, according to final data published by the European Environment Agency (EEA).

Biodiversity

[Protecting biodiversity could spare us future pandemics](#)

While there are still many uncertainties surrounding the origins of COVID-19, it is well established that continued damage to the environment will only increase the likelihood of future pandemics. This crisis has made it clear that our exploitation of natural resources is not sustainable. With the interconnections between our ways of producing food, health and medicines now more visible than ever, we must rethink our global consumption habits. As a first step, we should acknowledge the role that biodiversity loss plays in pandemics.

[Pollinators: importance for nature and human well-being, drivers of decline and the need for monitoring](#)

Pollinators are vital to our wellbeing and the survival of nature. By helping plants reproduce, pollinators support a steady supply of healthy and economically valuable food for humans and prop up entire ecosystems. However, we are at risk of losing these benefits, and many others, with the ongoing and dramatic decline of pollinators witnessed around the world. This brief highlights the importance of pollinators for food production and nature, covering pollination of both crops and wild plants. It also explores the drivers of pollinator decline actions to reverse it.

Circular Economy

[2020S: The Decade We Rethink Ownership?](#)

Our relationship with products and concept of 'ownership' is changing. New and not-so-new ways of consuming stuff have been given a new lease of life, with some exciting benefits for both people and planet. Will sharing, repairing, reusing and recycling go truly mainstream after the Covid-19 pandemic?

[Most EU Countries Set To Miss Deadline For Adoption Of New Waste Laws](#)

Experts call for swift action as governments approach the deadline for the implementation of the EU's new recycling and waste reduction laws.

Climate Action

[Visualising climate change effects on global cities: by 2050 Madrid's climate may be like Marrakech's](#)

Tackling climate change requires global behaviour change across all sectors of society. Many people, however, struggle to visualise how climate change will impact daily life — something that is key to motivating them to change their behaviour and demand urgent measures from governments and businesses. This new study illustrates how the climate of iconic cities will change in just 30 years by pairing them with other well-known cities that currently have their future climate.

Covid-19

[The role of greater cohesion funding for solidarity and sustainability post-COVID-19](#)

The revised multiannual financial framework (MFF) and the recovery package announced by the European Commission include €55 billion of new funding for the cohesion policy. This proposed increase, which

amounts to about 13% extra compared to the planned total for the 2021-27 MFF, is an important signal when the entire EU project is at risk due to clashing visions of what European solidarity means in the post-COVID-19 context.

[Europe's moment: Repair and prepare for the next generation](#)
The European Commission has put forward its proposal for a major recovery plan. To ensure the recovery is sustainable, even, inclusive and fair for all Member States, the European Commission is proposing to create [a new recovery instrument, Next Generation EU,](#) embedded within a powerful, modern and revamped long-term EU budget. The Commission has also unveiled its [adjusted Work Programme for 2020,](#) which will prioritise the actions needed to propel Europe's recovery and resilience.

Freshwater
[Energy policy must consider water footprint of energy sector, suggests EU study](#)
Energy security in the EU is a priority of the European Commission. However, at present, energy-related policies do not account for the use of water as a resource - and water is becoming increasingly scarce as a result of human activity. This study provides an assessment of the water footprint of the energy sector in the EU and could be valuable in informing future policy to protect against water scarcity, stress and insecurity.

Invasive Species
[Chlorination of ballast water may be insufficient to minimise spread of alien species](#)
Ballast water in ships is a principal way in which alien species are introduced into new aquatic habitats. Commercial trading ships are, therefore, required to treat their ballast water to meet discharge standards and regulation. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has approved a range of methods for ballast water treatment, such as filtration, ultraviolet radiation and chlorination. A recent study used DNA metabarcoding-based analyses to explore the efficacy of the most widely adopted approach — chlorination — finding that it affects zooplankton organisms unequally and may potentially even increase the chances of introduced populations becoming established in new habitats.

Marine
[IUCN Acting Director General's Statement for World Oceans Day](#)
Imagine the deep blue ocean, an immense ally that provides food and oxygen, regulates our climate, links distant shores, and serves humanity as a source of social and economic development. That ocean is in danger, and recent scientific research gives even greater cause for concern about its health. Last year alone, IUCN's Ocean Deoxygenation report, the IPCC Special Report on Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, and the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services helped us understand that our activities are depleting the ocean's oxygen levels, making the seas warmer and more acidic, and critically threatening biodiversity.

[Quality of Europe's bathing waters remains high, latest annual assessment finds](#)
The quality of Europe's bathing water remains high, according to this year's European bathing water quality assessment. Just under 85% of swimming sites across Europe monitored in 2019 met the European Union's highest and most stringent 'excellent' quality standards.

[2020 Blue Economy Report: Blue sectors contribute to the recovery and pave way for EU Green Deal](#)
The Commission has published "The EU Blue Economy Report 2020", providing an overview of the performance of the EU economic sectors related to oceans and the coastal environment. With a turnover of €750 billion in 2018 and 5 million people working in the blue economy sector representing a significant increase of 11.6% compared to the year before. Although sectors such as coastal and marine tourism, as well as fisheries and aquaculture are severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic, the blue economy as a whole presents a huge potential in terms of its contribution to a green recovery.

Planning
[Promoting health with people-centred city design: the 'Barcelona Superblock' model](#)
Car-centred urban planning has resulted in high levels of pollution, sedentary lifestyles and in-creased vulnerability to the effects of climate change. The superblock model is an urban and transport planning

strategy that reclaims public space for people, reduces motorised transport, promotes active lifestyles, provides urban greening and mitigates the effects of climate change. A study now estimates the health impacts of applying this model across Barcelona.

Sustainable Development
European Semester Spring Package: Towards green shoots of sustainability?
Does the European Semester Spring Package of recommendations manage to move beyond GDP and push the sustainability agenda forward? Last week, China's National People Congress abandoned setting a gross domestic product target for the first time in its history.