

Environmental News, Research & Analysis (ENRA)

June 2021

Agriculture/ Land Use

[EC releases the study giving basis to the 'carbon farming initiative in motion'](#)

Building on this study and on the input from several EU-funded projects and events, the Commission plans to launch the carbon farming initiative by the end of 2021. The study reviewed existing schemes that reward climate-related benefits in five promising areas: peatland restoration and rewetting; agroforestry; maintaining and enhancing soil organic carbon (SOC) on mineral soils; managing SOC on grasslands; and livestock farm carbon audit.

[Key recommendations for supporting pollinator-friendly farming in the EU](#)

Transitioning to pollinator-friendly farming practices is key to the recovery of pollinators. IEEP has been contributing to EU action for pollinators through a project supporting the implementation of the EU Pollinators Initiative. This included work identifying key measures and recommendations to improve farmland pollinator conservation.

Biodiversity

[Biodiversity: MEPs demand binding targets to protect wildlife and humans](#)

An EU Biodiversity Law is needed to set the biodiversity governance framework until 2050, the European Parliament Environment Committee has agreed.

[Commission progress report on EU action to protect pollinators highlights urgency of action](#)

The Commission has published a [report on the implementation of the first-ever EU Pollinators Initiative](#), which the Commission adopted in 2018 to address the decline of wild pollinating insects. Pollinating insects are crucial for the functioning of ecosystems, our food security, for medicines and our wellbeing.

[Policy is Urgently Needed for "Assisted Colonization" to help Wildlife Cope with Climate Change](#)

A team of scientists is calling for the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), which holds its 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP 15) in October in China, to launch a process to establish global standards for "assisted colonization," the practice of physically moving wildlife into new areas to reduce extinction risk from climate change.

[Nature connections and conservation through the #NatureForAll inspired BackyardBio campaign](#)

Inspired by #NatureForAll, this campaign spearheaded by Canadian NGO Exploring By The Seat of Your Pants aims to provide an easy, fun and engaging experience that will inspire people around the world to learn more, get excited about the natural world and want to take action to make a positive difference for conservation.

Climate Action

[Briefing - Establishing the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change](#)

This briefing provides an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's impact assessment (IA) accompanying the above-mentioned communication on the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change (new adaptation strategy), which aims to realise the 2050 vision of a climate-resilient EU. The IA was published on 24 February 2021 and was subsequently referred to the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

[Are long-term climate emissions scenarios plausible today? Scientists review using historical emissions data](#)

Long-term emissions scenarios are a vital tool in evaluating future climate-change and response strategies. This study seeks to assess whether Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) emission projections, based on these scenarios, are relevant today — by examining historical trends and projections for key variables during 1990–2017.

[EIB Working Paper - Assessing climate change risks at the country level](#)

The European Investment Bank Climate Change Risk Country Scoring Model provides a way to comprehensively assess the climate change risks faced by more than 180 countries. The two sets of scores for physical and transition risks aggregate exposures to various risk factors, taking into account the adaptation and mitigation capacity of each country.

Circular Economy

[How long do products last? A new model for long-lived product lifetimes, applied to construction](#)

Both in Europe and worldwide, actions are in place to increase the rates of product use and recycling and transition to a more circular economy. However, without accurate data on product lifetimes, it is difficult to understand whether, when and which interventions would be appropriate and effective. This study applies 'material flow analysis' to UK construction industry data to produce a novel method of identification for product lifetimes.

[Key to a circular future?](#)

Waste water operators already render the valuable resources found in sludge to be reusable but we need a regulatory framework to support sustainable and resilient sludge management. The current regulatory framework for sludge is set across a number of different instruments at EU level, which tend to focus on the waste dimension rather than on the reuse of the valuable resources.

Covid-19/ Build Back Better

[A Green Recovery Starts In Cities](#)

EU Member States recently published their National Recovery and Resilience Plans. These plans will form the basis of the lion's share of EU spending to implement the European Green Deal, but cities have barely been consulted in drafting these plans

Energy

[In focus: Hydrogen – driving the green revolution](#)

With more and more countries pledging climate neutrality, the world needs to find solutions to decarbonise every last part of our economy. Hydrogen is the word on everyone's lips, and there are good reasons behind the hype. Because of its multifaceted and versatile nature, it can play a key role in addressing the challenges ahead.

[Morning After: Coal's Days Are Over, Taxpayers Face Clean-Up Bills](#)

Coal is inevitably on its way out of the EU energy mix, but the public is facing a double legacy of environmental damage and footing the bill for the remediation costs, as current EU liability rules for companies are not doing their job. Europe passed a milestone this spring when 50% of the coal power capacity either has closed or announced closure dates before 2030. Coal is not only incompatible with EU climate goals, but also increasingly unprofitable. It could not be clearer: we are in the end game for coal in Europe, and a phase-out is as inevitable as it is necessary.

Freshwater

[Wasted Ink On Waste Water?](#)

Weak rules and poor implementation: this is why the EU is failing to curb pollution from the chemical industry, shows [a new report](#) by the European Environmental Bureau.

Governance

[An emerging conservation approach: Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures](#)

The OECM framework provides ample opportunity to promote biodiversity conservation in the EU, can complement existing protected areas across landscapes and seascapes and contribute to achieving ambitious conservation targets. Nevertheless, the concept is still new, especially in the EU, and their role needs to be carefully evaluated.

[New IUCN Open Project Portal to increase transparency and accountability](#)

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) now has an Open Project Portal to allow open, comprehensive public access to data on IUCN's work in over 125 countries and territories. This new public portal is a part of IUCN's commitment to increase the transparency of its project portfolio for the Union, project donors and stakeholders and the public.

Green New Deal

[European Green Deal: Commission aims for zero pollution in air, water and soil](#)

The European Commission has adopted the [EU Action Plan: "Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil"](#) – a key deliverable of the [European Green Deal](#) and the main topic of this year's [EU Green Week](#).

Marine

[First guidelines to design and deploy Blue Carbon projects in Europe and the Mediterranean](#)

IUCN launches a manual to support financing of restoration and conservation efforts on a European and Mediterranean scale. Conservation of blue carbon ecosystems such as wetlands and seagrasses is one of the most effective management measures for climate change mitigation. The [Manual for the Creation of Blue Carbon Projects in Europe and the Mediterranean](#) launched by IUCN intends to respond to the growing interest in managing, protecting, and restoring these blue carbon habitats to their full potential as a part of local and global climate change mitigation policies.

[Filling the Gaps in the Global Governance of Marine Plastic Pollution](#)

Effective responses to marine plastic pollution will require unwavering commitments by all stakeholders to change their behavior. What is the best way forward?

[EU unveils roadmap to green maritime activities](#)

The European Commission unveiled new rules to green economic activities at sea, which employ more than four million people in the bloc. The European Commission have presented a roadmap to green economic activities at sea, including new targets to restore damaged marine ecosystems.

Plastics

[Microplastic pollution from tyre-wear: a review of source, emissions and risk](#)

Tyre-wear particles, which may account for a large proportion of microplastic pollution, are the focus of a recent review of studies on the environmental concentrations and impacts of non-exhaust vehicle emissions. The review finds no data on the potential risk from ingestion via the food chain, and little information from either long-term monitoring, or on the particles' ecotoxicological effects.

[Study highlights best EU initiatives for achieving material circularity for three types of plastic](#)

Global annual production of plastic, primarily from fossil fuels, exceeds 300 megatonnes (Mt) a year. A study compares European initiatives to improve recycling of three widely used plastics – polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) - to achieve policy targets for reducing virgin plastic production. The material flow of these plastics in Europe - lifetimes, demand growth rates and quality reductions of recycled plastic - are considered over a 50-year timeframe.

Research & Innovation

[Evaluating the impact of Nature-based Solutions: a handbook for practitioners](#)

A new handbook aims to provide practitioners with a comprehensive Nature-based Solutions (NBS) impact assessment framework, and a robust set of indicators and methodologies to assess impacts of NBS across 12 societal challenges: Climate Resilience; Water Management; Natural and Climate Hazards; Green Space Management; Biodiversity; Air Quality; Place Regeneration; Knowledge and Social Capacity Building for Sustainable Urban Transformation; Participatory Planning and Governance; Social Justice and Social Cohesion; Health and Well-being; New Economic Opportunities and Green Jobs.

[New handbook: nature-based solutions for water security](#)

The handbook provides guidance on developing an investable business case for nature-based solution projects for water security, climate mitigation and adaptation and other key societal challenges: it explains how to choose a mode of governance for the project, as well as a funding, financing and procurement strategy. In the Horizon 2020 [NAIAD project](#), 23 partners from across Europe worked together on the protective value of nature and its ability to help society reduce human and economic risks associated with floods and drought.

Sustainable Development

[EU's New Industrial Strategy Fails To Square The Circle Of Sustainability](#)

Despite fine words about the importance of renewable energy and the circular economy, the European Commission's revised Industrial Strategy fails to provide a viable blueprint for a truly green industrial transition based on circularity and binding targets, says the EEB.

[Building on nature: Area-based conservation as a key tool for delivering SDGs](#)

Protected and conserved areas benefit sustainable development and can be effective tools to deliver SDGs around the world. This pioneering, action-oriented guidance demonstrates how the designation and effective management of protected and conserved areas can benefit sustainable development, playing a key role in delivering Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supporting the 2030 Agenda globally.