

EU MATTERS

NIEL's Monthly European Environmental News



Agriculture

[Pesticide cocktails in European Food](#)

Over a quarter of the food consumed in Europe contains residues of two or more pesticides, according to the annual report published by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). For certain foods the situation is much worse: more than 60% of the popular summer fruits tested (currants, sweet cherries, strawberries and bananas) come with pesticide “cocktails”.

[The environment in the new CAP](#)

Greens have strongly criticised the European Commission for what they say is a lack of concern for the environment in its proposals for the post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy. The Commission’s proposals on climate change are too weak, environmentalists say, arguing that stronger decision-making powers for EU member states risk sinking environmental objectives.

Air Quality

[Members make mixed progress in reducing emissions under UN convention, latest air pollution data shows](#)

EU Member States have made only mixed progress in reducing emissions of the most harmful air pollutants, according to updated data published by the European Environment Agency. The data is from the annual EU emission inventory report sent to the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP).

[Air quality co-benefits for health and agriculture outweigh costs of meeting Paris Agreement pledges](#)

Ahead of the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change, various climate and energy policy actions were proposed to target pledged 'nationally determined contributions' (NDCs). Now, researchers have quantified the global impact of implementing these actions on air quality, and determined that they have the potential to substantially reduce air pollution worldwide, with significant co-benefits for human health and agriculture — including the prevention of up to 99 000 premature deaths annually by 2030. These co-benefits could offset the global costs of climate policy; this study thus calls for an integrated policy perspective that aims to maximise the benefits of NDCs for climate and health.

Biodiversity

[Wild pollinators in decline, finds 33-year Great Britain study of bees and hoverflies](#)

To estimate the losses of wild pollinators across Great Britain, a study mapped records of 353 wild bee and hoverfly species, collected across the country from 1980 to 2013. It found that a third of species decreased, while a tenth increased. On average, the geographic range of bee and hoverfly species declined by a quarter, which equates to a net loss of 11 species from each 1km grid square (with uncommon species more harshly affected), highlighting a significant risk to biodiversity, pollinators, and their ecosystems.

[Turning concrete jungles into national parks](#)

London is the first urban area in the world to become a ‘national park city’. When people hear the word national park, they usually think of forests, mountains and even savannahs. They do not usually picture cities. Yet, earlier this week, London became the world’s first-ever ‘[national park city](#)’ when it signed up to the [International Charter for National Park Cities](#).



Brexit: Updates on NIEL's EU Policy work after the UK Referendum decision can be found [here](#).

[Earthworms are essential for soil quality, reducing crop pathogens and ensuring yield](#)

Soil biodiversity, soil quality, and soil health are integral to protecting the natural environment. Soils are crucial to food production and human well-being, as highlighted by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The abundance of soil biota is of great importance for the provision of associated ecosystem services and fundamental driver of self-regulation in soil. This study explores how the presence, or absence, of earthworms affects aspects of crop health and productivity, focusing on their shielding of winter wheat from the toxic plant fungi *Fusarium*.

Circular Economy

[One year to go: Are EU countries ready to turn waste into opportunity?](#)

From plastic pollution to food waste, we are about to find out whether EU governments are serious about recycling and reducing waste. Within a year from now, by July 2020, all 28 member states will have to incorporate into national legislation the most ambitious set of measures ever agreed by the European Union to boost recycling and cut waste.

Climate Action

[ESDE: 2019 review highlights that tackling climate change can be a driver for growth and jobs](#)

In light of global long-term trends such as ageing, globalisation, technological transformation and climate change, the 2019 Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) is dedicated to the theme of sustainability. The report shows that tackling climate change and preserving growth go hand in hand.

[Reducing aviation's impact on climate change in Europe](#)

Aviation's impact on climate has come under increased scrutiny lately. France has just announced a new aviation tax, Germany is considering increasing its own, and the new European Commission President-elect has proposed to reduce the free allowances allocated to airlines. But how big is the problem, and what is being done about it at the EU level?

[Climate change... what if the solution started with land management?](#)

Putting land use at the centre of climate change discussion.

Environmental Governance

[EU can better protect environment by strengthening corporate responsibility](#)

The EU can help tackle deforestation, environmental harm and human rights abuses by introducing mandatory due diligence – rules which require companies to identify and prevent the negative impact of their operations and supply chains. [ClientEarth](#) legal experts have teamed up with Global Witness to produce a [briefing](#) for EU policy-makers outlining how greater scrutiny of business practices, imports, production and investments will greatly improve protections for people and the planet.

Plastics

[Microplastics: new methods needed to filter tiny particles from drinking water](#)

The presence of plastics in aquatic environments is a growing concern across the EU. This study explored the amount of microplastic particles present in raw and treated water at three water-treatment plants in the Czech Republic. While treated water contained fewer particles than raw fresh water, the amount found in treated water was not negligible. Ways to filter microplastics from potable water must be identified and their risk to humans, sources and routes into drinking water determined, say the researchers.

[What are European countries doing to tackle plastic waste?](#)

Despite some promising efforts to address the growing problem of plastic waste like banning plastic shopping bags or straws, specific prevention targets for different plastic waste are still not widespread in Europe, according to a European Environment Agency (EEA) assessment. Only nine countries have explicit targets in place for plastic waste prevention.



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Sustainable Development

[Thirty actions for a sustainable Europe 2030](#)

The newly elected European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen has pledged a Green Deal for Europe in her first 100 days in office. Last year, IEEP asked sustainability experts from across the continent for policy recommendations. Here is what a Green Deal that's aligned with SDGs should look like.

[European Union presents its progress towards sustainable development](#)

At the United Nations High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development in New York, the EU reaffirmed its strong commitment to deliver on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a shared global roadmap for a peaceful and prosperous world, with human well-being on a healthy planet at its core. The EU assessed the progress made in implementing the Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within Europe and through the EU's international cooperation.

[Balancing research, policy and practice could help agriculture meet Sustainable Development Goals](#)

A study into how agriculture can help humanity meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals finds that research in Europe on agricultural land systems largely omits key priorities from policy and practice. The researchers identify 32 variables that researchers, policymakers and practitioners collectively prioritise when it comes to European agricultural systems, and suggest that future research includes these in order to more comprehensively analyse trade-offs and identify opportunities for sustainable progress

Transport

[Five transport policies that could build thriving cities](#)

Accessibility within cities has not become better despite urban planners' best efforts. Creative solutions are needed to create better interconnected and concentrated cities.



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