EU MATTERS
NIEL's Monthly European Environmental News

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Agriculture

[Not fit for purpose – NGOs present Fitness Check of the Common Agricultural Policy](#)

A new study shows that the current CAP, accounting for almost 40% of the EU budget, is not fit for purpose. The independent study, for which the authors assessed 450 peer reviewed scientific papers, titled *Is the CAP fit for purpose*? was commissioned by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and BirdLife with the support of research institutes and political groups and carried out by a team of experts in agro-economy, ecology and sociology following the Commission's own 'better regulation' methodology.

Air Quality

[Commission plans air infringements package adoption](#)

The European Commission is expected to take action against member states that breach EU air quality laws when it adopts its monthly infringement package.

Biodiversity

[Save our bees – European Commission launches EU Pollinators initiative](#)

WWF welcomes the decision of the European Commission to launch an initiative to tackle the rapid decline of pollinators in Europe. Pollinators such as bees, bumblebees, butterflies and other insects play a critical role in healthy ecosystems, and they are essential for our food production..

Circular Economy

[How can Europe export its circular economy model?](#)

It is clear that the 2030 Agenda will not be achieved without a more circular economy. If all citizens of the world were to have the same consumption patterns as European citizens by 2050, the resources of two planets would be needed. Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns - through a circular economy - will have positive knock-on effects for a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Climate Change

[IEEP & Energy Cities to bridge science and citizens gap on climate change through culture](#)

The objectives of the Iceberg project are to raise awareness about local solutions to climate change, give greater exposure to cities committed to fighting climate change and raise funds for climate change research. This gigantic sculpture, made of recycled materials, will travel from city to city…

[Commission welcomes agreement on key legislation to tackle climate change](#)

The European Parliament and Council have reached a provisional agreement on a key legislative proposal for implementing the EU's 2030 climate objectives – on accounting of emissions from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF). They form part of the EU's policy to drive Europe's transition to a modern and clean economy.

Energy

[EU agrees clean energy position](#)

The European Council has agreed its negotiating position on a regulation establishing the framework for an internal electricity market across the EU. This regulation is one of the legislative proposals of the clean energy package and is the cornerstone of the redesign of the electricity market.

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

Environmental Justice
[EP calls on the Commission to propose legislation on Access to Justice in Member States and the EU](#)
On 15 November, the European Parliament adopted Resolution 2017/2819 calling on the Commission to ensure better implementation of EU nature laws by proposing legislation on access to justice in Member States and the EU.

[Environment compliance assurance and combatting environmental crime](#)
How does the law protect the environment? The responsibility for the legal protection of the environment rests largely with public authorities such as the police, local authorities or specialised regulatory agencies. However, more recently, attention has been focused on the enforcement of environmental law — how it should most effectively be implemented, how best to ensure compliance, and how best to deal with breaches of environmental law where they occur. This Thematic Issue presents recent research into the value of emerging networks of enforcement bodies, the need to exploit new technologies and strategies, the use of appropriate sanctions and the added value of a compliance assurance conceptual framework.

Freshwater
[Restoring floodplains and wetlands offer value-for-money solution to river flooding](#)
Investing in 'green infrastructure' like restoring floodplains or wetlands to bolster flood prevention not only generates more environmental and socio-economic benefits, especially in the long term, but also lowers the amount of financial investment needed to defend against damaging floods. This is the conclusion of a new European Environment Agency (EEA) report which assesses the green options available in building climate resilience in wake of the increased risk posed by river flooding.

Marine
[Warming in the Channel leads to a decline in cold-water fish](#)
Results from a long-term study of fish communities in the Bay of Somme in the English Channel show that numbers of cold-water fish, such as dab and plaice, have been dropping since 1998, as sea temperatures have risen. The researchers say this is evidence of 'tropicalisation' in an English-Channel ecosystem. The findings may have implications for conservation policies in the Bay, which is a Marine Protected Area designated under the Natura 2000 programme, as well as other marine sites affected by warming.

[EU shows lack of overfishing ambition](#)
Despite a legal commitment to end overfishing in European waters by 2015, EU fisheries ministers agreed to forgo legal, scientific and moral obligations, and continue legalised overfishing in the North Sea and Atlantic, according to campaign group Our Fish.

Natural Capital
[Taking stock: progress in natural capital accounting](#)
The growing human population and a shift to more resource-intensive habits and behaviours are increasing the demands on global ecosystems. Natural capital is a way to describe Earth's natural assets, including soil, air, water and living things, existing as complex ecosystems, which provide a range of services to humans. Depleting and degrading these reserves may irreversibly reduce the availability of benefits to future generations. This In-Depth Report presents an overview of ideas, debates and progress so far in natural capital accounting, in particular in accounting for ecosystems and their services.

Planning
[Insights for urban planning — constructed wetlands sited near industry exposed to high levels of pollution](#)
Constructed wetlands serve as a cost-effective and multi-purpose option for storm-water treatment in urban landscapes, offering flood protection as well as wildlife habitat. However, a new study shows that when nearby land use includes industry, wetlands can accumulate high levels of pollution and potentially become toxic to wildlife. This new piece of research offers important insights for the planning and management of wetlands.

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