

EU MATTERS

NIEL's Monthly European Environmental News



Agriculture

[CAP Greening Evaluation Published](#)

A new evaluation of the CAP's Pillar 1 greening measures, found that overall the greening measures have led to only small changes in management practices. Environmental and climate impacts have been limited and locally specific. These measures have had a negligible effect on production or economic viability of farms and the additional administrative costs associated with them have been relatively low.

[Antibiotic resistance genes traced from manure to soil and water on Finnish farms](#)

A study has investigated the movement of antibiotic resistance genes between farm animals, soil and water. Results show that many of these genes are spread from animals to the soil through manure application; however, these genes do not appear to persist in soil. The study suggests that practices that minimise the use of antibiotics, may lead to lower levels of clinically relevant resistance genes in agricultural soils.

Air Quality

[Cleaner air benefits human health and climate change](#)

The EEA highlights the recent launch of the EEA's Air Quality Index developments, November's Clean Air Forum and local efforts necessary to complement international directives.

Biodiversity

[Half Europe's land area within 1.5 km's of transport infrastructure, with large-scale impact on wildlife](#)

Transport infrastructure is so widespread in Europe that half of the land area is within 1.5 kilometres (km) of paved roads and railway lines. Researchers found that transport infrastructure has an impact on the abundance of birds in almost half of the country and is affecting the abundance of mammals across almost all of the land area.

[Species diversity throughout the food chain maintains multiple ecosystem services more effectively](#)

Higher species diversity across trophic levels particularly for plants, insects and soil microbial decomposers is important for the provision of multiple ecosystem services related to food production, recreational benefits, or climate regulation. Species diversity across different trophic groups was found to be as important in controlling ecosystem functioning as management intensity of grasslands and environmental factors.

Climate Change

[Better predictions of climate change impact on wildlife thanks to genetically informed modelling](#)

The effects of climate change on the distribution of species can be predicted more accurately by considering the genetic differences between different groups of the same species, a new study suggests. The researchers found that a computer model which incorporated genetic information on different groups of a US tree species was up to 12 times more accurate in predicting tree locations than a non-genetically informed model.

[Processing London's local food waste in an anaerobic digester avoids 3.9 tonnes of GHG emissions](#)

A study found that a novel, micro-scale anaerobic digester, located in London and fed mainly with local food waste, avoided 3.9 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, while providing biogas for cooking, heat and power. Anaerobic digestion on this scale could play a part in reducing the amount of food waste that goes to landfill and contribute to the circular economy.

[Climate change and transport: effects of sea-level rise on an English railway line](#)

Climate change will have major consequences for transport networks, especially those located on coastlines. This study assessed the impact of projected sea-level rise on a vulnerable stretch of railway line on the coast



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

of South West England. The authors say their semi-empirical modelling method could provide guidance to policymakers worldwide.

Energy

[EU invests €873 million in clean energy infrastructure](#)

Member States agreed on the Commission's proposal to invest €873 million in key European energy infrastructure projects. Europe's transition to a clean and modern economy is the goal of the Energy Union and is becoming a reality. Properly interconnected electricity lines and gas pipelines form the backbone of an integrated European energy market anchored on the principle of solidarity.

[Environmental impact assessment: Commission takes Ireland back to the Court and proposes fines](#)

The Commission is taking Ireland back to the Court of Justice for its failure to comply with a previous Court judgement by not properly carrying out an EIA for the Derrybrien wind farm in County Galway.

[Clean coal' myth risks sabotaging EU path towards 100% renewables](#)

The EU's move away from polluting coal power and towards renewable energy could be at risk due to a focus on unworkable and unproven "clean coal" technologies, NGOs are warning.

Freshwater

[Banned pesticides continue to affect toxicity in streams](#)

Many toxic pesticides banned by the EU can remain in the environment for decades. Aquatic invertebrates are particularly vulnerable to pesticides, which can alter their feeding behaviour, growth and mobility. New research has found that persistent pesticides can increase toxicity in streams by up to 10 000 times compared to the residues of currently used pesticides.

Governance

[Brexit: Single Market, Customs Union, and the environment](#)

A paper has been prepared as a contribution to the debate among environmental stakeholders in the UK on the terms of the UK's departure from, and future relationship with, the EU. It discusses the meaning of the terms 'single market' and how it differs from the 'customs union'. The paper divides EU environmental legislation into five broad headings to clarify their relevance to the single market. It points up problems ahead, and ends with a summary and conclusions.

Invasive Species

[Invasive alien species in Europe: new framework shows scale and impact is increasing](#)

Invasive alien species pose a threat to biodiversity, human health and the economy. This study describes six alien species indicators for Europe, showing that the scale and impact of biological invasions are increasing across all indicators. The researchers say their framework could serve as a basis for monitoring the efficacy of recent EU legislation.

Planning

[Sustainable urban drainage systems: green roofs and permeable paving compared](#)

Green infrastructure - Using a hydraulic model technique, researchers found that, in some urban cases, green roofs were more effective than permeable paving.

Sustainable Development

[Commission reports on progress under global commitments for sustainable urban development](#)

15 months ago the EU and its partners put forward three commitments which contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement as part of the New Urban Agenda. Each of these commitments has a specific scope, expected achievements and deliverables. The Commission has reported on what has been achieved under these three commitments.



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