

EU MATTERS

NIEL's Monthly European Environmental News



Agriculture

[Ammonia emissions from agriculture continue to pose problems for Europe](#)

While emissions of most air pollutants remain on a downward trend across the European Union, emissions of ammonia from the agricultural sector continue to rise, posing a challenge for EU Member States in meeting EU air pollution limits, according to updated data released by the European Environment Agency.

[Avoiding ecosystem collapse will require a different Common Agricultural Policy](#)

Report on biodiversity sheds a light on where the future negotiation should go. In Paris a few weeks ago, at the height of the EU election campaign, a report on biodiversity and aimed at global decision makers was released, and made quite a commotion. What grasped the public attention was a frightening figure stated in the report: 1 million species will become extinct in the coming years - meaning a collapse of our ecosystems and dire consequences for human beings throughout in the world, particularly impacting their capacity to produce food.

[Extreme climate events impact domestic and international agricultural prices](#)

A recent JRC study investigated the effects of extreme climatic events on agricultural commodity markets. Heatwaves and droughts can have an impact on both regional and international agricultural markets. It shows that if historical events, such as the 2003 European heatwave, the 1988 and 2010 droughts in the US and Russia occurred in the near future, the economic impact would be visible not only on regional crop yields and prices but also on international markets.

Air Quality

[Landmark ruling confirms Brussels' residents right to challenge illegal air pollution](#)

Brussels' citizens have the right to take the city's regional government to court for failing to tackle illegal air pollution - that's the landmark ruling from the EU's top court. The judgement – which sets a precedent for people all across the EU – means citizens can call out authorities' failings when it comes to properly monitoring air pollution, such as not monitoring exposure at the most polluted spots and using a city-wide average instead.

Circular Economy

[5 Recyclable household items that need to be recycled more](#)

As the world continues to confront a variety of complex environmental problems, recycling is one of the tools that we humans can use to reduce our overall impact on the ecosystem. Some items contain harmful, non-biodegradable materials that need to be properly processed and disposed of – such as certain electronic components – while others are simply a source of massive amounts of waste, such as plastic.

[Recovering critical and other raw materials from landfills and mining waste](#)

There's untapped potential to extract strategic raw materials from mining waste and landfills in Europe, according to a new report from the JRC. Extracting raw materials from waste streams can enhance the sustainability of mining activities in the EU. To enhance the development of these practices, the report presents information on the policy context, and the latest knowledge and technologies in use – identifying good practices and challenges to be overcome.



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

Climate Action

[Disappointment reigns after EU summit fails to deliver on carbon neutrality goal](#)

Experts have expressed disappointment with the outcome of a summit of EU leaders last week which failed to reach agreement on a “carbon-neutral” energy mix by 2050. Central and Eastern European countries blocked a planned EU pledge to cut carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 at the summit in Brussels. Four Member States refused to support summit conclusions that would have sent a signal of intent from the EU to meet the Paris climate agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. However, the failure to agree does not prevent individual EU countries from setting their own targets.

[European Mayors set the tone in a time of climate action](#)

A series of events critical to the future of the European Union took place this May, with important political happenings, such as the EU Leaders Summit and the EU elections, coinciding with intensified citizen action on climate change. European Mayors have led and set the tone in this time, releasing an Open Letter demanding specific EU climate action.

[Average CO2 emissions from new cars and new vans increased in 2018](#)

According to provisional data published by the European Environment Agency (EEA), the average carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from new passenger cars registered in the European Union (EU) in 2018 increased for the second consecutive year, reaching 120.4 grammes of CO2 per kilometre. For the first time, the average CO2 emissions from new vans also increased. Manufacturers will have to reduce emissions of their fleet significantly to meet the upcoming 2020 and 2021 targets.

Energy

[Time to eradicate energy poverty in Europe](#)

Local governments call on the European Commission to propose specific objectives for reducing energy poverty by 2030 and eradicating it by 2050. Energy poverty is a major societal challenge with direct impact on health that affects around 54 million Europeans (EC). High-energy prices, low incomes and badly insulated, damp and unhealthy homes are leading to higher energy poverty rates. Electricity prices have gone up significantly in most countries in the past decade, which combined with the recent economic and financial crisis and the poor energy performance of Europe's building stock, has led to increased concerns over energy poverty in Europe.

Environmental Governance

[The European election aftermath: what next for environmental policies?](#)

Following the European elections, IEEP take a look at the results and at the 'green wave' that swept across some of the Member States. This article gives insights on what the election results might imply for environmental policies at the European level. The 2019 elections are likely to be remembered as a turning point in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation. The ever-increasing public concern regarding these issues had an unprecedented impact on the electoral choice of many European citizens. The environmental stance of parties became a make-or-break issue for many voters..

Environmental Justice

[Challenging non-disclosure of environmental information – join the webinar!](#)

The webinar “Challenging non-disclosure of environmental information” will be held on September 26 2019 from 12.30 to 1:30 pm GMT+1. It is intended for public interest lawyers, judges, public authorities and NGOs and organised by ClientEarth.

Litter

[A 'LitterForce' to clean up neighbourhoods](#)

Veterans and residents recently came together to celebrate the launch of LitterForce - a partnership between Keep Britain Tidy and Walking With The Wounded. Using skills developed in the military, LitterForce



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will work with businesses, councils and communities to organise litter picks, creating a better environment for everyone.

Marine

[Over 85% of European bathing sites rated as excellent for water quality](#)

Just over 85% of bathing water sites across Europe monitored last year met the EU's highest 'excellent' and most stringent quality standards for water cleanliness, according to the latest annual European bathing water quality report. Some 95.4% of the 21 831 bathing water sites monitored in the 28 EU Member States met the minimum quality requirements under EU rules, according to this year's report.

[IEEP held a session on marine protected areas at the 2019 Natural Capital Initiative Summit](#)

There is still little empirical evidence on the socio-economic impacts of European Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) on local communities, especially on positive impacts. This is one of the main conclusions of a recent project exploring the available evidence on socio-economic benefits provided by European MPAs. Collecting information on socio-economic benefits is important as it can help create a more balanced view of the impact of MPAs on local communities and help attract authorities' attention to the need for effective site management. Showing that MPAs can benefit local communities - and under what conditions this can be achieved - might also contribute to public acceptance and buy-in.

Plastics

[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.

Sustainable Development

[Global SDG assessment shows the EU needs to step up its efforts](#)

UN SDSN and Bertelsmann Stiftung have just published their annual Sustainable Development Report. The latest edition includes recommendations for SDG implementation. According to the results, the EU and its Member States need to significantly step up their efforts to achieve the goals by 2030.



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