

## EU MATTERS

### NIEL's Monthly European Environmental News



#### Agriculture

##### [120 Civil society groups call for reform of European agricultural policies \(EEB\)](#)

Over 150 European civil society organisations representing environmental and social justice networks, organic farmers, pastoralists, sustainable forestry groups, health groups, animal welfare organisations, consumer rights bodies, development, fair-trade, cultural heritage and rural development organisations, consumer co-operatives, sustainable tourism and crafts associations from 25 EU countries have called on EU leaders to carry out a radical reform of the CAP and related policies.

##### [Tougher food inspections from farm to fork Plenary Session Food safety](#)

Plans to tighten up official food inspections, from farm to fork, have been adopted by the European Parliament. The new rules, already informally agreed by MEPs and the Council, aims to improve food traceability, combat fraud and restore consumer trust in the integrity of the food chain.

#### Biodiversity

##### [Bees under threat as agrichemical giants, Bayer and Syngenta, battle with European Commission](#)

Agrichemical giants, Bayer and Syngenta, return to the European courts to attempt to have the European Commission's neonicotinoid ban overturned. Following on from two separate reviews by the European Food and Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2013, the Commission imposed a ban on three neonicotinoids, sighting the risk which they pose to bees as the justification for the ban.

##### [Study suggests access to Nature reduces depression](#)

According to a new report, people living close to Nature and 'green spaces' are less likely to be obese, inactive or dependant on antidepressants.

#### Climate Change

##### [High soil carbon in Natura 2000 sites brings potential for climate-smart conservation](#)

Natura 2000 sites have, on average, 10% more carbon in their topsoil than non-protected areas, according to new research. They also generally have lower economic value for agriculture. The results suggest that there is significant potential to develop win-win biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation efforts within the EU.

##### [Cities taking action, learning from each other to adapt to climate change](#)

Despite budgetary challenges, urban areas across Europe are taking action to put in place measures that will help them adapt to the impacts of climate change. A new European Environment Agency report highlights the opportunities open to municipalities to share best practices and how they can support projects like green roofs or expanding city parks to help alleviate the negative effects of climate change.

#### Energy

##### [Arctic: ban oil drilling and mitigate tensions, urge MEPs](#)

Climate change is bringing new environmental and security challenges in the Arctic, as the melting ice cap opens up new navigation and fishing routes, and competition for its natural resources heats up, say MEPs. They call for measures to protect the vulnerable Arctic ecosystem, ban oil drilling there and keep it a low-tension and cooperation area.



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

## **Freshwater**

### [Environmental DNA in rivers can assess broad-scale biodiversity](#)

Traces of animals' DNA in the environment, known as environmental DNA (eDNA), can be monitored to paint a picture of biodiversity, new research shows. This study used eDNA to assess biodiversity in an entire river catchment in Switzerland. Importantly, the eDNA technique allowed the researchers to detect both aquatic and land-based species in river water, making it possible to assess biodiversity over a broad scale.

## **Governance**

### [Aarhus finding paves way to more democratic Europe](#)

The European Environmental Bureau welcomes the Aarhus Compliance Committee's conclusion that the European Union is in breach of its legal obligations under the Aarhus Convention due to the lack of effective access to justice at EU level.

## **Marine**

### [European coastal regions at greatest risk from oil spills identified by new risk index](#)

European Atlantic countries are, in general, at higher risk of being affected by oil spills than Mediterranean and Baltic countries, with the United Kingdom most affected, according to new research. The study developed a new risk index for analysing the potential vulnerability of coastal regions to oil spills at sea.

## **Sustainable Development**

### [Towards sustainable urban development: city data and indicators](#)

In an era of growing urban populations, cities present both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. Data and indicator availability allows for a better understanding of how cities can improve the wellbeing of their citizens. As part of the latest Beyond GDP newsletter, the Institute for European Environmental Policy interviewed three experts to explore new city data metrics and indices which are starting to be used around the world.

## **Transport**

### [Waste materials are an underused resource in the construction of Europe's roads](#)

Recycled waste material could play a major role in the construction of roads in Europe, bringing both environmental and economic benefits. A new study proposes a scenario where 50% of the asphalt for Europe's roads consists of recycled materials, leading to significant reductions in costs, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Waste**

### [Can supermarkets encourage customers to cut food waste through social media? Analysis of UK campaign shows mixed results](#)

A study has evaluated three types of media campaign conducted by a large UK supermarket to encourage shoppers to reduce their food waste. Although they all appeared to lead to reductions in food waste to some extent, similar behavioural changes were also seen for customers who had not participated in any of the campaigns.

### [Waste: boost recycling, cut landfilling and curb food waste, European Parliament](#)

The share of waste to be recycled would rise to 70% by 2030, from 44% under draft legislation. MEPs also want the "waste package" plans to limit the share of landfilling, which has a big environmental impact, to 5% and to deliver a 50% reduction in food waste by 2030. Parliament will now negotiate with Council of Ministers.

## **Other**

### [Article 50: What matters now for the environment?](#)

Institute for European Environmental Policy's London office Director Martin Nesbit reflects on three areas of focus for environmental stakeholders.



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