



### **Air Quality**

#### [98% of EU urban population exposed to harmful air – EEA report](#)

Almost everyone living in a city in the EU is breathing air that is harmful to their health, according to a new report. Road transport is a major source of harmful pollution, but the report's authors warn more must also be done to tackle pollution from energy, industry, households and agriculture.

#### [Innovative seaweed-based gel coating for urban homes able to capture harmful air particles](#)

Air pollution via small particulate matter (PM) from diesel fumes and other sources is of growing concern in urban areas, and contributes to poor air quality. In European urban areas, PM pollution often exceeds World Health Organization (WHO) safe levels for human wellbeing. In response, the European Commission has encouraged researchers to develop a low-cost, sustainable material that captures these particles in order to clean the air<sup>1</sup>. This study created a new PM capture material using sustainable chemical processes where the carbon footprint and energy use of the production process of the remediation material is taken into account.

### **Agriculture**

#### [Agriculture in a 1.5 °C world](#)

Half a degree may not sound that much but it can be a matter of life or death in the context of climate change. This is one of the headline messages of the recent IPCC special report, "Global warming of 1.5 °C", which is based on the assessment of the latest scientific literature. The report confirms the urgency to act in order to avoid often irreversible consequences for human well-being, ecosystems and sustainable development. But what does this mean for agriculture in general and for the EU farming sector in particular? What kind of challenges would the sector face in a 1.5 °C or 2 °C world? And how can the farming sector contribute to keeping global temperature increase below 1.5°C?

### **Biodiversity**

#### [EU calls for renewed international action to protect nature on land and at sea](#)

Amid recent alarming reports of the dramatic loss of wildlife and ecosystems worldwide, the European Union is calling for stronger global response to biodiversity concerns at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference 2018.

#### [‘The other COP’: EU must be a champion for nature at UN biodiversity convention](#)

With biodiversity in drastic decline, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh is a crucial moment. As the international community negotiates a new global biodiversity framework, the EU must become a leader for nature conservation, both globally and at home, argues WWF.

### **Circular Economy**

#### [EU Plastics Strategy: Commission welcomes voluntary pledges from industry to boost the market for recycled plastics and encourages further action](#)

A preliminary Commission assessment of the voluntary pledges received by the industry shows significant commitments, although more will be needed to achieve the objective of a well-functioning EU market of recycled plastics.

#### [Microplastics – Sources, effects and solutions](#)

Where do microplastics come from and what are their effects? Discover key facts about microplastics and find out what solutions the EU is working on.



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

## ***Climate Action***

### [16 European leaders call for raising climate targets by 2020](#)

Just ahead of the world's foremost summit on climate change, COP24, 16 European leaders have called upon all countries of the world to commit to review the levels of ambition of their Paris Agreement pledges by 2020, in light of the findings of the IPCC Special Report. The EU now needs to translate this statement into an action plan on how and when its Member States will agree on a new 2030 target, in line with the long-term objectives of the Paris Agreement.

## ***Energy***

### [Rising energy consumption slows EU progress on renewables and energy efficiency targets](#)

Progress on increasing the use of renewable energy and improving energy efficiency is slowing across the European Union, putting at risk the EU's ability to achieve its energy and emissions reduction targets. Rising energy consumption, particularly in the transport sector, is to blame for the slowdown, according to preliminary data in the European Environment Agency's (EEA) annual analysis on the EU's progress towards its targets on renewables and energy efficiency.

### [Wind energy set to become EU's largest power source well before 2030 | WindEurope](#)

Wind energy is set overtake coal, nuclear and gas to become the EU's largest power source well before 2030. This is according to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) 2018 World Energy Outlook.

## ***Environmental Governance***

### [Green NGOs welcome environmental commitments in Brexit deal](#)

After almost two years of negotiations, an agreement on the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and on the framework for the future EU-UK relationship, has been reached. Green NGOs welcome the commitments in the deal that environmental standards will not be reduced as a result of Brexit.

## ***Freshwater***

### [Restoring floodplains would improve state of water, ecosystems and climate protection in Europe](#)

Areas next to rivers hold potential for cost-effective flood protection and improving the health of an entire river ecosystem. According to a European Environment Agency (EEA) briefing, restoring European floodplains closer to their natural state would contribute to the achievement of several European Union policies. Estimates suggest that 70-90 % of Europe's floodplain area is ecologically degraded.

## ***Marine***

### [Political will needed to halt European marine habitat neglect](#)

Environmental experts are warning that marine life across Europe is being harmed because EU member states are neglecting to actively manage their marine protected areas.

## ***Sustainable Development***

### [Rethinking value-added tax \(VAT\) to focus on environmental damage and sustainability](#)

Sustainability in the production of goods and services could be encouraged by replacing value-added tax (VAT) with 'DaVAT,' a damage and value-added tax, a new study suggests. This tariff is partly based on a life-cycle assessment (LCA) of goods and services and varies from high (products deemed to seriously harm the environment and human health) to low (those with a lesser impact). The researchers propose a novel way to convert VAT into DaVAT and provide a new policy tool, based on LCA, that can be applied by any country wishing to reform its consumption tax system and move towards a more sustainable future.

## ***Transport***

### [EU publishes climate strategy to exit oil](#)

Europe should end carbon emissions from transport by 2050, the European Commission said today in a new long-term climate strategy welcomed by federation of transport NGOs Transport & Environment.



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