

EU MATTERS

NIEL's Monthly European Environmental News



Agriculture

[Shift to sustainable food system in Europe is possible, but faces challenges](#)

Making Europe's production, consumption and trade in food environmentally sustainable is possible, but it will require a major shift in public attitudes, policies and knowledge and seizing current opportunities for change, according to an EEA report.

[Farming contributes to air pollution](#)

According to a new report by the European Environment Agency, 400,000 Europeans die every year as a result of air pollution from several sources, including agriculture.

Air Quality

[Improving air quality in European cities will bring major health benefits](#)

Most people living in European cities are exposed to poor air quality. Latest estimates by the European Environment Agency (EEA), released today, show that fine particulate matter continues to cause the premature death of more than 400 000 Europeans annually. Road transport, agriculture, power plants, industry and households are the biggest emitters of air pollutants in Europe.

[New and improved car emissions tests become mandatory on 1 September](#)

As of 1 September 2017, new car models have to pass new and more reliable emissions tests in real driving conditions ("Real Driving Emissions") as well as an improved laboratory test ("World Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure") before they can be driven on European roads.

[Missed air quality targets hits new high, ClientEarth mulls fresh legal action](#)

The number of UK Local Authorities missing air quality targets reached a seven year high last year. The news comes as ClientEarth revealed it has written to the UK government warning that without action to address the holes in its latest air quality plans, ministers would face legal action for the third time.

Climate Change

[Preparing Europe for climate change: coordination is key to reduce risks posed by extreme weather](#)

Building stronger links between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction experts is more important than ever in wake of recent devastating and extreme weather events across Europe and elsewhere. Closer cooperation, including better policy alignment, will be crucial to reduce the impacts of weather and climate-related hazards like floods, heatwaves, forest fires, or storm surges. Increasing coherence in actions and using innovative methods can improve the handling of these events.

[Melting snow aids CO2 absorption](#)

Although rising global temperatures are causing seasonal snow cover to melt earlier, it allows for the snow-free boreal forests to absorb more carbon dioxide.

[Cities: the key to climate change?](#)

Cities are essential to combatting climate change. They are also responsible for three-quarters of humanity's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions worldwide. How can cities address this kind of rapid population growth while at the same time reducing their carbon emissions?



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

[Businesses, investors, civil society launch call for strong EU 2050 climate strategies](#)

Over 30 groups including business, civil society, investors and trade unions have today launched a joint statement in support of strong 2050 climate strategies. They call on the EU to make long-term climate strategies compulsory in the Energy Union governance regulation, and to provide guidance to help Member States make their strategies as effective as possible.

Energy

[Funding coal “incomprehensible” as study reveals dramatic decline](#)

A new report published by Coalswarm and Greenpeace reveals an unprecedented drop in global confidence in coal with 25% of 1,675 coal operators having left the business since 2010 and a wave of national phase-outs being declared.

Environmental Justice

[EU slammed for lack of respect for rule of law on environmental justice](#)

A day after European Commission President Juncker declared the rule of law to be one of three principles that must anchor the European Union in his State of the Union address, the EU has been heavily criticised for its failure to accept an international panel’s ruling that it is not ensuring adequate access to justice for its citizens at EU level.

Freshwater

[Tall sedge in biofiltration systems removes the majority of dissolved phosphorus from greywater](#)

The pathways for removal of dissolved phosphorus within biofiltration systems have been examined in a new study. Over 95% of phosphorus was removed over the study period, with the majority of phosphorus stored within plants. The researchers say the findings demonstrate the value of using suitable plant species within biofiltration systems to treat polluted water.

Invasive Species

[Is the EU’s new Invasive Alien Species Regulation set for success?](#)

Outlining actions to deal with one of the world’s biggest threats to biodiversity, the EU’s Regulation on invasive alien species (IAS) could not have come sooner. Is this new regulation set for success or are there still hurdles to overcome?

Land Use

[Unsustainable land use threatens European landscapes](#)

Accelerating rates of construction, changing demographics, technological changes, and climate change are some of the key drivers influencing the use of Europe’s vast landscapes. A European Environment Agency report published today says that the continent’s land use increasingly sees striking changes and conflicts over land demand which will require reconciling place-based management and macro policies to foster responsible land use.

Marine

[Leaders commit to ocean conservation](#)

Our Ocean, a conference of global leaders on ocean conservation, hosted by the European Union in Malta, concluded with a series of major commitments from governments, business and civil society in response to the steep deterioration of ocean ecosystems.

Waste

[Why a circular economy matters](#)

According to the European Recycling Industries’ Confederation, to make the circular economy a reality, there is a need for practical actions and well-enforced measures including product design that takes into consideration end-of-life status, correcting market failures to incentivise the use of recycled materials and a well-functioning EU and international market for secondary raw materials.



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