

Environmental News, Research & Analysis (ENRA)

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Agriculture/ Food

[Towards a legislative framework for sustainable food systems](#)

The evidence shows that European food systems are not sustainable. The question of how best to address this is now gathering momentum, with the expectation of a major proposal being tabled by the European Commission in 2023.

[Building blocks for food system resilience in Europe](#)

This policy report explores systems thinking and essential actions around food system resilience in EU agriculture in the post-COVID-19 period. In preparation for the Farm to Fork conference, systems thinking is essential and action is required now.

[Zero pollution: Report shows more needs to be done against water pollution from nitrates](#)

The latest [Commission Report on the implementation](#) of the [Nitrates Directive](#) (based on data for 2016-2019) warns that nitrates are still causing harmful pollution to water in the EU. See also [Questions and answers on Nitrates Directive Implementation Report](#)

Air Quality

[In focus: Methane - what's the deal?](#)

Global warming is the chief challenge facing the international community. This is caused by greenhouse gases, with carbon dioxide (CO₂) widely identified as the chief culprit. This is not the only greenhouse gas, however. The gas that is second on the list of the worst greenhouse gas contributors to climate change is methane.

Biodiversity

[The 'Dark Ecological Network': strategically tackling light pollution for biodiversity and people](#)

Night-time light pollution from artificial sources can disrupt biological processes and fragment habitats. This study presents a new concept for addressing the problem: a 'dark ecological network'. Its development involves mapping a new system of connected functional zones and corridors where dark can be preserved to help birds, bats and other taxa, and gives people the chance to experience starry skies.

[Restoring ecosystems part-and-parcel of IUCN Congress](#)

During the Expo of the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the Nature-based Solutions and Ecosystem Restoration pavilion devoted over half of its programme to restoration work as part of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. Hosting events that drew from an extensive network of restoration knowledge, providing new tools for implementation and inspiring uptake of restoration work.

[Regulate lead-based hunting ammunition to reduce risk to large raptors, urges study](#)

Eagles and vultures in southern European mountain ranges are heavily exposed to lead, finds a new study.

Climate Action

[Environmental Action and Public Health Must Go Hand In Hand](#)

The European Environmental Bureau's 2021 conference focused on Europe's need to give greater urgency and stronger commitments to both climate action and broader environmental action, while making a powerful message on the public health benefits from acting. The pandemic revealed many frailties in our society and changed mindsets on policy making- notably on the importance of wellbeing

and that climate and environmental action and public health are so intrinsically linked that the world should consider them collectively.

[Methane: MEPs want binding target to bring double win for climate and health](#)

MEPs push for binding reduction targets on methane emissions to reach EU climate goals and improve air quality. In a resolution on the EU strategy to reduce methane emissions MEPs call on the Commission to propose binding measures and methane reduction targets for all sectors. The objective is to significantly reduce methane emissions in the EU by 2030 in line with the Paris Agreement. They also want a binding global agreement on methane at COP26 in Glasgow.

Covid-19

[10 Turning Points to Heal Our Society](#)

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) has released 'Turning Point', a new book that looks into a possible, post-pandemic future where people and nature can thrive together. The coronavirus pandemic has forced humankind to take a long, hard look at itself: two years in, the recognition is there that a return to 'normal' is not possible, because the 'old normal' was broken: we live on a finite planet with finite resources, yet live by the mantra of infinite growth. But what kind of change do we need for our society to heal?

[Lesson from health impacts should drive EU Policies](#)

If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that the environment and human health go hand in hand. Now is the moment for decision-makers to embrace environmental policies as health policies – for the better of people and the planet.

Energy

[Energy price crisis: the answer is more climate action, not less](#)

Skyrocketing gas prices, not EU climate policies, are to blame for the crisis on electricity prices hitting Europe. To break our dependence on imported fossil fuels and their volatile prices we must speed up the transition to renewables.

[EU achieves 20-20-20 climate targets, 55 % emissions cut by 2030 reachable with more efforts and policies](#)

The European Union (EU) achieved its three main climate and energy targets by 2020, according to a new European Environment Agency (EEA) assessment. The 2030 target of a 55 % reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions can be reached if additional efforts are made and new policies are adopted and implemented.

[The extra mile the EU needs to move away from gas boilers](#)

To protect citizens from soaring gas prices, EU governments must accelerate the deployment of renewable heating, a technology that is ready to replace gas boilers, but only affordable for a standard household in 8 EU countries. A new study reveals an extra €70 bn in public support would enable consumers to overcome the upfront for switching to heat pumps and solar thermal systems.

[Home is where the heat is](#)

Novel model simulates uptake of renewable heating technologies from behaviour and choice at a household level Researchers have applied a novel approach to modelling the uptake and replacement of heating technologies.

[Building consensus on sustainable use of biomass for EU bioenergy](#)

several stakeholders came together at a workshop to discuss sustainable biomass supply and the role of bioenergy in the EU going forward. But how much agreement can be established?

[EU Parliament - Energy infrastructure: boost hydrogen and carbon capture, phase out natural gas](#)

The updated rules to select which energy projects should be supported aim to make cross-border energy infrastructure sustainable and in line with the EU Green Deal

[Commission publishes recommendation and guidelines on the energy efficiency first principle](#)

The European Commission has published a new recommendation and guidelines on the energy efficiency first principle with a view to converting the concept from a principle into practice.

Forestry/ Woodland

[The EU Forest Strategy: Strengthening ecosystem services and forest management](#)

The new EU Forest Strategy has hit the forest headlines over the summer and in a timely online debate, policymakers from the EU Commission met with experts representing forest owners and managers, civil society and national policymakers to discuss what the strategy means for those it affects.

Freshwater/ Water

[Commission must extend water pollution regulation to include pharmaceuticals, PFAS and pesticides](#)

Europe's freshwaters are under pressure from a large number of toxic substances emitted by industry, households and agriculture - yet only a fraction of them are monitored. Now is the moment for the European Commission to better regulate the presence of forever chemicals, toxic pesticides and hormone-altering substances in water.

[Pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors: transfer from water to land ecosystems](#)

Pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors increasingly contaminate the world's freshwaters. New research provides direct evidence of their transfer from aquatic to terrestrial ecosystems via the consumption of aquatic insects by terrestrial predators such as spiders, birds and bats. This exposure may have negative impacts on the physiology and population dynamics of predators, suggesting a need for improved risk-assessment guidelines and practices.

[Climate change may be a significant threat to world's fresh-water fish](#)

Climate change poses a major threat to global biodiversity, yet fresh-water fish have been largely overlooked in climate-change assessments. This study presents a comprehensive appraisal of the threat from potential climate extremes, covering both water flow and temperature, to the world's fresh-water fish.

[The River Game: Connecting Children and Youth to River through Edutainment](#)

It has often been discussed that children and youth need to be connected to nature for restoring the degraded river ecosystems meaningfully and sustainably. However, the ways of connecting them are sometimes designed without their participation

Funding

[Reforming the EU fiscal framework for people and nature](#)

Fiscal Matters is working for the transition towards a wellbeing economy that works for people and nature. A reform of the EU fiscal framework could potentially boost investments in climate action, nature protection, social and gender justice, and a just transition and transformation.

Governance

[Biodiversity footprints in policy and decision-making: State of play and future opportunities](#)

This briefing gives an overview of the state of knowledge and current application of biodiversity footprint methods and tools in the EU, and identifies key future needs and opportunities for using these methods to support more sustainable decision-making.

[Strengthening biodiversity footprints](#)

What kind of information does the European Union need to get serious about implementing the Green New Deal? One critical aspect is finding out the impacts that its consumption and production is having on biodiversity, both at home and in other parts of the world: its biodiversity footprint.

Invasive Species

[Managing Asian hornet incursions with nest dissection and microsatellite marker analysis](#)

The yellow-legged Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina nigrithorax*) is an invasive species that poses a particular threat to the European honey bee. This study reports on the management of Asian hornet incursions in the UK, including the use of nest dissection and microsatellite marker analysis (a form of genetic testing) to determine the relatedness and reproductive status of detected nests and hornets.

Land Use

[Regionally and culturally adapted approaches to landscape stewardship could benefit European rural landscapes](#)

Rural landscape stewardship must be an inclusive societal process based on collaborative governance. This study conducted horizon scanning to identify current knowledge and trends regarding the factors that can underpin this. To meet the need of establishing or enhancing the functionality of green infrastructures, the integrated analysis of 16 pan-European case study landscapes provides insights on current trends, challenges and opportunities for strengthening social capital among rural landscape stakeholders. It emphasises a need for more regionally and culturally adapted approaches to landscape stewardship in Europe.

['Green Mining': A Myth That Could Cost Us The Earth](#)

Feeding Europe's digital and green transition with runaway mining without changing the way we use natural resources could cost us the Earth. A new report urges the EU to slash resource consumption by two-thirds

Marine

[Extreme coastal water levels will increase considerably due to climate change, posing an increasing threat of coastal floods due to 'overtopping' - a cause of flooding](#)

Climate change and anthropogenic pressures are widely expected to exacerbate hazards such as coastal flooding. One process that could contribute to this is overtopping which occurs when the extreme coastal water level exceeds the maximum elevation of the coastal system (such as dunes, dykes or cliffs).

[Increasing levels of toxic metals in coastal sediments highlight the need — in the context of the developing blue economy - to address hidden sources of these contaminants](#)

Regulation and improved waste treatment have reduced marine pollution; however, some contaminants persist in coastal sediments. An analysis of data on UK sediments has shown that concentrations of some, including copper and nickel, are rising. Identifying the hidden sources, such as shipping, say the researchers, is critical for maintaining healthy seas, which underpin a growing blue economy.

Plastics

[Plant from plastics: Bio-based polymers can be transformed into fertilizer](#)

Bioplastics can be chemically recycled into nitrogen-rich fertilizers in a facile and environmentally friendly way, as recently demonstrated. Their findings pave the way towards sustainable circular systems that simultaneously address issues such as plastic pollution, petrochemical resource depletion, and world hunger.

Sustainable Development

[Building a sustainable future](#)

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation together with other partners, has launched an Anthology of Sustainable Consumption that you can consult here. This Anthology answers the urgency of the current social and environmental crises by gathering ideas from practitioners from around the globe.