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Agriculture/ Food

[MEPs back up European Commission's plans for sustainable food systems](#)
As a key part of the Green Deal published in May 2020, the Commission introduced the Farm to Fork strategy which looks at accelerating the transition towards a fair, sustainable and healthy food system. The strategy includes targets for a European food system with a reduced footprint until 2030, addressing the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. The Strategy is accompanied by a list of 27 actions to be taken until 2024. Read the IEEP reaction.

[Food waste: new model helps estimate current levels in all EU countries](#)
Food waste has serious economic, environmental, and social impacts. To meet the EU's commitment to reduce food waste by 2030 - accurate, baseline data are needed for all Member States. This study considers two models for estimating food waste to assist the EU in identifying a consistent methodology for collating food-waste data by 2022 - to help defining mandatory targets outlined in the Farm to Fork Strategy.

[Time to tip our food systems towards a sustainable and equitable future](#)
By finding well targeted 'tipping points', a sustainable, resilient, and more equitable world food system can still be created, argue Simon Sharpe, Deputy Director of the UK Government Cabinet Office COP26 Unit and Tim Lenton, Director of the Global Systems Institute at the University of Exeter.

Air Quality

[Progress made on European air quality since 2000: most pollutants falling, but further action needed](#)
In a new overview of air quality in the EU and the UK, researchers have revealed downward trends in key pollutant emissions from 2000 to 2017. Despite significant progress, they found that urban exposure to fine particulate matter and ozone - which have some of the greatest health impacts - still exceeded the WHO limit values in 2017, suggesting that intensified actions are urgently needed.

[Air pollution still too high in most EU Member States](#)
Concentrations of key air pollutants remain too high in most European countries. According to the European Environment Agency's official data most EU Member States exceed at least one or more of the EU's legal limits for pollutants in ambient air in 2019.

[Air quality for tomorrow's cities](#)
What if the cities of tomorrow already existed? What if European cities were already doing the work, putting the efforts in, innovating and creating the future we want for the people and the environment. This podcast explores the possibility of local transformation and concrete sustainable change.

[Cutting the dead wood out to clear Europe's air](#)
A crackling fire in a wood stove may sound like a very ecological and healthy way to warm up our homes, but is that true? A new study shows domestic heating from wood and other kinds of biomass is a major source of toxic air pollution.

Biodiversity

[Europe's nature under pressure - challenges and solutions](#)
The European Environment Agency's work and other assessments have shown that European ecosystems are under serious threat. Centuries of exploitation have left their mark on Europe's natural world and most protected habitats and species are not in good conservation status. The EEA Signals

2021 presents an overview of the problems Europe's nature is facing and points to strategies to reverse the situation.

[Ensuring a strong evidence base to protect wild pollinators](#)
Building on its extensive work on pollinator conservation, IEEP is joining forces with 25 organisations to contribute to reversing the decline of wild pollinators in Europe. Wild pollinators provide a wide range of benefits to crops, wild plants, and human wellbeing - but they are declining in numbers and diversity in Europe and around the world, due to climate change, land use and habitat loss. The full extent of their decline, its complex causes and the most effective ways to respond to it are still not well understood.

Climate Action
[COP26: Over 200 health journals unite in calling for urgent action on climate change](#)
More than 200 health journals worldwide are publishing an editorial calling on leaders to take emergency action on climate change and protect health. (*The Scotsman – Environment*)

[Towards net-zero: Sound policies need science](#)
Following the release of the Fit for 55 package and the EU Climate Law's promise to create a Climate Change Advisory Board, IEEP and the EEAC Network gathered scientists and policymakers to discuss how scientific evidence can best be used in the context of European climate policymaking.

Covid-19
[IUCN Congress closes with call for a post-pandemic recovery based on nature](#)
The IUCN World Conservation Congress closed setting the nature conservation agenda for the next decade and beyond. The IUCN Congress urged governments to implement a nature-based recovery from the pandemic, investing at least 10% of global recovery funds in nature, and adopted a series of resolutions and commitments to urgently address the interlinked climate and biodiversity crises.

Circular Economy
[Pulling the plug on consumer frustration and e-waste: Commission proposes a common charger for electronic devices](#)
The Commission has taken an important step against e-waste and consumer inconvenience, caused by the prevalence of different, incompatible chargers for electronic devices. Years of working with industry on a voluntary approach already brought down the number of mobile phone chargers from 30 to 3 within the last decade, but could not deliver a complete solution. The Commission is now putting forward legislation to establish a common charging solution for all relevant devices.

[Collecting more and better: the final push to reach 100% glass circularity](#)
Glass packaging already has one of the highest recycling rates in Europe, but better collection of a greater amount of glass is needed to meet Europe's goal of a 75% recycling rate and, eventually, reach complete circularity. But it is yet to reach complete circularity – some glass is still wasted and new glass is still made using carbon-intensive production.

Energy
[Simpler EU energy labels for lighting products](#)
To help EU consumers cut their energy bills and carbon footprint, a brand new version of the widely-recognised EU energy label for light bulbs and other lighting products will be applicable in all shops and online retail outlets from 1 September 2021. The move follows the considerable improvement in energy efficiency in this sector in recent years

Freshwater/ Water
[New dual screening method for emerging pollutant chemicals in urban wastewater](#)

Urban wastewaters contain a number of chemical contaminants - including plasticisers, flame retardants, pharmaceuticals and pesticides. These chemicals are often ecotoxic - for example, those which disrupt hormones in organisms - and are a potential threat to aquatic life. This study aimed to establish a large-scale, environmental risk assessment (ERA) on emerging chemical pollutants continually released in effluent into local watercourses from 10 water treatment plants in France.

Pollution and barriers are key problems for Europe's waters

European water bodies suffer from agricultural pollution as well as pollution from insufficiently treated waste water from cities, industry and scattered dwellings, according to a European Environment Agency. Artificial barriers, together with navigation, abstraction, aquaculture, and invasive alien species cause additional pressures. However, solutions to tackle the problems exist and should be more widely adopted.

A new method for removing lead from drinking water

Engineers have designed a relatively low-cost, energy-efficient approach to treating water contaminated with heavy metals.

Marine

European fishing communities face their own specific climate risks

Of all European fisheries and coastal communities, the ones in the UK and the Eastern Mediterranean have the highest risk of being affected by climate change. To reduce climate risks, researchers are advising regional policy makers to focus on sustainable and diverse fisheries management.

Blueprinting the way for success of Blue Natural Capital projects

The Blue Natural Capital Financing Facility releases a series of Blue Prints to help inspire the development of self-sustainable Blue Natural Capital projects in coastal and marine environments.

Plastics

Social cost of plastic pollution more than GDP of India

The pollution, emissions and clean-up costs of plastic produced in 2019 alone could be $3.7 trillion, according to a report released on 6 September by wildlife charity WWF, warning of the environmental and economic burden of this "seemingly cheap" material.

River research reveals scale of macroplastic pollution

Plastic pollution clogs river systems for longer than previously thought, new research shows.

Slay the Plastic Waste Trade Dragon, Campaigners Urge the Eu

A giant dragon spewing plastic waste laid siege to EU institutions as campaigners called for an end to Europe's waste export crisis. The three metres tall monster was set up by the Rethink Plastic Alliance and partner organisations to bring attention to the irresponsible plastic waste exports from the EU to third countries.

Sustainable Development

Innovating for sustainability

Innovation is a political priority across Europe that can deliver many benefits for society but also generate costs that are often unaccounted for. A European Environment Agency briefing looks at how innovation can respond to sustainability challenges and how Europe needs to look for solutions beyond technological innovation

Flanders tackles pandemic's sustainability fallout

It is clear that the ongoing coronavirus crisis has offset sustainability efforts: thousands of personal protective equipment items are thrown away every day and the pandemic has increased poverty and inequality. Flemish communities have taken these setbacks head-on, bringing together individuals and local authorities to tackle disparities caused by the pandemic