

Environmental News, Research & Analysis (ENRA)

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Agriculture/ Land Use

[Scientists develop 'greener' way to make fertilizer](#)

Researchers have devised a new 'greener' method to make a key compound in fertilizer, and that may pave the way to a more sustainable agricultural practice as global food demand rises.

[Novel technique seamlessly converts ammonia to 'green' hydrogen](#)

A recent study has announced a breakthrough in technology that efficiently converts liquid ammonia into hydrogen. A research team has announced a breakthrough in technology that efficiently converts liquid ammonia into hydrogen. Their findings have also attracted significant attention from academic research communities owing to its new analysis protocol, capable of finding optimal process environments.

Air Quality

[European Union as a whole stays within air pollutant emission limits in 2019](#)

The EU as a whole respected emission ceilings for four key pollutants in 2019, including nitrogen oxides, non-methane volatile organic compounds, sulphur dioxide and ammonia, according to a new European Environment Agency briefing. Nevertheless, Member States still need to make deeper cuts in emissions to achieve 2020-29 and 2030 reduction commitments, especially for nitrogen oxides, fine particulate matter and ammonia.

Biodiversity

[IUCN welcomes IPBES decision to develop crucial biodiversity reports](#)

IUCN welcomes IPBES-8 plenary decision to approve the scoping reports of the 'nexus' and 'transformative change' assessments, and encourages the IUCN constituency to engage actively with the assessments process.

[Six top tips for developing a leading business biodiversity strategy](#)

Biodiversity is steadily rising up the business agenda in the run-up to COP26. But how can the private sector go beyond greenwashing to deliver meaningful, engaging, science-based strategies?

[Carbon-sequestering kelp: Sussex councils team up for major natural capital project](#)

Two West Sussex Councils have applied for permission to create a large 'undersea forest' of kelp - a project they claim will boost biodiversity while sequestering carbon emissions.

Climate Action

[Methane: Short-Term Gains Vs Long-Term Pains](#)

The IPCC report published earlier this month thrusts into the spotlight methane (CH₄), the second biggest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide (CO₂), capable of trapping heat at a higher rate than any other greenhouse gases. This special attention given to the previously overlooked methane, could very well mark a shift in policy and public focus from CO₂ to CH₄.

[Policy-induced reductions in methane emissions have permanent impact](#)

Do short-term reductions in methane emissions have a lasting impact on longer-term emission trends? A study seeks to answer this question by analysing emissions in 36 OECD countries from 1750 to 2014. The researchers conclude that actions do lead to permanent change, and that policies to improve emissions from agriculture, energy generation and waste can have long-lasting effects.

[Fast fashion vs. climate - how 'repair & resell' is the new model](#)

Textiles consumed in the EU generated more than 300 million tonnes of CO₂-equivalent in 2017, making it the fifth-largest impact origin of each European and UK citizen.

Circular Economy

[Commission decides to register 'ReturnthePlastics' initiative on plastic bottle recycling](#)

The Commission has decided to register a European Citizens' Initiative entitled 'ReturnthePlastics: A Citizen's Initiative to implement an EU-wide deposit-system to recycle plastic bottles'.

Energy

[Rapid shift to evolving renewable energy technologies poses new waste challenge for Europe](#)

A rapid transition to renewable energy is necessary if Europe is to achieve its climate objectives. Developing the infrastructure to enable this change will require substantial resources and generate large volumes of waste as equipment reaches the end of its service life. Applying circular economy principles in this sector provides a win-win approach to address both these issues, according to a European Environment Agency (EEA) briefing.

[Equality in the energy sector – call to action for stakeholders](#)

The Commission has launched a call for action to stakeholders in the energy sector who would be interested to join and become members of a new platform on equality in the energy sector. An inclusive and diverse environment, which encourages the full potential of a wide range of stakeholders and individuals, is central to achieving the EU's ambition of a clean energy transition. The European Commission calls on organisations, governments, private sector, academia and civil society to join the 'Equality platform for the energy sector', which will be established in October 2021.

[Solar expansion may increase CO₂ emissions due to land-use change - but mitigation is possible](#)

To meet global emissions reductions targets, large-scale solar energy facilities will increase in number in the next 30 years. However, this could actually cause net emissions of up to 50 grams of CO₂ per kilowatt-hour produced due to land-use and cover change, finds a new study - but a net release of carbon could be avoided by managing expanded 'solar land' as pasture and regulating its siting.

Freshwater/ Water

[Water managers are set to fail our rivers, lakes and groundwater](#)

EU water laws set 2027 as a final deadline to guarantee the ecological health of our rivers, lakes and groundwater. Yet, according to a report published in June, many EU countries are set to miss this legally binding target.

[Public participation in management of China's waterways improves water quality](#)

An estimated 70% of China's rivers and lakes are too polluted for human use, the result of decades of intensifying economic development that have increased the amount of pollution that winds up in the water. Fixing China's water pollution problems is an uphill battle, but citizen monitoring of remediation efforts could lead to consistent improvements in water quality, according to researchers.

Planning

[Commission adopts new guidance on how to climate-proof future infrastructure projects](#)

The European Commission has published [new technical guidance on climate-proofing of infrastructure projects](#) for the period 2021-2027. The guidance will help mainstream climate considerations in future investment and development of infrastructure projects from buildings, network infrastructure to a range of built systems and assets. That way, institutional and private European investors will be able to make informed decisions on projects deemed compatible with the Paris Agreement and the EU climate objectives.

[Rating the smart readiness of EU buildings](#)

The smart readiness indicator (SRI) is a common EU scheme for rating the readiness of buildings to use smart technologies, which was introduced in the 2018 revision of the Energy Performance in Buildings Directive. SRI will help raise awareness of the benefits smart building technologies bring for creating healthy, energy-efficient and comfortable buildings, including via building automation and electronic monitoring of heating, hot water, ventilation and lightning.

Plastics

[Ship coatings are the principal source of North Sea marine microplastics, finds study](#)

Much discarded plastic enters our oceans via pathways such as littering, drainage, sewage systems, and mismanaged disposal, and fragments to form 'microplastics' - particles of under 5 mm in size. A study assesses the distribution, variation, composition, concentration and sources of microplastics in the German Bight. It finds different types of microplastics in coastal, central and estuarine areas, and suggests that antifouling coatings on ships are a prominent, but underestimated, source of microplastic pollution in the area.

Transport

[Sustainable and inclusive transport systems: Gender and mobility](#)

Gender is one of the most important determinants of transport choices. EU mobility policy and the European Green Deal are still mostly gender blind, with negative consequences for the sustainability and accessibility of mobility in the EU.

Woodland

[European Green Deal: Commission proposes new strategy to protect and restore EU forests](#)

The Commission has adopted the New EU Forest Strategy for 2030, a flagship initiative of the European Green Deal that builds on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. The strategy contributes to the measures proposed to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 55% by 2030 and climate neutrality in 2050 in the EU. It also helps the EU deliver on its commitment to enhance carbon removals by natural sinks as per the Climate Law. By addressing the social, economic and environmental aspects all together, the Forest Strategy aims at ensuring the multifunctionality of EU forests and highlights the pivotal role played by foresters.