

Environmental News, Research & Analysis (ENRA)

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Agriculture/ Food

[The time has come for a Just Transition in agriculture](#)

A just transition urgently needs to be planned and enacted for European agriculture. A new paper by IEEP looks into how, at a critical moment in decisions over how CAP subsidies are spent.

[The buzz and the true potential of carbon farming](#)

Read the interview with Célia Nyssens, EEB Policy Officer for Agriculture, about carbon farming, the challenges and what it would take for this approach to become the win-win-win solution for climate, nature and farmers.

[Agriculture Commissioner throws his weight behind carbon farming](#)

EU agriculture chief Janusz Wojciechowski has promised to do his best to place carbon farming front and centre of member states' Common agriculture policy strategic plans amid concerns that nice words will not translate into action. Highlighting that carbon farming is a key priority of the French presidency, the Commissioner stressed its importance for European farming's future during a meeting of Parliament's agriculture committee on 10 January.

[Europe targets greenwashing and eco-labelling for food](#)

No more greenwashing: The European Commission will soon launch the much anticipated (and delayed) Green Claims Initiative, which should help reduce greenwashing. EEB explore what that means for the future of food labelling.

Air Quality

[1.8 million deaths are linked to air pollution worldwide, reports find](#)

Some 1.8 million excess deaths and nearly two million asthma cases have been attributed to air pollution in 2019 worldwide, according to studies published in The Lancet Planetary Health journal. The studies, published on 6 January, both highlight the "ongoing need" for strategies to improve air pollution and reduce exposure to harmful emissions. Most vulnerable are the elderly and children.

Biodiversity

[Nature restoration is a matter of intergenerational justice](#)

Ahead of the Commission's proposal for binding nature restoration targets, young Europeans call for targets with urgent and youth-inclusive action as a matter of intergenerational justice, writes Giulia Testa. Giulia Testa is a campaigner at Generation Climate Europe, a European youth organisation. Following the commitments of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the European Commission plans to set forward binding nature restoration targets in early 2022.

Circular Economy/ Waste

[Assessing the impact of circular economy measures on environmental sustainability: a hybrid approach](#)

In order to evaluate the environmental sustainability of a circular economy measure, it is necessary to predict future material flows and their impacts. A study outlines a hybrid approach for achieving this. It uses a combination of dynamic material flow analysis and life cycle assessment to quantify and compare the potential effects of a selected circular economy measure over the mid- to long-term.

[Can packaging become climate-neutral?](#)

Paper, plastic, tin or glass? As the European Commission readies a revision of the packaging and packaging waste directive, research highlights the positives and negatives of various packaging types. There are few people who would say they're in favour of packaging waste. Buying a product that

comes with too much packaging that seems unnecessary, or packaging known to be difficult to recycle, tends to annoy people. But as consumers, it's difficult to feel much control over the situation.

Climate Action

[Future of Europe: Europeans see climate change as top challenge for the EU](#)

Over one in two young people see climate change as main global challenge for the future of the EU. Nine out of 10 young Europeans agree that tackling climate change can help improve their own health and well-being (91% of 15–24-year-olds) while 87% of all respondents also share this sentiment.

[Austria to give out annual €200 “climate bonus”](#)

Austrian parliament has passed a climate levy on fossil fuels as a part of the much-praised eco-social tax reform. Passed in January, the reform will see the levy paid back to taxpayers in the form of a climate bonus. The bonus, up to €200 depending on where they live and how much they engage with public transport, is designed to compensate for increased prices of petrol, gas, diesel, and heating oil.

[New use of satellite data reveals the accelerating pace of glacier shrinkage this century](#)

Around the world, shrinking glaciers are contributing to rising sea levels, affecting water cycles and intensifying natural hazards. Lack of detailed observations has hindered accurate knowledge of changes in their size, however. A new study harnesses satellite imaging to reveal changes in all Earth's glaciers from 2000–2019, estimating that they lost an average 267 gigatonnes (Gt) of mass per year, equivalent to 21% of observed sea-level rise during this period.

[Citizen engagement initiative : Shaping the EU's climate future together](#)

Citizen Voices for Climate Transition is an initiative funded through the Horizon 2020 Green Deal Call, “other action 9”. Its goal is to analyse the environmental, social and economic transitions needed to achieve the European Green Deal objectives in different domains.

Education

[Commission calls for environmental sustainability to be at the core of EU education and training systems](#)

The Commission has published a proposal for a [Council Recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability](#). The aim of the proposal is to support Member States, schools, higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations and all education providers in equipping learners with understanding and skills on sustainability, climate change and the environment.

Energy

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

Embracing climate action, we can tackle soaring energy prices, help reduce the energy market volatility and risks, reduce costs to households, companies and the economy, and reduce dependency on fossil fuels and imports.

Environmental Crime

[How can taxes and other economic instruments help to make polluters pay?](#)

This report finds that EU polluters are not currently paying for most of the environmental damage they cause and explores how taxes and other economic instruments could help to better apply the polluter pays principle. The report, prepared for the European Commission by the Institute for European Environmental Policy and partners, provides calculations of the external costs of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution, waste management, water scarcity and biodiversity loss in the EU.

Freshwater/ Water

[What is the future for monitoring Europe's surface waters?](#)

New study assesses effectiveness and results from Water Framework Directive data. A new large-scale study of data from over 8 000 sites across 31 European countries has found that the monitoring of water quality and ecological risks has improved over time, but the water condition itself has worsened.

[Large-scale modelling of rapid flows to groundwater highlights risk of aquifer contamination](#)

New research highlights how some aquifers might be at greater risk of contamination than previously thought. Modelling fast flow infiltration - where surface water sinks through cracks - the study shows that significant quantities of water-borne pollutants (such as pesticides, veterinary medicines or human pathogens) may reach groundwater in carbonate rock before they degrade.

[Zero pollution in drinking water: Endocrine-disrupting chemicals on new watch list of pollutants](#)

Following a Commission decision, drinking water across the EU will have to be monitored more closely for the potential presence of two endocrine-disrupting compounds throughout the whole water supply chain. As required by EU rules on drinking water in force since last year, the Commission established a first 'watch list' of emerging compounds to monitor and address if needed.

Governance

[Rethinking Economic Governance: It's time for a sustainability and wellbeing pact](#)

This summer, the European Commission will publish a review of the EU Economic Governance Framework. EEB call for a new framework that is redirected towards sustainability and wellbeing for the planet and the people.

Green Recovery

[How Europe can grow without growing](#)

May 2022 be the year we switch to a wellbeing economy. In a landmark document recognising the destructive power of constant economic growth, the European Environment Agency (EEA) echoes the demands of campaigners and scientists: the urgent need to favour wellbeing over wealth.

Marine

[Established populations of invasive Asian date mussels found in the Greater North Sea ecoregion may pose challenges to aquaculture and ecosystems restoration](#)

The Asian date mussel is an invasive species in European seas, At high densities, it can pose significant ecological and economic risks including outcompeting other bivalves, altering sediment conditions and impacting seagrass growth. Ecologically and commercially important shellfish such as cockles and clams could also be affected. Researchers have confirmed the presence of this species - since at least 2011 - across the Solent region of southern England, part of the Greater North Sea ecoregion.

Plastics

[Slovakia first country in region to adopt deposit scheme for plastic bottles](#)

Slovaks can now return undamaged plastic bottles and cans to supermarkets. Slovakia has become the first country in Central Europe and only the eighth country in the EU to introduce a deposit system of this kind. When purchasing a plastic bottle or can, every customer will pay an additional fee of 15 cents. Once empty, consumers can return them to the supermarkets that have joined the deposit system. Then, if the package is undamaged, they will get back the deposit in full.

Sustainable Development

[Think Sustainable Europe](#)

The idea generator behind the Think2030 platform, Think Sustainable Europe (TSE) is a pan-European network of sustainability think tanks, led by IEEP. The network aims to provide policymakers across the continent with sound, science-based analysis and recommendations.

Transport

[Disposable e-bikes? The problem with unrepairable batteries](#)

It's complicated: The market for e-bikes is rapidly growing. Now it is facing a repairability dilemma: is it more sustainable to replace or repair e-bike batteries? And what are the options for cyclists when replacement batteries are not available? EEB experts Chloé Mikolajczak and Jean-Pierre Schweitzer look into battery failures and the right to repair for electric bicycles.