EUROPEAN UNION'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Institutions, Policy Areas and Future Challenges

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1 The European Union in brief

- Introduction
- The Treaties of the European Union
- Who and how decides in the European Union?
- Ordinary legislative procedure

Introduction

- The European Union (EU) is an economic and political union between 28 European states.
- It is not a state itself and does not intent to replace existing member states, but it aims at a compromise amongst them.
- Member States have delegated some of their decision-making powers to the **shared institutions**, so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level.
- By pooling some of their ‘sovereignty’, member states gain ‘strength’ and the benefits of size.

The 28 EU member states

Year	EU member states	Total
1952/1958	Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands	6
1973	Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom	9
1981	Greece	10
1986	Spain, Portugal	12
1995	Austria, Finland, Sweden	15
2004	Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia	25
2007	Bulgaria, Romania	27
2013	Croatia	28

The EU Treaties (I)

1950	1951	1957	1986	1992
European Coal and Steel Community	**Treaty of Paris**	**Treaties of Rome**	**Single European Act**	**The Maastricht Treaty**
Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands	Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which entered into force in 1952 and expired in 2002.	Establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)	It amended the EEC Treaty and paved the way for completing the single market.	It established the European Union, gave the Parliament more say in decision-making and added new policy areas of cooperation.

The EU Treaties (II)

1997 2001 2007

Treaty of Amsterdam

Amendment of previous treaties.

Treaty of Nice

It streamlined the EU institutional system so that it could continue to work effectively after the new wave of Member States joined in 2004.

Treaty of Lisbon

It simplified working methods and voting rules and created a President of the European Council. Came into force from December 2009.

Since 1950, the EU has regularly updated and added to the treaties to ensure effective policy and decision-making.

Who and how decides?
EU institutions and bodies (I)

- The institutions of the European Union provide for the existence of seven bodies.
- The cooperation and interconnections between these bodies ensure the smooth functioning of the Union.
- These seven bodies are the following:

- **The European Commission**: a politically independent institution and the executive arm of the EU that represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole. It proposes laws, policy agreements and is responsible for implementing the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council. It is composed of the College of Commissioners, one from each EU country, responsible for a specific policy area.

Who and how decides? EU institutions and bodies (II)

- **The Council** (also known as the Council of Ministers): consists of government ministers from all the EU countries. Together with the European Parliament, it adopts legislation proposed by the European Commission.

- **The European Parliament**: consists of 751 directly elected members from the 28 member states representing the European citizens. The Parliament shares with the Council the power to legislate, it exercises democratic supervision over all EU institutions, and in particular the Commission, and finally it shares authority with the Council over the EU budget and can therefore influence EU spending.

Who and how decides? EU institutions and bodies (III)

- **The European Council:** The body which brings together the EU's top political leaders, along with its President and the President of the Commission. It defines political direction and priorities but it does not have the authority to adopt legislation.

- **The Court of Justice of the European Union (the Court)** ensures that EU legislation is interpreted and applied in the same way in each Member State. Furthermore, it has the power to settle legal disputes between Member States, EU institutions, businesses and individuals.

Who and how decides?
EU institutions and bodies (IV)

- **The European Central Bank (ECB):** manages the European common currency, the euro, which is adopted by 19 member states. Its purpose is to maintain monetary stability in the euro area by ensuring low and stable consumer price inflation, safeguarding the value of the euro.

- **The European Court of Auditors (ECA)** is the independent external audit institution of the European Union. It checks that the Union's income has been received correctly, that its expenditure has been incurred in a legal and regular manner, and that financial management has been sound.

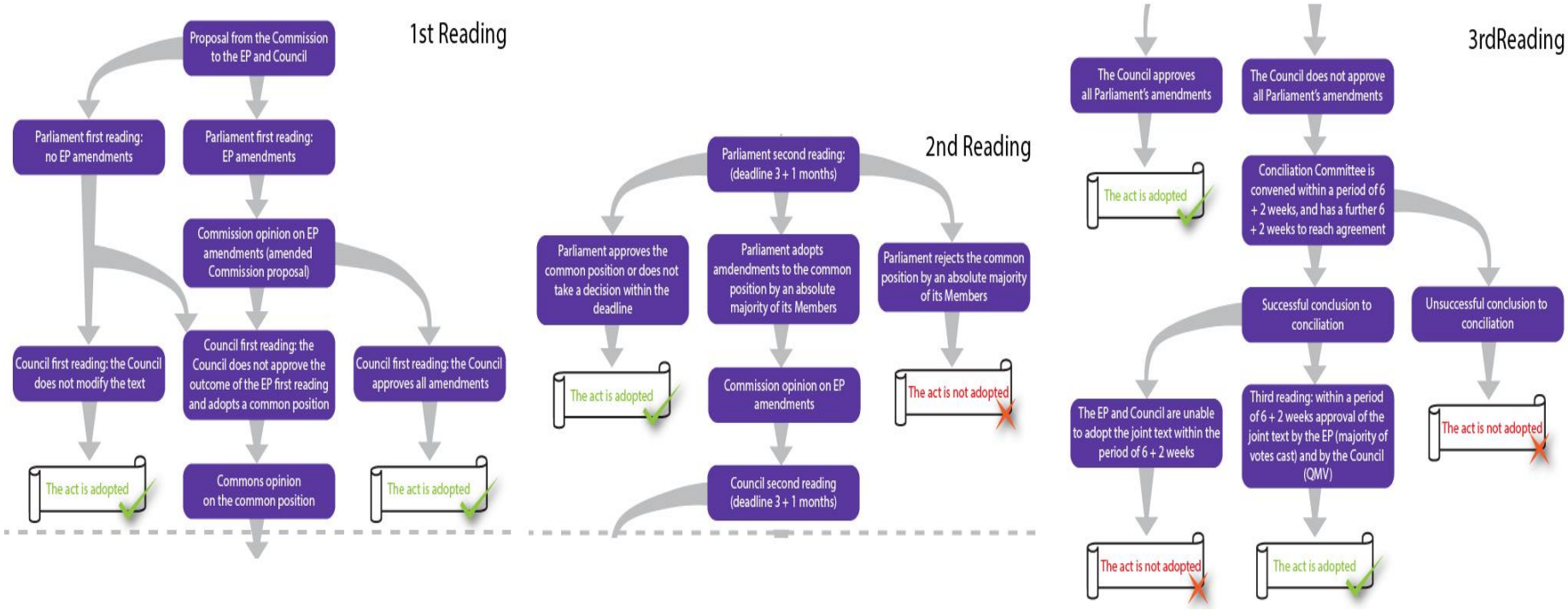
Legal Acts

- There are several types of legal acts which are applied in different ways:
  - A **regulation** is a law that is applicable and binding in all Member States directly. It does not need to be passed into national law by the Member States although national laws may need to be changed to avoid conflicting with the regulation.
  - A **directive** is a law that binds the Member States or a group of Member States, to achieve a particular objective. Usually, directives must be transposed into national law to become effective. Significantly, a directive specifies the result to be achieved: it is up to the Member States individually to decide how this is done.
  - A **decision** can be addressed to Member States, groups of people, or even individuals. It is binding in its entirety. Decisions are used, for example, to rule on proposed mergers between companies.

Ordinary legislative procedure (I)

- The configuration of any EU legislation is reached through the interaction of all the EU bodies.
- The way in which decision making takes place at EU level is known as the ordinary legislative procedure.
  - previously known as ‘codecision’
- It is a fairly complex process, always aiming at the maximum possible democratic legitimacy of decisions taken in the EU.
- Although it seems complicated, it is usually relatively simple.
- A European legal act is frequently adopted at the first or second reading.

Ordinary legislative procedure (II)



2 The Environment in the E.U.

- Introduction
- Environmental and economic policy parameters
- Aims and challenges of EU's environmental policy
- Development of EU's environmental policy
- Implementation of EU's environmental policy
- Basic management principles
- Tools for environmental funding and protection
- Tools for environmental awareness

Introduction

- The major environmental challenges facing Europe have evolved since the early days of European environmental policymaking.
- In the 1970s and 1980s the focus was on traditional environmental themes such as protecting species and improving the quality of the air we breathe or the water we drink by reducing emissions of pollutants.
- Now, emphasis is on a more **systematic approach** that takes account of links between various themes and their global dimension. This means moving from remediation to prevention of environmental degradation.

Environmental and economic policy parameters

- The basis of the **systematic approach** ensures that other areas such as agriculture, energy, transport, fisheries, regional development, research, innovation and external aid take fully into account the environmental consequences of their policy and funding decisions.
- ‘Greening’ the economy reduces environmental costs through more efficient use of resources.
- At the same time, new environmentally friendly technologies and techniques create employment, give a boost to the economy and strengthen the competitiveness of European industry.

Aims and challenges of EU's environmental policy

- Basic objectives of EU's environmental policy are:
  - enhance the Union's natural capital
  - turn the Union into a resource-efficient economy
  - safeguard the citizens' health and well being
- Much of our environment is protected by a body of European legislation.
- The implementation of these policies remains problematic. This is a key challenge that needs to be tackled through the correct implementation of existing legislation as well as through:
  - Cooperation across borders (see section 2.2, p. 10)
  - Public support (see section 2.3, p. 11)

Development of EU's env. policy

- The accession of a member state in the EU implies its obligation to work towards *'a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment'* (see Lisbon Treaty)
- The process of developing EU environmental policy and legislation is highly democratic
- Before tabling a proposal, the European Commission carries out extensive consultations with national authorities, NGOs, environmental experts and the general public for an opportunity to express their views.
- This clarifies many issues in advance and also develops a sense of '*ownership*' among key stakeholders of the policy being proposed.

Implementation of EU's env. policy

- The over 200 pieces of legislation to protect the environment count for little if they are not properly applied and enforced.
- The existence of reliable, solid data help in the development of policies and in the monitoring of their implementation.
  - The mandate of the European Environment Agency is the help in the development of informed decisions.
- Most recent policies encourage eco-innovation, i.e. reducing impacts on the environment, enhancing resilience to environmental pressures or achieving a more efficient and responsible use of natural resources.
- Failure to implement legislation has many adverse consequences on the environment and human health as well as legal action and potential fines to the member sates.

Basic management principles

- **The “Polluter Pays” Principle**
  - This basic principle within the Lisbon Treaty, means that the cost incurred in combating pollution and nuisances in the first instance falls to the polluter.
  - In practice, the polluting industries bear the expenditure corresponding to the measures necessary to combat pollution and/or bear the charges whose purpose is to encourage the polluter himself to take measures to reduce pollution and pay his share of the costs of collective purification measures.
- **Environmental Liability**
  - Based on the “polluter pays” principle, an important Directive establishes a framework for environmental liability, with a view to preventing and remedying environmental damage (even across borders).

Tools for environmental funding and protection

- The environmental policy is a quest for sustainability meaning that all economic sectors continue to deliver the services we need, without compromising the health of the natural world we all depend upon.

- **Funding:** The main specific vehicle for EU support for environmental policy is LIFE, which was established in 1992. It focuses on nature conservation and environmental protection (e.g. biodiversity protection, resource efficiency, climate action etc).

- **Protected areas:** Natura 2000 is a pan-European network designed to protect species and habitats in their natural environment, delimiting protection zones and restricting polluting economic activities.

Tools for environmental awareness

- The European Commission promotes awareness of the environment in many ways, for example:

- **Green Week:** An annual event held in Brussels when thousands of participants debate a key environmental issue, such as biodiversity.

- **Green Capital Award:** a European city which demonstrates environmental care and imagination is elected through a competition.

- **EU Ecolabel:** identifies products and services with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life-cycle, from the extraction of raw material through to production, use and disposal.

3 Specific environmental elements

- Chemicals
- Waste
- Air
- Water Resources
- Noise
- Forests
- Soil
- International cooperation

Chemicals

- Some chemicals can severely damage human health and others could be dangerous if not properly used.
- The EU has the most advanced chemicals legislation in the world, named **REACH**
  - Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals
- All chemical substances manufactured or imported into the EU must be registered with the Helsinki-based **European Chemicals Agency**.
- Companies are responsible for assessing and managing any risks from the chemicals they use or sell in the Union and for providing customers with the appropriate safety advice on how they should be handled.

Waste

- waste has a huge impact on the environment, causing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.
- The **Waste Framework Directive** introduces a 5-step waste hierarchy topped by prevention, followed by re-use, recycling and recovery, with disposal (e.g. landfill) as the last resort.
  - The Directives for Landfill and for Waste Incineration set standards and limits for the release of pollution into the air or into groundwater
  - Other pieces of legislation provide the framework for correct waste management of End-of-Life Vehicles, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), Batteries, Sewage sludge etc.
- Economic incentives such as landfill tax or “pay-as-you-throw” systems have been imposed in many European cities to reduce waste generation.

Air

- Air pollution ranks high among Europeans' environmental concerns and causes many premature deaths every year.
- Directive **2008/50/EC** on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe establishes a system for the assessment of ambient air quality in relation to specific gases and particulate matter. In particular, the Directive establishes:
  - Zones (eg. Urban, rural) to assess air quality
  - Criteria and assessment methods and thresholds for each pollutant
  - Limit values for the protection of human health and the environment.
- Member States shall maintain the levels of pollutants below the limits mentioned above and shall endeavour to preserve the best ambient air quality. These limits are also included in National Action Plans for Air Quality Improvement.

Public information on air quality & Penalties

- Up-to-date information on ambient concentrations of the pollutants must be routinely made available to the public and the bodies concerned.
- Where alert and information thresholds are exceeded, relevant information must be published, along with possible health effects and recommended behavior.
- Emergency preventative measures and measures to reduce the emissions such as limits on traffic may also be published, if necessary.
- In case of infringements of the national provisions adopted pursuant to this Directive and the National Action Plans, effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties are applicable.

Water Resources

- The **Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC,** EU's main piece of water legislation, aims at the correct management and protection of water resources and the prevention of further deprivation of all water bodies.
- It is an innovative Directive because it treats water as an ecological good and it promotes public participation in the decision making process.
- Member states should control the situation of their water bodies and formulate Action Plans aiming at a "*good ecological status*" for all water bodies between 2015-2027.
- The EU has also adopted the "**Water Blueprint**" to ensure that a sufficient quantity of good quality water is available for people's needs, the economy and the environment throughout the EU.

Marine strategy framework & Bathing Water

- A relevant EU Directive adopts a coordinated approach to managing human activities that have an impact on the **marine environment.**
- National measures must be introduced from 2015 to ensure marine litter does not harm the coastal and marine environment and aims to have *healthy marine waters* by 2020.
- The overall quality of bathing waters in the EU has improved markedly since 1990, as per the annual European bathing water quality report.
- Additionally, through EEA's water information system for Europe (WISE), the public can check the status of the water wherever they plan to swim.

Noise

- Noise pollution has been linked to a range of health problems and it also harms wildlife.
- The EU regulates noise from a number of sources, including motor vehicles, trains and equipment used outdoors.
- Under the **EU Directive 2002/49/EC** relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise, member states must draw up maps of noise levels in their larger towns and cities, and for major roads, railways and civil airports. They then need to come up with plans to tackle the problem.
- The aim is to control noise perceived by people by taking measures for noise reduction according to the noise producing activity (e.g. airports, hospitals, parks etc.)

Forests

- Forests as are an important sphere for the EU: they cover 37.8 % of European territory and provide a living for 3.4 million people (forestry and forest-based industries).
- Forests also play an important role in the context of climate change through carbon trapping and biomass production.
- They contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, to the protection of soil and water resources.
- Despite all these, forests are being cut down at an alarming rate around the world.
- The EU has called for global deforestation to be halved by 2020 and halted entirely by 2030.
- EU legislation now minimises the risk of illegally harvested timber being sold in the Union.

Soil

- Soil is defined as the top layer of the earth's crust, formed by mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms.
- The main threats to soil in Europe with huge economic repercussions are:
  - erosion, decline in organic matter and soil biodiversity, soil contamination, sealing, compaction, salinization, floods and landslides.
- There is no specific EU legislation on soil, but soil-related problems are addressed by specific measures in almost all environmental Directives.
- The EU has a **strategy** specifically addressing all the different threats to soil, particularly from farming practices and industrial processes, and guidelines on covering soil with impermeable materials.

International cooperation

- Natural resources like water, air, soils and biodiversity are **inter-connected** in complex ecosystems across borders.
- The EU calls for a region-wide system of environmental protection and recovery, at regional and world-wide level:
  - Priority is given to environmental cooperation with neighbouring countries (East Europe, North Africa, Middle East)
  - The EU played a key role at the 2010 biodiversity summit in Nagoya which led to an agreement on combating biodiversity loss
  - The Rio+20 conference on sustainable development held in Brazil in 2012, underlined the need for more concerted action to address global environmental challenges and the EU has taken steps to help translate the Rio commitments into actions, both within the EU and globally.

4

Climate change and European Policy

- Introduction
- Greenhouse gases
- Consequences of climate change
- International action
- “Europe 2020” strategy
- Emissions Trading System (ETS)
- Non-ETS emissions
- Adaptation & New Technologies
- Roadmap to 2050

Introduction

- The average surface temperature has risen by about 0.8 °C since 1880 globally but Europe's land area has warmed more, by some 1.4 °C.
- Scientific evidence indicates that irreversible and potentially catastrophic changes in the global environment are increasingly likely to occur if global average warming exceeds 2°C above the temperature in pre-industrial times.
- This conclusion is reflected in the internationally recognised scientific assessments of the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, which brings together the world's leading experts in atmospheric science.
  - 97 % of the world's climate scientists agree that climate change is happening and that human activity is causing it.

Greenhouse gases

- Greenhouse gases (GHG) are so called because they trap the sun's heat in the atmosphere in the same way as a greenhouse traps heat with glass. These gases are:
  - **carbon dioxide (CO_2)**: emitted by the burning of fossil fuels, wood or anything else made of carbon
  - **methane (CH_4)**: releases come from fossil fuel production, livestock husbandry, rice cultivation and waste management
  - **nitrous oxide (N_2O)**: emission sources are fertilisers, fossil-fuel combustion and industrial chemical production using nitrogen
  - **four types of fluorinated gases** developed specifically for industrial use: hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) and nitrogen trifluoride
- The average global temperature is rising because of an increase in greenhouse gases from human activities.

Consequences of climate change

- Some of the most serious consequences of climate change:
  - Rising sea levels threaten low-lying island states and coastal communities.
  - Extreme weather events jeopardise food production, especially in the poorest developing countries.
  - Heatwaves over the past decade have caused tens of thousands of premature deaths.
  - Water and food shortages could trigger regional conflicts, famine and refugee movements.
  - Some plant and animal species are at increased risk of extinction.
- The cost of not adapting to climate change is estimated to reach at least €100 billion a year by 2020 for the European Union as a whole.

International action

- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), agreed in 1992, was the first major international agreement to address climate change, supplemented by the **Kyoto Protocol** in 1997.
  - During the first commitment period (2008-2012), 37 industrialized countries and the European Community committed to reduce GHG emissions to an average of 5% against 1990 levels.
  - By 2010 the EU succeeded in cutting emissions by 15.5% since 1990, thus over-achieving its goal.
  - During the second commitment period (2013-2020), the EU, the Member States and Iceland have committed to jointly achieve a 20% reduction against 1990 levels.
  - However, this commitment involves 14% of global emissions making the need for an agreement with more countries more imminent; it is estimated that by 2020, 75% of global emissions will be produced in developing countries.

“Europe 2020” strategy

- Tackling climate change is one of the five headline themes of the wide-ranging “**Europe 2020” strategy** for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Its specific climate change targets aim to ensure that, by 2020:
  - EU greenhouse gas emissions are cut by 20 %
  - 20 % of energy comes from renewables and,
  - energy efficiency is improved by 20 %
- The first two of these targets were implemented by a ‘climate and energy package’ of binding legislation that became law in June 2009
  - see **Directive 2012/27/EC** which was renamed to **Directive 2013/12/EC** on improvement of energy efficiency
  - See Directive **2009/28/EC** on the national targets for the use of energy from renewable sources for 2020

Emissions Trading System (ETS)–(I)

- The single most important instrument to reduce emissions is the Emissions Trading System (ETS), which has created the world's biggest carbon market.
- It covers some 45 % of emissions from over 12 000 installations in the power-generating industry and other energy-intensive sectors in the Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
- The basic premise of the scheme is simple:
  - A limit or 'cap' is set on overall emissions from the installations covered, such as power stations. Within this limit, installations receive and buy allowances to emit a certain tonnage of greenhouse gases every year.
  - Those installations that produce less emissions than their allowed 'cap', can sell their surplus allowances.
  - (*see next slide*)

Emissions Trading System(ETS)-(II)

- Those that expect to produce higher emissions than their allowances cover, can either invest in measures or technologies to reduce their emissions or buy additional allowances on the market to cover some or all of their excess.
- This ability to trade, within the limits of the overall cap on emissions, creates flexibility. It ensures that emissions are cut where it is cheapest to do so and investments are directed to where the greatest emission savings can be made at the lowest cost.

- Since 2012, all airlines flying between airports within the EU have been part of the ETS, while the aim is to adopt this scheme in international flights as well.
- ‘Cap-and-trade’ systems like the EU ETS are spreading to other parts of the world and the EU wants to see the international carbon market develop through the creation of a network of compatible emission trading systems.

Non-ETS emissions

- Some 55% of the EU's emissions are not covered by the ETS (i.e. emissions from transport, buildings, agriculture and waste).
- Road transport contributes about 20% of the EU's total CO_2 emissions and it is the only major sector in the EU where GHG emissions are still rising (23% between 1990 and 2010).
- EU legislation (**Regulation (EC) No. 715/2007**) sets out clear emission limits which car manufacturers must respect.
- There is considerable scope for saving energy and reducing emissions from buildings.
- Under legislation on the energy performance of buildings, new constructions will have to use zero energy in net terms from 2021 onwards, meaning that they will have to produce as much energy as they use.

Adaptation & New Technologies

- Even if greenhouse gas emissions are sharply reduced, warming of the Earth will continue for decades.
- The European Climate Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT), launched in 2012, supports adaptation actions in Europe whereby,
  - Adaptation means anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage they can cause, or taking advantage of opportunities that may arise.
- The EU supports the development of innovative low-carbon technologies, such as the '**NER 300**' programme, as well as
  - technologies for capturing and storing carbon emissions
  - innovative renewable energy technologies
- Investing in the green economy is anticipated to increase employment and boost growth at the EU level.

Roadmap to 2050

- As its contribution to keeping global warming below 2 °C, the EU has committed to the long-term goal of cutting its emissions by 80–95 % of 1990 levels by 2050.
- In 2011, the Commission published a '**roadmap**' setting out how a competitive low-carbon economy could be achieved.
- At the same time, it focuses on issues such as:
  - Awareness
  - Inclusion of all activities in climate actions
  - Increase climate-related budget for the 2014-2020 period by 20%
  - Help and support to developing nations
- On the initiative of the EU and developing countries, a new agreement is due to be adopted in Paris in 2015, with the objective of **global climate treaty requiring action by all countries.**

5 7th Environment Action Programme

- Introduction
- Long-term vision
- Priority Objectives
- Priority Areas (Action areas 1-3)
- “Enabling Framework”(Action areas 4-7)
- 8th and 9th Action areas

Introduction

- Since the mid-1970s, EU environment policy has been guided by action programmes defining priority objectives to be achieved over a period of years..
- The 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in November 2013 and covers the period up to 2020.
- It’s a common strategy that should guide future action by the EU institutions and the Member States, who share responsibility for its implementation and the achievement of its priority objectives.

Long-term vision

- The programme is guided by a long-term vision:

  In 2050, we live well, within the planet's ecological limits. Our prosperity and healthy environment stem from an innovative, circular economy where nothing is wasted and where natural resources are managed sustainably, and biodiversity is protected, valued and restored in ways that enhance our society's resilience. Our low-carbon growth has long been decoupled from resource use, setting the pace for a safe and sustainable global society.

Priority Objectives

1. Protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital.
2. Turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy.
3. Safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing.
4. Maximise the benefits of the Union's environment legislation by improving implementation.
5. Increase knowledge about the environment and widen the evidence base for policy.
6. Secure investment for environment and climate policy and account for the environmental costs of any societal activities.
7. Better integrate environmental concerns into other policy areas and ensure coherence when creating new policy.
8. Make the Union's cities more sustainable.
9. Help the Union address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively.

Priority areas

- The programme identifies **three priority areas** where more action is needed:

1. to protect nature and strengthen ecological resilience,
2. to boost resource-efficient, low-carbon growth and,
3. reduce threats to human health and wellbeing linked to pollution, chemical substances, and the impacts of climate change.

First action area

- The first action area is linked to “natural capital”, i.e.
  - soils, productive land, seas and fresh water bodies, clean air, biodiversity
- Objective: to halt biodiversity loss and achieve good status for Europe’s waters and marine environment
- Relevant legally-binding commitments towards this direction:
  - Water Framework Directive
  - Air Quality Directive
  - Habitats and Birds Directives.
- The 7th EAP expresses the commitment of the EU, national authorities and stakeholders to speed up the delivery of the objectives of the **2020 Biodiversity Strategy** and the **Blueprint to Safeguard Europe’s Water Resources**.

Second action area

- The second action area concerns the conditions that will help transform the EU into a resource-efficient, low-carbon economy. This requires:
  - full delivery of the climate and energy package to achieve the 20-20-20 targets and agreement on the next steps for climate policy beyond 2020
  - significant improvements to the environmental performance of products over their life cycle
  - reductions in the environmental impact of consumption, including issues such as cutting food waste and using biomass in a sustainable way.
- Significant attention is also paid to:
  - the need for further action towards more efficient use of water, and
  - the need for indicators and targets for resource efficiency to be established, to guide public and private decision-makers.

Third action area

- The third key action area covers challenges to human health and wellbeing, such as air and water pollution, excessive noise, and toxic chemicals. In particular, the 7th EAP intends to:
  - improve implementation of existing legislation, and to secure further reductions in air and noise pollution
  - set out a long-term vision of a non-toxic environment and propose to address risks associated with the use of chemicals in products and chemical mixtures, especially those that interfere with the endocrine system
  - encourage innovation and the development of more sustainable solutions, towards a more predictable framework combined with more investment in knowledge.

“Enabling Framework”(I)

- The 7th EAP includes an **“enabling framework”** with the next four priority objectives to help Europe deliver on these goals:
- 4th action area:
  - **Better implementation of existing legislation** - if properly implemented, EU environment legislation creates a level playing-field and opportunities in the single market for sustainable investments, in addition to environmental benefits.
- 5th action area:
  - **Better information by enhancing the knowledge base** - the EAP aims to address the challenge of information gaps by improving the way data and other information is collected, managed and used across the EU, investing in research, and developing a more systematic approach to new and emerging risks. At the same time, the *precautionary principle* will continue to guide the EU’s approach to policy-making in this field.

“Enabling Framework”(II)

- 6th action area:
  - **Better and wiser investments for environmental protection -** this can only happen if impacts on the environment are properly accounted for and if **market signals** also reflect the true costs to the environment. It involves applying the *polluter-pays principle* more systematically, phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies, shifting taxation from labour towards pollution, and expanding markets for environmental goods and services.
- 7th action area:
  - **Better integration of environmental concerns into other policy areas** (cross compliance), such as energy, transport, agriculture, fisheries, trade, economy and industry etc. Systematically assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts of policy initiatives and full implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment legislation will ensure better decision-making and coherent policy approaches that deliver multiple benefits.

8th and 9th action areas

- The 7th EAP is completed with te 8th and 9th action areas.
- 8th action area:
  - **Make the Union's cities more sustainable** - the EAP aims to promote and expand initiatives that support innovation and best practice sharing in cities. The aim is to ensure that by 2020, most cities in the EU are implementing policies for sustainable urban planning and design, and are using the EU funding available for this purpose.
- 9th action area:
  - **Addressing international environmental and climate challenges more effectively** - Many of the priority objectives in the EAP can only be achieved in cooperation with partner countries or as part of a global approach. The EU and its Member States are committed to engage more effectively in working with international partners towards the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals. «*Living well, within the limits of our planet*» is a global aim.

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This teaching material has been prepared based on the following issues of the "The European Union explained" series of the European Commission and the Directorate General for Communication:

- **How the European Union works** – Your guide to the EU institutions (June 2013). doi: 10.2775/20055
- **Environment** – A healthy and sustainable environment for future generations (January 2013). doi: 10.2775/51135
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Chapter 5 on the 7th EAP has been prepared based on the following material of the European Commission and the Directorate General for Communication:

- **Living well, with the limits of our planet**. 7th EAP — The new general Union Environment Action Programme to 2020. (2014). doi: 10.2779/57220