META MORPHOSIS

Editorial

A EUROPEAN RESOURCE POLICY AS IF WE ONLY HAD ONE PLANET

The recent tensions between Russia and the West over Ukraine have heightened political awareness of the need for Europe to become more self-sufficient with respect to energy resources. But the reasons for Europe to develop a smarter approach to resource use go way beyond the politics of energy (in)security. Resource policy is one of the areas where environmental, economic and political considerations all deliver the same message: Europe needs to urgently reduce its resource use in absolute terms. Not least for reasons of fairness: the planet could not afford for the world’s population to consume resources at the level of the average European. For that, we would need three planets. Our over-consumption directly or indirectly constrains the possibility for the poorest countries to emerge from poverty and causes ever more environmental conflicts. So it is high time that measures to reduce Europe’s resource use are stepped up.

In the months before the European Parliament elections, the number of proposals coming out of the European Commission has dwindled to a trickle. One of the lucky few that are still expected to come out during the term of this Commission is what has become known as the ‘Circular Economy Package’, reflecting the ideal that all waste should become a new resource (and therefore not really waste) in a circular process.

With this package, the Commission plans to bring out policy proposals that take forward the political rhetoric of the Europe 2020 Strategy’s Resource Efficiency Flagship initiative and the Resource Efficiency Roadmap. It should also build on the advice developed by the European Resource Efficiency Platform in which the EEB is represented.

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A study commissioned by the EEB has underlined the case for stronger resource efficiency policy, describing it as imperative for Europe. It highlighted the benefits generated in the form of greater job creation; reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, land use, water use and material use; and cost savings for households resulting from higher levels of waste prevention, re-use and recycling. It found that an ambitious scenario with significantly increased reuse and recycling targets and food waste prevention could reduce carbon emissions by nearly 400 million tons yearly and create around 750,000 jobs by 2025 – which is incidentally a significantly higher number than the roughly half a million jobs that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership currently under negotiation are claimed but unlikely to achieve.

The quality and ambition of the Commission’s proposal in the area of waste policy, and whether it will include more ambitious recycling targets as well as prevention targets, will also be a test for the credibility of the European Commission’s REFIT Programme where EU waste policy has undergone an extensive fitness check in 2013. This found that waste prevention should be integrated into a number of the ‘older’ waste directives. It makes the setting of waste reduction targets for a series of waste streams, including food and industrial waste, an important litmus test for the EU’s better regulation as well as its resource efficiency agenda.

Beyond waste policy, the circular economy package provides an important opportunity to advance the development of a set of indicators for resource efficiency and to set targets that will ensure an absolute reduction in resource consumption. The possibility of a headline indicator based on GDP is still under discussion but would on its own not be sufficient to achieve the sort of reductions required. That is why the EEB together with FoE Europe are seeking complementary indicators targeting water, land, GHGs and total material consumption. Inspiration can be drawn from the example of Japan which has set for itself for years a real circular economy indicator, measuring the ratio of reused and recycled material to the total material used, recorded at 15% in 2012 (OECD 2013).

Last but not least, it is now time to get serious on product policy and use the ecodeign legislation to make sure that products are designed to last longer, be repaired, upgraded and reused, and finally be easier to recycle. The opportunities linked to the ongoing review of the Ecodesign Directive and Packaging & Packaging Waste Directive should not be missed.

While measures improving resource efficiency are without doubt an important part of the solution, they do not address the way in which the current economic model acts as a driver for over-consumption and are on their own unlikely to be sufficient to bring Europe’s resource footprint to a sustainable level. In the longer term, more radical measures such as resource caps will also need to be explored.

http://www.eeb.org/EEB/17/140015d-4E8BB960D-S066-8741-D8CC3E648D15D0F2

To tackle inequality and injustice, civil society groups also demanded stricter regulatory frameworks for transnational corporations to ensure that they are fully transparent, respect human rights and are held accountable whenever they violate these rights. Corporate accountability must not rely on the goodwill and self-regulation of corporations.

The other hot issue was universality, under which all countries must work on all goals, with national targets and strategies on national and local levels. Those should be presented and implemented in National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS). So there is hope that the new European Commission will dust off the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, update it and finally make it the overall framework for all internal and external policies. At the April session of the OWG, there will be a debate on which goals and targets must be set.

For the 19 focus areas see: http://sustainedevelopment.un.org/focussdg.html

On 18 December 2013, the European Commission adopted a package of proposals to improve air quality in the European Union. The “Clean Air Policy Package” has two main components: a long awaited proposal to revise the National Emission Ceilings (NEC) Directive and a proposal for a Directive to limit emissions from medium-scale combustion (MCP) installations with a rated thermal input between 1 and 50 megawatts.

The role of the NEC Directive is crucial as it is the only instrument limiting overall emissions of major harmful air pollutants in the EU. It helps to improve the air we breathe and also protects ecosystems against the adverse effects of air pollution. The MCP proposal will fill a regulatory gap left by the Industrial Emissions Directive which only covers installations bigger than 50 megawatts.

The Commission’s initiative had been keenly anticipated due to the widespread effects of air pollution. Despite some progress made in the 1990s, for instance in eliminating most of Europe’s acidification problems, the EU is still suffering badly from the effects of air pollution. Poor air quality leads to acute health problems, especially in cities and for sensitive parts of the population such as children and the elderly. Each year, air pollution is responsible for over 400,000 early deaths. The health-related economic costs are enormous, amounting to between €330 and €940 billion for the entire EU in the year 2010 alone. This includes €15 billion from lost workdays, €4 billion from healthcare costs, €3 billion in crop yield loss and €1 billion in damage to buildings.

The health costs are only those linked to the treatment of chronic bronchitis, meaning that the total health bill is likely to be substantially higher.

Other impacts include damage to buildings, crops and ecosystems, mainly through widespread eutrophication of soil and water on over 60% of EU territory – including 70% of protected Natura 2000 areas.

The reactions were very diverse. Member States were in favour of grouping priorities in focus areas, accounting also for interlinkages. NGOs and groups representing Children & Youth, Women and Indigenous Peoples on the other hand expressed their disappointment at the report and regretted that a historic opportunity to realise a Copernican-scale revolution in globally promoting the new paradigm of development and its relationship with the environment was being missed. The text is, unfortunately, still too much focussed on the traditional idea of “development” as economic growth, industrialisation and infrastructure. A representative from the Southern NGO Network, IBON, commented “Governments must make clear unequivocal commitments to a new course for the world that ensures the planet’s limited resources are used equitably and responsibly, acknowledging the historical debt of the few to the many, and our responsibility to future generations.”
Considering the urgency of the situation, the level of ambition of the Commission’s proposals is surprisingly and worryingly insufficient. The NEC emission targets to be achieved by 2020 are less ambitious than those which would be achieved under a business-as-usual scenario, i.e. less than the levels which Member States would achieve by merely implementing existing obligations. The Commission also decided not to include binding targets for 2025 despite having initially considered their inclusion, instead postponing all efforts to 2030. This five-year delay was one of business groups’ main demands and represents a major setback for health and environmental protection.

The bar could also have been set higher for the MCP proposal. The proposed limits are much weaker than the levels which current ‘best available techniques’ would achieve and would only kick in after 2025 and 2030 for existing installations.

If adopted without any change, the Commission’s proposals would still leave enormous health problems unaddressed. In 2020, air pollution would still cause 140,000 premature deaths and would cost the EU around €243-775 billion. In 2030, after the adoption and application of the full package, it is estimated that over 260,000 premature deaths would still be occurring. This leaves us far from the EU’s long-term air quality objective which is to attain "levels of air quality that do not give rise to significant negative impacts on and risks to human health and the environment". Following the recent adoption of the 7th Environmental Action Programme, the Commission had a perfect opportunity to establish a clear pathway towards the attainment of the EU’s objective and the World Health Organisation’s air quality guidelines. Instead, the Commission failed to indicate by when and how these objectives will be met.

It is now in the hands of Member States and the new European Parliament to show citizens that air quality and people’s health is a priority which deserves more commitments in the near, medium and long term. It will require political courage but will yield great benefits: millions of healthier citizens, a richer environment and considerable monetary savings. Why wait any longer? •

Louise Duprez
EEB Senior Policy Officer – Air Quality

THE EU’S FUTURE CLIMATE AMBITION
IN DOUBT

The European Commission caused a stir when it released its White Paper on the EU’s post-2020 climate and energy policy in January. The proposal lacks both the ambition to seriously address climate change and details progress made to date in developing clean technologies.

The Commission proposes an inadequate greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction target of 40% for 2030, accompanied by a target of reaching at least a 27% share of renewables in the EU’s energy mix. The renewables target represents barely more than “business as usual”, and what is more, will not be divided into national targets to oblige Member States to take action. Discussions on a target for energy savings were simply postponed until after the review of the Energy Efficiency Directive this summer.

The approach taken in the White Paper falls far short of what scientists generally agree with, an almost unprecedented degree of consensus, is necessary to avoid dangerous climate change. Moreover, it comes at a time when EU leadership for global action is required more than ever - ahead of the Paris climate conference in 2015 when the world is set to adopt a new international climate agreement.

The EEB would like to see a greenhouse gas reduction target of at least 60% adopted for 2030 in order to put Europe on the path to reaching at least a 95% reduction by 2050 and consequently minimise the risk of overshooting the 2°C target. This would require aiming to reach and go beyond the upper end of the EU’s long-term commitment to reduce emissions by 80-95% by 2050. Furthermore, an adequate GHG target should be backed by a non-binding target for sustainable renewables and a target to save at least 40% of energy. Importantly, all three targets need to be legally binding on the Member States in order to ensure their delivery.

Binding renewables and energy savings targets are necessary to continue the market transition that has started under the 2020 package towards green energy and technologies that create jobs and growth in Europe. While the EU is on track to reaching its GHG and renewables targets, it is expected to miss the energy efficiency target, which was the only non-binding one of the three. At the same time, there is enormous potential to reduce our energy consumption – and cut our energy bills in the process. The EU has a cost-effective end-use energy savings potential of 41% for 2030, t and tapping this would result in over €239 billion annual net savings for households and industry due to lower energy bills. It would also help to reduce the Europe’s reliance on imported energy, particularly pertinent given the current situation in Ukraine. It is therefore crucial that a binding energy savings target is set as part of the review of the Energy Efficiency Directive this summer.

Instead of reaping the clear economic and social benefits of ambitious action including reduced health costs, GDP growth and job creation, the proposal rather bow to the interests of the tired fossil fuel lobby.

What is really needed is a forward-looking plan for Europe to transition to a low-carbon energy system that will meet our energy needs sustainably in the long run. Where the Commission has failed to provide vision for the future, it is now up to the Member State leaders and the European Parliament to take initiative into the plans.

Incidentally, the European Parliament already confronted the Commission when its Plenary voted on an own-initiative report on the 2030 policy in early February.

The main objectives are:
• To accelerate the shift towards SCP in all countries by supporting regional and national policies and initiatives;
• To increase resource efficiency and decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, creating decent job and economic opportunities, contributing to poverty eradication and shared prosperity;
• Support capacity building and facilitate access to financial and technical assistance for developing countries, supporting the implementation of SCP activities at all levels;
• Serve as an information and knowledge-sharing platform on SCP to enable all stakeholders to exchange policies, tools, initiatives and best practices, thereby enhancing cooperation.

Governmental and civil society focal points have been established under the 10YFP to guide the programme and to promote its implementation. The EEB has been selected as the European Focal Point for NGOs. It is up to the European NGOs to decide when the programme to focus on. For now the existing programmes are:

Consumer information; Sustainable lifestyles and education; Sustainable public procurement; Sustainable buildings and construction; Sustainable tourism, including ecotourism. Other programmes will be added later, likely including one on sustainable food and agriculture.

Programmes will serve as “umbrellas” that bring together existing and/or develop new initiatives and partnerships to fill capacity and knowledge needs and “gaps”. They will build synergies and cooperation between stakeholders, and allow scaling up and replication of policies, voluntary measures, management practices, and partnerships promoting the shift to SCP patterns. They will use a mix of instruments and engage all stakeholders: governments, business, consumers, NGOs and the other major groups. Programmes are expected to deliver capacity building and technical support at regional, sub-regional, national and local levels. •


Leida Rijnhout – EEB Director of Global Policies and Sustainability

Achieving sustainable consumption and production (SCP), often seen as a fundamental tenet of sustainable development, is a tough nut to crack. A genuine SCP model involves all sectors of the economy and many vested interests are wary of such a transition.

At the UNCED summit in 1992, countries already recognized the necessity of SCP when they declared “The major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production…” (Agenda 21, Rio de Janeiro). This was repeated in 2002 in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation but it was only in 2012 that countries showed real commitment to SCP in adopting the 10 Year Framework of Programs on sustainable consumption and production (10YFP) in the Rio+20 outcome document “The Future We Want”.

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A healthy environment for a good quality of life

The Green 10 top ten demands for the 2014 European Parliament elections

Europe is struggling to find its way out of multiple crises. Austerity measures in reaction to the economic crisis are causing untold human suffering. The environmental crisis is continuing apace, endangering the well-being of future generations. Meanwhile, little has been done to put the region on an environmentally sustainable path. Ten of the leading environmental organisations in the EU, representing over 20 million Europeans, believe that the answers to these crises lie in smarter and more sustainable EU policies. This will help Europe create new jobs, regain competitiveness, address the climate crisis and improve quality of life within the limits of our planet.

The European Parliament, a driver for sustainable change

To respond to these crises, new Members of Parliament elected in 2014 should focus on the following ten key priorities:

1. Create new jobs, shift the tax burden from labour to resource consumption, and eliminate environmentally-harmful subsidies through a new economic strategy based on sustainability principles.

The EU should align its spending and lending with its environmental targets, ensuring that the European Investment Bank lends money to projects that protect the environment and our climate. All these measures will help combat climate change, reduce resource consumption and safeguard biodiversity.

2. Ensure the EU adopts three separate, ambitious and binding targets for renewable energy, greenhouse gas emissions cuts and energy efficiency for 2030.

To help keep global temperature increases below two degrees centigrade, these three targets must be met in a sustainable way. This means ending harmful bioenergy including biofuels, stopping the use of polluting fossil fuels in energy, industry, buildings and transport, and phasing out nuclear energy as fast as possible. Such policies will deliver a healthier environment, a better quality of life, new jobs, greater energy security, and technological innovation.


The strengthening of the EU’s biodiversity strategy, the enforcement of flagship conservation issues such as Natura 2000 (Europe’s network of protected areas) and the implementation of the reformed fishing and waters laws will help protect our habitats, forests, animals, waters and soils.

4. Put in place comprehensive resource-reduction, product and waste policies.

Europe is using more than its fair share of the world’s resources – exacerbating global social inequalities and environmental damage. Policies are needed which tackle this overconsumption and put Europe on a path to eliminating waste, and encourage quality, resource and energy-efficient products. Food waste is a particular problem and should be cut by at least 50%.

5. Adopt measures to reduce the use of pesticides and replace hazardous chemicals.

Many chemicals, including nano-materials, used in the production of goods are a threat to our health and wildlife. For example, pesticides that kill bees are still widely used in Europe, despite the vital role that pollinators play in food production. The Parliament must adopt measures to reduce the use of pesticides and exposure to endocrine disruptors, which are chemicals that disrupt our hormonal systems and increase rates of breast cancer, diabetes and infertility problems.

6. Limit air pollution and bring levels in line with latest health recommendations.

The World Health Organisation recently classified outdoor air pollution as a cancer-causing agent. The Parliament should set ambitious and binding air pollution ceilings for 2020 and 2025. It should also limit air pollution from major sources such as power plants, agriculture, shipping, construction and domestic heating. This would improve the quality of the air we breathe and bring down cancer and respiratory disease rates.

7. End European and global deforestation and forest degradation.

Forest loss is increasing greenhouse gas emissions and threatening wildlife and the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. The newly elected Members of Parliament should adopt, by 2015, an action plan to reduce the overall impact of EU consumption on forests, eliminate goods linked to deforestation, and support efforts by developing countries to tackle rainforest destruction.

8. Oppose any new free trade deals, especially agreements with the US and Canada, that jeopardise strong social and environmental standards.

In particular, the European Parliament should oppose any deal that includes an investor-state dispute settlement measure. This clause would allow private corporations to legally challenge democratically agreed EU, national and local laws, which preserve citizen rights, health and the environment. The EU-Canada deal is likely to include such a clause and should be rejected to avoid setting a dangerous precedent.

9. Put the environment at the heart of the global development goals to end poverty.

Environmental protection should be at the centre of post-2015 global sustainable development goals to help eradicate poverty. The Parliament must ensure the global development agenda is implemented in all relevant EU policies.

10. Guarantee the right to information, participation and justice for European citizens.

Greater transparency in EU decision-making and lobbying activities would strengthen EU legitimacy, help ensure a balanced composition of EU advisory groups and avoid politicians’ conflicts of interest. The European Parliament must adopt new policies to guarantee these rights and good practices. It must also ensure the public rights to information and participation in decision-making in environmental matters, at both EU and national levels, are respected.

What can you do?

Send this Manifesto to your candidates running for election to the European Parliament on 22-25 May 2014 and ask them to support these 10 key demands. By doing so, you are joining over 20 million Europeans who want the environment to be a priority in the next European Parliament.

Remember: What they decide in Europe will affect your everyday life – and will have global impacts for our and future generations.

www.green10.org | December 2013
**LONG-AWAITED IMPROVEMENTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS ON THE WAY**

The European Parliament Plenary voted in March for revisions that, once adopted and in force, will strengthen the EU Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This was warmly welcomed by the EEB which believes that in economically difficult times it is even more important to have a sound tool limiting the risk of environmental protection being degraded in favour of short-term economic profit.

The EIA Directive is one of the EU’s major instruments for environment and health protection. Since its adoption almost 30 years ago, only relatively small amendments were made. However, an update was long overdue to take account of political developments, scientific findings and shortcomings revealed through the impressive list of complaints related to the EIA Directive. The directive covers a wide range of both public and private projects such as dams, bridges, four-lane roads, chemical factories, waste disposal and the extraction of petroleum and natural gas, to name just a few.

Vital, while the NGOs’ demand to remove the threshold for mandatory EIA of shale gas projects was not taken up, other measures were introduced which would strengthen the assessment of shale gas projects. For instance, a developer would no longer be able to submit five small shale-gas projects in the same area (known as ‘salami slicing’) hoping to remain below the threshold and avoid an EIA. Their impacts will now be accumulated and assessed as one big project.

The final text, while falling well short of what NGOs had originally hoped for, includes many improvements helping to overcome some of the loopholes in the current directive. It requires the independence of experts and that conflict of interest must be avoided. Additional environmental factors must be taken into account such as biodiversity and climate change. The text also seeks to ensure better provision of information to, and participation of, the public, which are crucial elements to improve the respect of EU environmental law in general.

The text still needs formal approval by the Council but as Member States at a COREPER meeting in December voted in favour of the final compromise text, this is expected to be a formality. Regina Schneider EEB Head of Communications, Enforcement Co-ordinator

**WASTE PREVENTION: WHEN LESS IS MORE**

Worldwide, the quantity of waste produced is increasing rapidly. In the EU around 3.5 tonnes per capita of waste is produced annually, including more than 400 kg of domestic waste. All the projections available today tend to show that this increase on the global level will continue at least until 2030. At EU level, no real decoupling between waste and economic growth is expected before 2020, even if this is already happening in some EU countries.

For the EEB, the absolute priority is to prevent waste generation and reduce toxicity. If we do not pay more attention to limiting waste generation and turning discarded materials into new resources, we will not only lose additional pressure on our environment but also endanger our economy which relies heavily on imported resources. Prevention needs to be addressed at the design stage of products, but also all along the consumption chain; from when a product is produced, then purchased, to when it is eventually discarded. Despite supposedly being a top priority for years, prevention instruments have yet to be fully deployed and good practice at national and local levels are far from being widespread. There is an urgent need to create the right conditions for waste reduction through regulatory and economic instruments, as without them progress simply will not be made.

The revised EU Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) required that Member States establish national waste prevention programmes by 12 December 2013 (Article 29.1). Despite this obligation, only 14 Member States submitted their programmes on time.

A summary of the first handful of plans shows a range of different approaches. Only four plans include quantified reduction targets, others contain less quantifiable goals such as the decoupling of waste generation and economic growth. The most concrete seems to be a programme for the Brussels capital region aiming to reduce household food waste to 5 kg per capita/year and paper waste from businesses by 30 kg per worker/year or packaging at schools by 1 kg per student/year. Most countries were cautious about targets, but aimed to cut waste generation in relation to GDP, number of employees and population or simply to “stabilise” the amount of municipal waste at the level of the year 2000 and subsequently reduce downwards from 2016.

While all the programmes cover the waste streams from households and public services, and most of them cover construction, retail and transport, only a few of them tackle agriculture and mining waste.

The European Environmental Agency has summarized those programmes already received and will continue with a detailed review which will be available at http://scp.eionet.europa.eu/facts/WPP.

The EEB is promoting the following recommendations for the revised Waste Framework Directive:

- Set out the waste prevention objectives and determine ambitious specific qualitative or quantitative measures. The aim of objectives and measures should be to break the link between economic growth and the generation of waste. This can be achieved by (inter alia) setting targets on food waste and preparation for reuse in municipal solid waste. Moreover general waste reduction targets on residual and industrial/commercial waste could be set.

A “fitness check” shows that strong prevention measures need to be integrated in the old Directives (as expressed in the BIOIS study on ex-post evaluation of EU Waste Directives).

- Set out waste reduction targets for industrial/commercial waste to promote industrial symbiosis.

Piotr Barczak
EEB Policy Officer - Waste

This diagram illustrates the link between waste prevention and waste minimization:

Source: Adapted from OECD Reference Manual, Strategic Waste Prevention, p. 38
HOT OFF THE PRESS!

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WILL A BIOFUELS POLICY REVISION EVER SEEN THE LIGHT OF DAY?

In December 2013, after lengthy discussions in ad hoc working groups, the European Ministers failed to strike a deal on reducing the environmental and social impacts of the EU’s demand for biofuels – specifically the Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC) effects. In doing so they prolonged the current harmful situation and the development of a technology that can increase net greenhouse gas emissions compared to fossil fuels, to the detriment of sustainable investments.

Member States refused to support the Presidency compromises for very different reasons, resulting in an unholy blocking minority. Denmark, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium were concerned that the compromise failed to address the damaging impacts of biofuels properly. More worryingly, others like Poland and Hungary found it still too ambitious after having pushed the proposed 5% cap on land-based biofuels to a staggering 7%. A 7% cap would have meant 400 million additional tons of CO2 emissions compared to the Commission’s proposal.

While the Lithuanian proposal fell short of what is needed to make Europe’s biofuels policy sustainable, the situation in which we are left now, with no deal and a risk of crucial reforms on biofuels targets being abandoned, is much worse, especially as the Greek EU Presidency has not worked actively to unlock the stalemate so far (while they initially put ILUC as a tentative item for the 4 March Council, they later withdrew it at the last minute).

We are now hoping that the Greek Presidency will actually work to find a deal before the end of the Presidency that will allow for a reform of Europe’s costly and destructive biofuels policy.

GLOBAL ATLAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS

The Environmental Justice Organisations, Liabilities and Trade (EJOLT) project recently launched its Global Atlas of Environmental Justice. The atlas is a visually attractive and interactive online mapping platform detailing around 1000 environmental conflicts (and growing). It allows users to search and filter across 100 fields and to browse by commodity, company, country and type of conflict. With one click you can find a global snapshot of nuclear, waste or water conflicts, or the places where communities have an issue with a particular mining or chemical company. By clicking on any location you can find the actors and a conflict description with the outcome and sources. Featured maps will focus on issues ranging from fracking to maps on the violent targeting of activists and more.

The Atlas is a product of the EU-funded EJOLT project which the EEB inherited when ANPED became the EEB’s Global Policies and Sustainability Unit. In an interview with the Atlas, Nick Meynen, EEB Communications Officer for Global Policies and Sustainability, states the project is a response to the need for a visual communication on what is needed to make Europe’s environmental policies work. The Atlas received much press attention.

IPCC REPORT HIGHLIGHTS CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS AND COSTS

In the last week of March the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) brought out the second part of its Fifth Assessment Report on the risks posed by climate change impacts and adaptation needs. The report, compiled by the world’s leading academics in the field of climate science, highlights the ways in which climate change is already negatively affecting the people and ecosystems on every continent, including Europe.

The EU’s response to climate change thus far has been far from adequate to address the challenges the IPCC outlined. The Commission’s January White Paper proposed targets lacking the ambition needed to set Europe on the path that is required for the EU to reach the upper end of its 2050 target of an 85-90% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions as a minimum.

The EEB’s Global Policies and Sustainability Unit is in charge of raising awareness of the project. On 19 March, the EEB and UNEP held a well-attended event in Brussels to launch the Atlas and discuss environmental justice issues. The Atlas received much press attention.

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES, SLOVAKIA

The centre for Sustainable Alternatives (CEPTA) is a Slovakian NGO founded in 2005, based in the small town of Zvolen, located just 25 km from the geographical centre of Europe. Our aim is to promote sustainable alternatives in different fields, according to our capacities and knowledge. We combine the scientific approach and campaigning to promote public participation, nature conservation and environmental protection at local, national and international level. With our small team we focus at the moment on air protection in national policy (PM10 reduction strategy, EU structural funds 2014-2020), local actions, and promoting cycling and are currently developing a new methodology and certification scheme for Ecodriving more information here: http://bit.ly/TmVj5k. We organize national and international events - workshops and conferences sharing best practice, knowledge and experience.

Our other fields of interest include: sustainable agriculture we coordinate the national platform Agro-Eko Forum with 17 NGO members, promoting sustainable agriculture, forestry and rural development. On top of this we are active in pesticides use reduction (National Action Plan, Rural development programme, GMO free, and activities focused on sustainable and community supported agriculture) and waste management, where we closely cooperate with municipalities. At the local level we helped to found and now run a local food community in Zvolen town distributing local products from small farms.

We have been members of the international network Pesticides Action Network since 2007. Since 2010 we have been active in the European campaign Soott free for the Climate and since 2013 we are members of the European Environmental Bureau. At the national level we are members of the environmental NGO platform EkoForum.

http://www.cepta.sk

GREENING ISTRIA

Green Istria (Zelena Istra) is a non-governmental environmental organization based in the Istria region of Croatia. Zelena Istra was founded in 1995. Together with Friends of the Earth Croatia (Zelena akcija) and Greenpeace Croatia, and with the financial support of the European Climate Foundation, we are campaigning against the coal-fired power plant Plomin C on the Northern Adriatic coast in Istrian County. The Croatian electricity utility (HEP), a state-owned company, has aggressively pushed several new power plant projects - mainly hydro, and one coal-based - a 500 MW power plant in Plomin. We believe that the Plomin C project presents a high risk for potential investors, as well as a high cost for the Croatian public in both monetary and health terms. A study by Greenpeace - using European Environmental Agency methodology - estimated the total external costs of Plomin C at EUR 124.8 million annually and 680 premature deaths.

Recently the NGOs and local residents from the Plomin area, filed an official appeal against the Environmental Permit for Plomin C. They argued it is incompatible with the Istria region spatial plan and the environmental-impact assessment’s insufficient consideration of the health and climate impact aspects of the project. The Regional Prefect of Istria had also filed a legal appeal against the approval. The case was concluded in October 2013, when the presiding magistrate declined to examine the question of Plomin C’s non-compliance with the Istria spatial plan. Friends of the Earth Croatia has since submitted a further complaint - to the Constitutional Court. Green Action/Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace Croatia and Green Istria have invited the potential investors to reconsider their interest in the Plomin C project due to its legal challenges, uncertain economic feasibility and strong local opposition to the project, inviting them instead to invest in other more sustainable technologies in Croatia.

By Ivan Divkovic – Green Istria


http://zaustavimoplominc.org/
FEATURED PUBLICATION

ADVANCING RESOURCE EFFICIENCY IN EUROPE

This EEB report details the wide-ranging benefits that an ambitious waste policy at EU level could deliver by 2030. These include greenhouse gas savings, job creation, and reduced land use. It calls on the European Commission to set specific targets for waste prevention, re-use and recycling.

COMING AND GOING

ANPED – The Northern Alliance for Sustainability – effectively merged with the EEB at the beginning of 2014. Its three former staff members now form the EEB’s Global Policies and Sustainability (or GPS) unit. They are Leida Rijnhout, who is now the EEB Director of Global Policies and Sustainability, Nick Meynen - the Communications Officer, and Sonia Goicoechea – project officer.

In March 2014 the EEB also welcomed Sébastien Pant as its new Communications Officer for Air and Resource Efficiency.

Charlotte Lepitre is the EEB’s new intern on agriculture and bioenergy.

Jakob Villioth is doing an internship in the global policies and sustainability unit focusing on environmental justice.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW CAP IN ACTION: WHAT CHANCE LEFT FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION?

Organized by Elliniki Etairia (the Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage) and the EEB

7 May 2014 - Athens

The reformed Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) was finally published in the Official Journal of the EU in December 2013. Even if the greening is now ‘official’ on paper, it will almost certainly be a failure on our farmland because of all the dilution of greening measures, exemption mechanisms, and equivalence systems.

However, there is hope that through implementation Member States could still help the environment as they have been granted significant flexibility in how they implement the policy. Rural development programmes, if properly designed, can also achieve significant outcomes for biodiversity, soil, water and climate.

To discuss these preliminary choices of the Member States, the EEB and Elliniki Etairia are organizing a conference bringing together the European Commission, Member State representatives, NGOs, farmers etc.

Participants can register here: http://bit.ly/1gJsusk

A series of factsheets about the myth of the green reform can be found on the EEB website here: http://www.eeb.org/index.cfm/library/ [Under agriculture]

BLUE GROWTH

Co-organised by Elliniki Etairia, Ecocity, The Mediterranean SOS Network and the EEB

A seminar on the Blue Growth priority of the Greek EU Presidency, given the special interest it presents for Mediterranean countries.

WHEN: Athens, 3 June 2014 Time: 9am – 5 pm
WHERE: Athens University