Editorial

As Europe’s new MEPs find their places in the various parliamentary committees and the options for the likely make-up of the new Commission are steadily narrowed down, the debate on how to interpret the results of the election – a debate which erupted already in the last months before the elections – continues. Most agree that the results show that the EU must change and reform, but on the question of how, opinions are shaped by domestic political circumstance and range from calls for a ‘less bossy, less interfering Brussels’ to a Brussels that puts solidarity before austerity. As regards the former view, the success of the Eurosceptics in several countries has certainly been seen as a call for ‘less Europe’ and it has been assumed in some quarters that environmental policy is one of the areas in which there should be a slowdown, if not a reversal, in the development of policy instruments at the EU level and a greater degree of subsidiarity.

In fact, environmental policy is an area where the EU has a solid track record in delivering results on things that most people care about, such as clean air and water, protection from harmful chemicals and enjoying nature, even if those results are often not enough. Pragmatic Eurosceptic politicians, as well as those with explicitly pro-environment agendas like Italy’s Five Star movement, should acknowledge that without European laws, their electorates would be living in a more polluted environment, with all that that entails (higher rates of cancer, asthma, etc).

An increasingly commonly shared interpretation of the election results among EU policy makers, including future Commission President Juncker, is that Europe should concentrate on the ‘big issues’ and refrain from addressing details. Appealing as this may sound, the problem is that one first has to agree on what the big issues are – logically, they do not come much bigger than climate change, and yet this is probably not what
most proponents of this approach had in mind. But even more important, even if it were possible for everyone to agree on what those big issues are and accept the EU acting in those areas, it will still require EU policy makers to deal with percentage points, rules, structures and cut off criteria in order to actually achieve the big result. And inevitably some vested interest groups will be upset about the outcome and complain about ‘Brussels interference and red tape’. For example, the grand idea of substantially reducing European dependence on Russian gas, around which European leaders have so uniformly rallied in recent months, will not happen by itself and inevitably boils down to some not-so-grand nitty-gritty measures to improve energy efficiency such as those which need to be strengthened under the EU’s eco-design legislation – the type of measures from which some of the very same politicians like to distance themselves the moment someone who likes to continue selling inefficient products complains about undue interference.

It has been too easily accepted that the Eurosceptics and the anti-environmental deregulatory crusade led by the dinosaurs from Old Business are inseparable allies. Indeed, there is quite some overlap which has been successfully exploited. But the wish of people to have decisions made less remotely is not necessarily or always incompatible with the wish to have a strong and effective regulatory framework – and certainly not incompatible with the wish to live in an unpolluted environment. The rise of Euroscepticism being a fact, the environmental movement would do well to seek out points of common interest with the new arrivals – without extending this to extremist, anti-democratic politicians espousing fascist or racist ideas and policies.

It will be crucial that the new Commission, with its exclusive right of legislative initiative, thinks in a joined up way and has the intellectual clarity and backbone to come forward with much-needed new legislative proposals in the field of the environment. How the new Parliament will then react to such proposals will remain a matter of speculation for a while longer, especially because many seats have gone to new political groups or even individuals whose political agenda is not so easily simplified to being pro or anti EU, or pro or anti-environment. In any event, while the election results do not at first glance seem promising for the environment, it is to be hoped that the more ideologically-driven rhetoric will dissipate and that common-sense will prevail.

GREEKS IMPRESS ON INVASIVE SPECIES, LESS ON CLIMATE AND CHEMICALS

As the Greek Presidency of the European Union came to an end in June 2014, the EEB reviewed the Presidency’s performance on all environmental issues. The most noteworthy achievement of the Greek Presidency was reaching an agreement to limit the numbers of and damage from invasive alien species in the EU. Although the Presidency managed to break the deadlock on some key issues such as biofuels and GMOs, the compromise made on biofuels policy came at the expense of the environment by allowing too much land to be used for biofuels production.

Particularly disappointing was the Presidency’s lacklustre approach to dealing with the threat from dangerous chemicals. While endocrine disrupting chemicals, nanomaterials and the REACH review are moving up the agenda in other circles, the Greek Presidency all but ignored the issues, which have wide-ranging implications for people’s health.

The Greek Presidency is followed by the Italian one, which the EEB welcomed with its traditional ‘Ten Tests’ on which it will judge their environmental performance. With many issues currently on hold due to the changes in the European institutions, there is hope that the Italians will reinvigorate negotiations on some issues which have been sidelined during this period, including energy, air pollution and waste (the latter being a particularly pertinent issue for the Italians).

Energy is an especially key issue at the moment with energy security issues brought to the fore by the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. Greece did not excel on energy savings nor on targets to fight climate change. They left the important decisions to Italy, under whose Presidency the EU leaders are expected to agree their 2030 targets.

Alison Abrahams
EEB Communications Officer

The EEB assessment of the Greek Presidency and the 10 Green Tests for the Italian Presidency are available on the EEB website.
Two people died and many others were injured at the beginning of June when a hydrogen tank exploded in “Kosova A” – the half-century old lignite-based power plant in Kosovo and one of the worst polluters in Europe. The plant, which produces a third of the energy the country demands and which under Energy Community Treaty obligations Kosovo should shut down by the end of 2017, is hazardous in many ways. Yet, many politicians in Kosovo want to see it up and running even beyond the given deadline.

The question that immediately emerges is whether Kosovo needs as much energy as it currently demands. The answer is very simple: no!

In a recent publication by Kosovo’s leading NGOs gathered under the umbrella of the Kosovar Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development (KOSID), we have established that the country can lower its energy loss/wastage and demand, enabling us to shut down the old power plant according to Treaty obligations and removing any need for further lignite-based plants to be built.

For this to be achieved, it is necessary to cut the overall losses in the energy sector, which often reach 40% of the total demand, but never go under 35%. Current targets for technical loss reduction are at 1% a year, which is highly un-ambitious. Kosovo needs to tackle this serious problem urgently, so it can reach the acceptable 7% quota of losses by 2015. This is also the year when the Energy Community Treaty envisages the energy markets of the South-East Europe being liberalised. Managing the huge energy loss, thus, is what we call step zero, as we firmly believe the situation is so bad that it should have been tackled a long time ago.

As a first step, the government must increase energy efficiency. In a nutshell, in a country where 60% of energy is used by households and the demand doubles during the winter due to usage of electricity for heating, 80% of the homes have no roof and wall insulation. This will not be resolved by maintaining the current high demand for energy.

This situation requires an aggressive policy, thus we advocate for a national efficiency programme to be undertaken. Many international financial institutions have pledged millions of euros for energy efficiency in Kosovo. The World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank alone have committed more than 60 million euros. Most of these funds have not been utilised mainly due to lack of projects from the Kosovan government’s side. Our plan envisages the creation of an efficiency fund which would pool all the funds that were committed (and attract some more) and use them to provide low-interest loans for Kosovars undertaking energy efficiency projects, whose only alternative remains high-interest loans from commercial banks.

The third step of our solution includes the development of renewable energy sources. It is estimated that there is potential to build 300 MW generation capacities from wind and some 240 MW from hydro. In a country with 300 sunny days per year, the solar potential has not been explored at all, while geothermal capacities have been completely neglected. Biomass potential is estimated to be quite good, with up to 150 MW utilisation by 2025.

Once these three policy steps have been completed - and we have already provided details as to how this can be done - we expect that energy demand in Kosovo will decrease significantly, or even halve compared to the current demand. This is a much cleaner, more sustainable solution than the Kosovo government’s proposal to keep “Kosova A” alive after the internationally provided deadline alongside the New Kosovo Power Plant, which the World Bank supports and the EU is turning a blind eye to.

Rinora Gojani and Krenar Gashi
Kosovar Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development (KOSID)
EEB MEMBERS’ COMPLAINTS

INDUSTRIAL MINERALS PROCESSING FOUND TO BE ILLEGAL

For many years “S & B Industrial Minerals A. E.” has been processing industrial minerals on the island of Milos, Greece, with devastating effects on the local and marine environment. The process produces perlite dust which, together with the waste from the scrubbers, is mixed with seawater and poured into the sea. The management of the solid waste of the facility is in violation of the Joint Ministerial Decision for Waste Management and the European Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment.

The company did not have permission for the disposal of some of its wastewater, in violation of the rules governing the disposal of sewage and industrial waste.

The company has applied for and been granted numerous permits, fragmenting its activities and reporting on them to various different administrative levels (central, regional etc) – all of which is against the law. The environmental inspectors stressed that “cutting the project in many individual works goes against the fundamental principles of the law on the evaluation of projects and activities. That results in the project as a whole not being subjected to an environmental assessment”.

After the environmental inspectors’ report, the Ministry of Environment imposed a fine of €224,000 for the operation of the industrial minerals facilities.

The company appealed the case before the Athens Administrative Court which cancelled the Ministry’s decision and sent the case back to the administration to act legitimately.

The lower court’s decision has now been appealed to the Greek High Administrative Court.

Eco-city expects to soon lodge a complaint with the European Commission about the case.

Dr Angelika Kallia-Antoniou
Eco-City

TURTLE NESTING AREA IN CYPRUS UNDER SERIOUS THREAT

The conservation status of a very important Natura 2000 turtle nesting area in Cyprus is in imminent danger. A golf course, housing and hotel development has been licensed to be constructed inside and adjacent to the Natura 2000 area CY 4000001 Polis – Gialia.

The area includes a very narrow 10 km long beach and the adjacent marine area. It is a very important nesting place for the Loggerhead Sea Turtle which is a priority species known scientifically as Caretta caretta. The area which will be influenced by the development has the highest nesting density in Cyprus.

While the first decision of the Environment Department stipulated that a zone stretching to 475 metres from the sea should remain free of buildings, this condition was later decreased to 280 metres and finally the whole project was allowed to go ahead, requiring only that a tree-planting zone, 20m wide, be established along the coast for the protection of the beach from lights.

By doing so, the turtle nesting beach and the adjacent beaches are now threatened from direct lighting, from a ‘sky glow’ effect and from human disturbance since it is obvious that there will be an accumulation of people very near the beach where the mega development will be constructed.

The decision of the Republic of Cyprus to change the decision to leave 475 metres from the sea undeveloped is in violation of EU legislation.

A letter has already been sent by the EU Commission requesting more information about the issue. We hope that the authorities will finally respect the provisions of the Habitats Directive and will not lead the Cyprus Republic before the EU Court of Justice. The violations of the Directive are obvious and there is a serious possibility that the final results will go against Cyprus.

Lefkios Sergides, Conservation Officer, Cyprus Conservation Foundation Terra Cypria
CAP FOCUS SHIFTS TO MEMBER STATES

If the journey from a light greening of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (the initial Commission proposals) to a complete greenwashing (final texts) was slow and painful, the publication of the texts in the Official Journal of the EU was not the end of that race to the bottom.

In the name of simplicity and flexibility, MEPs and Member State governments together had already managed to produce an ineffective policy that was green only on the surface, diluting the content of the greening measures and adding dozens of grounds for exemptions to the already very weak rules. The Commission then worked on the so called delegated acts (meant to clarify and amend non-essential provisions made, there is still a possibility that this flexibility can revive some environmentally sound practices.

Regrettably some of them are already using this flexibility to make things even worse.³ They should remember that the primary objective of this reform was the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action and adapt their plans before sending their final versions to the Commission on 1 August 2014.

We hope that they will steer their choices in the right direction and consider the environment and people first, ensuring that in exchange for the €58bn⁴ of public money spent annually, the European public gets quality products and a healthy environment.

Faustine Defossez
Senior Policy Officer - Agriculture & Bioenergy

CLEAN-UP OF COAL PLANTS DELAYED BY LAGGARDS

The LCP Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference Document (BREF) sets out the “state of the art” performance benchmarks for large combustion plants (LCPs) were discussed at a meeting in Seville on 17 and 18 June 2014.

The LCP BREF started back in October 2011. It should be finalised in mid-2015 and operators will have a maximum of four years to comply with the updated benchmarks.

Approximately three-quarters of the room was filled by industry lobby representatives. One of the major issues discussed was the “C(E)Z lignite initiative”, aiming to have more lax requirements for those operators burning fuels of very bad quality such as lignite and that may have trouble to reach the new BAT associated emissions levels (BATAEL) for sulphur dioxide. The EEB made the case that the proposals are adequate, and burning these inadequate fuels cannot be considered the ‘best available technique’ (BAT). There is currently no appropriate requirement to regulate those operators burning particularly bad lignite with higher sulphur content above 3%.

It was also clear from the meeting that France and Greece are pushing for special treatment for certain LCPs operating on islands. They seek derogations from the proposal to apply expensive NOx abatement techniques for their operators (EDF - France and PPCS.A. - Greece).

There have been some worrying calls from a number of EU governments (FR, DK, UK, POL, GR) to “exclude” from the new BREF benchmarks existing LCPs that receive optional derogations from the minimum binding requirements (Emission Limit Values for Dust, NOx and SO2) that would normally apply by 2016 for existing plants. That call is in total contradiction of what BATs are designed for: “most effective and advanced stage in the development” of (combustion) activities that are “best” in the sense of “most effective in achieving a high general level of protection of the environment as a whole”, not just complying what is considered as the EU’s common lowest minimum denominator.

A subgroup on energy efficiency requirements will be created, which shall provide additional information by September 2014 on BAT based on “design” energy efficiency performance. The EEB will be involved in this group and suggested considering work carried out by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Christian Schaible,
Senior Policy Officer - Industrial Production

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/newsroom/161_en.htm
² Countries like France will give a ‘green’ payment to maize monoculture by using an ‘equivalent’ trick to crop diversification.
³ EU budget allocation to CAP in 2011.
Most green electricity consumers expect that the price they pay somehow contributes to a better environment. To ensure that this really happens, the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation and 33 other environmental organizations from 26 European countries created Ekoenergy: the first and only pan-European ecolabel for electricity.

The Ekoenergy Network was created in December 2012 and Ekoenergy criteria shortly after. Suppliers using the Ekoenergy label pay contributions to the Climate Fund and in the case of hydropower also to the Environmental Fund. The first €10,000 of the Ekoenergy Climate Fund will fund a solar project in Tanzania. Money from the Environmental Fund has been used to finance a river restoration project in Central Finland.

Volunteers and trainees play an important role in our Ekoenergy. Over 100 volunteers translated our website into 27 languages; the secretariat already hosted nine young people from seven countries and five more will join us after the summer. Long may it continue!

See www.ekoenergy.org or contact Steven.Vanholme@sil.fi for further information.

Steven Vanholme, Ekoenergy

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The focus of the Living Rivers Foundation is to promote healthy river systems on an international scale; through advisory assistance for rehabilitation projects, and through awards for successful projects. The Foundation is non-profit in nature and started its work four years ago. We share information, experience and best practices with all, encourage networks to protect natural river ecosystems and support the sustainable restoration of damaged rivers.

Every year Living Rivers finances an award for scientific work in the field of river protection.

For more information see www.living-rivers.org

Stephan von Keitz
Living Rivers
SOME EEB BOARD MEMBERS’ REACTION TO EU PARLIAMENT ELECTION

Elizabeth Hiester
Client Earth, UK:

“We are hopeful that the newly formed parliament will be motivated to engage with the current EU/US trade negotiations (TTIP), especially in relation to the democratic deficit in those measures which threaten to undermine hard won EU environmental regulation, such as chemicals and pesticides.”

Mauro Albrizio
Legambiente, Italy:

“The rise of eurosceptics groups is very worrying. However, the defeat of many short-sighted pro-business candidates, as happened in Italy, is a ray of hope for an ambitious climate and environment agenda.”

Mikael Karlsson
Society for Nature Conservation, Sweden:

“Environment was voters’ top priority in the Swedish EP election. Consequently, most candidates supported comparatively tough positions in key upcoming environmental issues. So we’re expecting a green harvest season now.”

Enes Cerimagic
Friends of the Earth, Croatia:

“With many more MEPs now coming from eurosceptic parties, the new European Parliament risks considering environmental issues less as social justice and human rights issues, and more as individual territorial issues to be solved on a national basis.”

Bjela Vossen
DNR, Germany:

“The rise of the Eurosceptic and right-wing populist MEPs is worrying, but the more worrying is the REFIT-agenda of the European Commission and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). There are big challenges ahead. The new Parliament has to defend European values – among them the environment.”

Lefkios Serghides
Terra Cypria Foundation, Cyprus:

“The results of the recent European Parliamentary election demonstrate a rise in euro-scepticism, resulting from the failure of the European institutions to listen to the concerns of European people.”

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INVASIVE SPECIES KEPT AT BAY

At its last plenary in April 2014, the outgoing European Parliament (EP) approved the deal on the new Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation and set in motion the final steps for putting in place an EU framework for tackling one of the biggest drivers of biodiversity loss in the EU and globally. Despite several serious attempts to derail negotiations, the agreement between the Council and the EP negotiators was finally reached in March. Before being published in the Official Journal and entering into force, hopefully already in January 2015, it still needs to be formally approved by the Council (probably in September). A big success of the supporters of an effective IAS regime, including environmental NGOs, is the final rejection of the unilateral national exemptions based on non-invasiveness and disproportionality, which were proposed and voted through by the EP ENVI Committee and pushed in the Council by a few Member States. Moreover, the final agreement includes some important improvements to the Commission’s initial proposal, such as removal of the cap of fifty species on the list of species of EU concern, and ensuring the provision of independent scientific advice in the implementation process through an independent ‘Scientific Forum’. It also more adequately addresses the problem of species native to one part of Europe but alien, and invasive and damaging in another part. However, rushed negotiations owing to the EP elections also led to some loopholes being introduced into the final text, such as the possibility for commercial entities to continue with activities involving species considered as being of EU concern after prior authorisation from the Commission, and the deletion of the reference to the measures of the IMO Ballast Water Convention from the operative part of the text, making the control of the spread of marine invasive organisms much less effective. The implementation will need to be closely monitored both at the EU and national levels to ensure that the regime put in place is effective.

Martina Mlinaric, EEB Senior Policy Officer – Water, Biodiversity and Soil

STEPS TO BRING PLASTIC MENACE UNDER CONTROL

Thanks to the European Parliament, progress has recently been made in confronting one of Europe’s most visible waste problems. On 16 April 2014, the European Parliament voted to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags, which significantly reinforced an initial, weak proposal from the European Commission. Meanwhile, initial debates in the Council of Ministers suggest the Council will back the Parliament’s proposal. According to the European Parliament’s amendments, a binding reduction target of 80% from the EU’s average consumption level in 2010 for these light plastic bags would apply within five years and be accompanied by several measures such as charges and bans. Member States will also be able to restrict the use of plastic bags further by using an exemption from the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive. The Parliament also proposed to phase out bags that fragment and do not biodegrade and to ban harmful substances in plastic bags. The plastic bags file should be concluded under the Italian Presidency.

Sebastien Pant – EEB Communications Officer for Air and Resource Efficiency

ADVOCACY INTO POLICY – A ROMANIAN SUCCESS STORY

It is always satisfying to see quick and concrete results from our policy work. In October 2013, the EEB, in cooperation with CEEweb for Biodiversity and Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania, held a conference on ‘implementing green measures in the future CAP’. The Romanian Ministry of Agriculture was present at the conference and took note of the problems outlined concerning the design of Romania’s High Nature Value grassland agri-environment measures, namely the fact that:

- Grazed pastures, as well as mown meadows, were eligible for higher non-mechanised payments, causing a loss of cows and increase of sheep, and damaging biodiversity.
- The earliest allowed mowing dates were the same for farms at low and high altitudes, which was discouraging low-altitude farmers from participating, since their hay suffered higher damage to its feed value.

In Romania’s draft Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, informally presented to the Commission in April this year, both these problems have been addressed: it is proposed that only meadows should be eligible for higher, non-mechanised payments. These changes, which will have widespread positive effects on biodiversity in Romania, are without a doubt partly a result of the October 2013 conference, and follow-up by Romanian EEB members.
HOW GREEN IS BLUE GROWTH?

In June, Greek EEB members Elliniki Etairia - Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, Ecosity and the Mediterranean SOS Network co-organised, with the EEB and Seas at Risk, a conference in Athens focused on Blue Growth, entitled “Could Blue Growth turn into Green?”. This was the first event which celebrates the EEB’s 40th anniversary.

Blue Growth is a long-term strategy to support the sustainable development of the coastal and marine sector. Representatives of NGOs, the European Commission, businesses and academics shared their opinions and experiences on the issue. The conference began by discussing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, highlighting its poor implementation. A Baltic Sea example was analyzed and the fears of Greek NGOs concerning the implementation of the legislation were highlighted.

The second session focused on navigation and ports. Shipping is considered to be one of the major sources of sea water pollution. As part of the solution the Clean Shipping Index, a tool for cargo owners and transport purchasers to evaluate environmental performance of ships and carriers was presented. The use of renewable energy farms in ports, which can also provide employment opportunities, was discussed. One speaker analysed the ecological situation in the biggest Greek port (Piraeus) and explained the Port Environmental Review System Certification (PERS).

Finally, speakers discussed the green approach of Blue Growth in tourism, energy and fisheries. In this session, the need for tourism development, but similarly the need for protecting nature and biodiversity, were discussed. The example of the Marine Protected Areas and the Mediterranean monk seal, and also the use of renewable energy farms were covered, focusing on the NGO concerns. Fisheries issues were discussed, in particular the need for strong legislation to support sustainable approaches to aquaculture and the use of discarded fish species in aquafeeds.

The conference was hosted by the Agricultural University of Athens and was simultaneously broadcast online through the University website.

Hara Fostieri and Gerassimos Arapis, Elliniki Etairia

FORGING A EUROPEAN REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

When the Millenium Development Goals expire in 2015, they will be replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals. Across the world, civil society organisations, governments and the EU among others are working within the framework of the UN to negotiate the texts of these goals which will influence how the world develops in the decade to come.

In May 2014, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) in collaboration with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) organised a regional briefing and consultation on Sustainable Development Goals and the follow up process.

The European Commission representative Hugo Schally of DG Environment explained that they felt that the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic) are well represented and balanced in the current proposal. So far they have not decided on individual targets but he clarified that the SDGs must include commitments from North and South. He said that the EU needs to show more leadership in the definition of goals and targets, and that they needed the voice of the CSOs. Presenting an NGO perspective, the EEB emphasized the need to push governments to make bold decisions.

The session was split into different working groups to give feedback on the regional position. The main messages were:

• A comprehensive framework based on human rights approach is needed - not a long list of goals where points can be missed.
• An independent monitoring and implementation mechanism is key. CSOs are not just implementers, but also watchdogs in North and South.
• Some issues can be more efficiently dealt with if we treat them as cross cutting issues, instead of stand-alone goals. Climate change and disaster risk reduction were identified as cross cutting issues by some groups.

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Hara Fostieri and Gerassimos Arapis, Elliniki Etairia

Leida Rijnhout
Director, Global Policies and Sustainability Unit
ENDOCRINE DISRUPTING PESTICIDES POSE THREAT TO OUR CHILDREN’S HEALTH

Last year, a coalition called EDC-Free Europe made up of public interest groups representing more than 50 organisations across Europe launched a campaign to raise public awareness about endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and urge quicker governmental action.

EDCs, also known as hormone-disrupting chemicals, are manmade substances that enter the body and may be making all of us more susceptible to many serious and potentially lethal diseases and health disorders. These include reproductive and fertility problems, cancers, neurological impairment, obesity and diabetes. These chemicals are found in our workplaces, schools, homes, parks, fields and the food we eat and products we use every day. Unborn and young children are particularly vulnerable to EDCs exposure, as these substances are most likely to have long-term and severe negative effects on the foetus and the hormonal system of young children while they are developing.

The first report focused on which endocrine-disrupting insecticides children are exposed to and the second report investigated the amount of pesticide residues found in strawberries from France and Spain. The third study, launched in April this year, focused on the endocrine-disrupting pesticides to which children may be exposed.

An unprecedented and targeted survey, the EXPPERT 3 study focused on the exposure of young children living and/or attending school in agricultural areas in France. It tested the hair of 30 children participating in the survey for 53 pesticides that are suspected to be EDCs. On average, 21 residues of endocrine-disrupting pesticides were found per child. Thirteen endocrine-disrupting pesticides, were found at least once, out of the total of 53 (66%). Thirteen substances out of the 53 were found in all samples, including various substances that are prohibited in agriculture. Yet, many of these products and substances are permitted in domestic and veterinary use.

François Veillerette, spokesperson for Générations Futures and Chair of PAN Europe, said ‘with an average of 21 residues of pesticides with endocrine disrupting characteristics in the hair samples analysed, the results show that our children are exposed to a considerable cocktail of chemical substances.’

With a national strategy on EDCs in France recently announced this May, it is now crucial that the European Commission finally publishes a protective and comprehensive set of EDC criteria, which will enable the EU Regulations on pesticides and biocides to be fully implemented. The EDC-Free coalition continues to call for an EDC-Free Europe. As people are most vulnerable to endocrine disruption pre-birth and during infancy and childhood, there is an urgent need to reduce exposure now for their health and future generations.

Genon K. Jenson
HEAL Executive Director

More information on the EDC-Free campaign is available here:
www.edc-free-europe.org
More information in French on the EXPPERT studies is available via Générations Futures’ website:
www.generations-futures.fr
More information on HEAL is available here: www.env-health.org

1 COPHES and DEMOCOPHES
www.eu-hbm.info/eureusl/mediacorner/press-kit
WASTE REFORMS WELCOME BUT NEED BEEFING UP TO END THROW-AWAY SOCIETY

Waste policy proposals published on 2 July by the European Commission will cut down on Europe’s overconsumption of resources, create jobs, reduce CO₂ emissions and cut costly imports of raw materials into Europe.

Piotr Barczak, the EEB’s Waste Policy Officer, said: “The Commission’s waste policy reforms set bold targets for recycling which are good for Europe. Importantly, it will harmonise the way recycling rates are now calculated across Europe. Waste policy is a textbook example of an area where the EU needs to act to address today’s big challenges.”

Disappointingly, the Commission’s ‘Circular Economy Package’ failed to contain any specific preparation for re-use targets. The EEB recently documented the substantial number of jobs that could be created by 2030 through an ambitious reuse policy of just two types of products - furniture and textiles. High levels of furniture and textile re-use could lead to almost 300,000 jobs being created in the EU and help avoid about 30 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by 20301.

The EEB welcomes the ban on landfilling of recyclable and compostable materials but is concerned about the possibility that previously landfilled material could now end up being incinerated.


INFORMATION SOCIETY FOR PEOPLE NOT GOVERNMENTS

Environment Ministers and high level officials from all over Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia came to Maastricht at the end of June 2014 to make a renewed commitment to access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters. At the 5th session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP-5) to the Aarhus Convention they came together to adopt the Maastricht Declaration, among other things to better protect whistle-blowers.

Addressing the MOP during a high-level panel discussion, EEB Secretary General Jeremy Wates drew attention to the link between the Edward Snowden revelations of mass surveillance of citizens by certain governments and the Convention’s goal of greater public access to information held by public authorities: “While governments obtain more and more information about the activities of their citizens, the same governments continue to prevent citizens from having access to information held by public authorities. This is not the ‘information society’ we have been calling for.”

Wates also used the opportunity to call for the expansion of the Convention’s Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to encompass resource use, products and storage: “Many pollutants leave the factory in the form of products and thus escape the reporting require-

ments under the Protocol. Others are stored on site, representing a potential hazard to neighbouring communities. If we want the Protocol to serve as a real driver of sustainability, it should also cover inputs such as energy, water and resources.”

RISCTOX

The EEB has developed together with ISTAS (Spanish trade union’s institute for health and environment) the Risctox database on over 100,000 toxic and hazardous substances.

RISCTOX provides information about health and environmental risks caused by chemicals contained in products. It contains information on:

- Air pollutants
- Water pollutants
- Soil pollutants
- Ozone-depleting substances
- Greenhouse gases
- Volatile organic compounds
- Persistent organic pollutants
- Endocrine disrupters
- Banned and restricted biocides, pesticides and other chemicals

RISCTOX also provides policy advice and links to related regulations. We invite you to use it whenever you have doubts about the safety of chemicals and provide any feedback to tatiana.santos@eeb.org
SAVE THE DATE!

EEB ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND 40TH ANNIVERSARY

1-2 December 2014, Brussels

Join us in Brussels 1-2 December 2014 for an eye-opening conference that will debate environmentalism in Europe and its potential for increased impact in a challenging global context, as well as celebrating 40 years of the European Environmental Bureau.

2014 provides an especially timely moment to take stock and look at future challenges: with a new European Parliament in place, and a new European Commission and President of the European Council taking up office just before the conference; a new era starts. What better moment to debate the importance of continued civil society engagement and involvement as well as strategies to increase our joint impact in Europe and globally?

We look forward to welcoming you to Brussels in December!

For EEB members the Annual Conference will be followed by the AGM (2 - 3 December 2014).

More information will follow on the EEB’s website after the summer.