Living well, within the limits of our planet

Europe’s Environment Action Programme to 2020 (7th EAP)

by Monica Pisani, DG ENV F.2

EU environment policy today and tomorrow

1. Where do we want to be in 2050?
2. Our environment today
3. Getting to where we want to be, with the 7th EAP
4. How far have we come in implementing it?
5. Conclusions
GOAL BY 2050:

Our young children of today will live half their lives in a low-carbon society, based on a circular economy and resilient ecosystems.

Where are we today?
People care about the environment despite the financial crisis

State of the European environment

Environmental protection

1970 1990 2020 2050
What have we done so far?

- Reduced pollution
- Increased nature protection
- Improved waste management
- Increased green growth & jobs: environmental economy grew by 50% since 2000 – this 8 times faster than the overall economy!

European environment policies in the last 40 years have improved:

- Our health
- Our living standards
- Functioning of our eco-systems
BUT big challenges remain. Biggest threats to our natural environment are:

- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Transport
- Industry
- Tourism
- Urban sprawl

...And globally:

- Population growth
- Changing consumption patterns
So many challenges, so little time... What to do?

We need a common vision and approach
The 7th Environment Action Programme:

- is the guiding framework for EU Environment Policy up to 2020
- was agreed in co-decision
- entered into force in January 2014
- should be implemented jointly by Member States and the European Commission

Clear links between the 7th EAP and the Juncker priorities
The 7th EAP sets a long-term vision of where we want to be by 2050:

"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."

A 2020 timeframe with nine priority objectives
The 7th EAP focuses actions in **three key areas**:

- **protecting the natural capital** that supports economic prosperity and human well-being;
- stimulating **resource-efficient, low-carbon economic and social development**;
- **safeguarding people** from environmental health risks.

**Four "I"s to help deliver these goals**

- Improved **implementation** of existing environmental legislation
- Increased **information**
- Secured **investments** in the field of environment and climate change
- More **integration** of environmental concerns into other policy areas
Two horizontal objectives to complete the programme:

**Urban:** Making our cities more sustainable  
**International:** Tackling environmental challenges together on a global scale

Some deliverables in the 7th EAP:
- Speed up implementation of existing strategies such as the **2020 Biodiversity Strategy** and the **Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources**
- Move towards **Circular Economy**
- Implement **new air quality legislation**
- Strategy for a **non-toxic environment**
- Maximise benefits of environmental legislation by **improving its implementation**
Full implementation of EU waste legislation would:

- Save €72 billion a year
- Create over 400,000 new jobs by 2020
- Increase the annual turnover of the EU waste management and recycling sector by €42 billion

Horizontal 7th EAP goals by 2020:

- **Urban**: Most EU cities are implementing policies for sustainable urban planning and design, and are using EU funding available for this
- **International**: Make progress in implementing Agenda 2030 globally and within the EU
So... Are we going in the right direction?

SOER 2015:

We have seen many improvements thanks to EU environment policy but great challenges remain in the three key priority areas of the 7th EAP
1. Natural capital:

+ Reduced pollution has significantly improved the quality of Europe’s air and water.
+ Today EU citizens enjoy some of the best water quality in the world.

BUT...

- Land degradation, loss of soil functions and climate change remain major concerns, threatening our economy and well-being.
- A high proportion of protected species (60%) and habitat types (77%) are in unfavourable conservation status
- Europe is not on track to meet its overall target of halting biodiversity loss by 2020
How does the future look? (1)

Climate change impacts will intensify and drivers of biodiversity loss will persist

2. Resource efficiency: many positive developments in the short term

+ We've decreased our greenhouse gas emissions by 19% since 1990 despite a 45% increase in economic output
+ We've decreased our fossil fuel use
+ Emissions of some pollutants from transport and industry have declined
+ **EU's total resource use** has declined by 19% since 2007

+ We're generating **less waste**

+ In nearly all EU countries we've **improved our recycling rates**

---

**SOER 2015**

**How does the future look? (2)**

With business as usual we won't achieve our 2050 target of reducing GHG emissions by 80-90%.
3. Environmental risks to health

+ marked **improvements** in the **quality of drinking water and bathing water** in recent decades
+ some **hazardous pollutants** have been **reduced**
- **BUT air and noise pollution** continue to **cause serious health impacts**, particularly in urban areas

---

SOER 2015

In 2012, more than **430 000 people died** prematurely from **fine particulate matter**

Each year, **at least 10 000 people die** prematurely from **exposure to environmental noise**, causing coronary heart disease and strokes

**Growing use of chemicals**, particularly in consumer products, **leads to more endocrine diseases and disorders in humans**
How does the future look? (3)

- Projected improvements in air quality will not be sufficient to protect our health and the environment.
- Health impacts resulting from climate change will worsen.

Implementation progress

Work has started relating to most of the 7th EAP commitments (1)

Implementation of the 7th EAP is done within the broad perspective of the Juncker Priorities, Agenda 2030, the Europe 2020 strategy and the Multi-Annual Financial Framework.
Work has started relating to most of the 7th EAP commitments (2)

- **Circular Economy Action Plan** adopted on 2 December 2015
- **Mid-term assessment of EU biodiversity strategy** adopted on 2 October 2015
- Complete ongoing **fitness check of nature legislation** by early 2016

The Circular Economy – a win-win strategy

- **Savings** of €600 billion for EU businesses, equivalent to 8% of their annual turnover
- **Creation** of 580,000 **jobs**
- **Reduction of EU carbon emissions** by 450 million tonnes per year
Work has started relating to most of the 7th EAP commitments (3)

- Conclude negotiations on **new air quality legislation** and implement it
- Start process towards strategy for a **non-toxic environment**
- New tool of tailor-made support to MS to **improve implementation** of environment policy

Work has started relating to most of the 7th EAP commitments (4)

- **Urban Agenda**: which initiatives could be most effective to support innovation and best practise sharing?
- **Internationally**: implementation of Agenda 2030 both globally and within the EU
No prosperity without a healthy environment

"When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realise that one cannot eat money."
(Native American saying)
Living well, within the limits of our planet requires working together

Conclusions:

1. The EU has high ambitions for our environment by 2050.
2. We’ve made progress since the start of EU environment policy but many challenges remain. The SOER 2015 calls for more efforts to protect our natural capital, our lifeline, and a prerequisite for our future growth and wellbeing.
3. The 7th EAP is our guiding framework for EU Environment Policy up to 2020, with a 2050 vision.
4. Work has started related to most 7th EAP commitments. Implementation of the 7th EAP will be done within the broad perspective of the Juncker Priorities, Agenda 2030, the Europe 2020 strategy and the Multi-Annual Framework.
5. Tackling Europe’s environment and climate challenges is an opportunity to bring about the long-term growth and societal wellbeing on which the future of the EU depends.
Conclusions:

1. The EU has **high ambitions** for what we want our environment to look like in 2050.

Conclusions:

2. We’ve **made progress** since the start of EU environment policy but **many challenges remain**. The SOER 2015 calls for **more efforts to protect our natural capital**, our lifeline, and a prerequisite for our future growth and wellbeing.
Conclusions:

3. The 7th EAP is our guiding framework for EU Environment Policy up to 2020, with a 2050 vision.

Conclusions:

4. Work has started related to most 7th EAP commitments. Implementation of the 7th EAP will be done within the broad perspective of the Juncker Priorities, the Europe 2020 strategy and the Multi-Annual Framework.
Conclusions:

5. Tackling Europe's environment and climate challenges is an opportunity to bring about the long-term growth and societal wellbeing on which the future of the EU depends.

Let's work together - citizens, industry, NGOs and public authorities at local, regional and national level – to live well, within the limits of our planet!
Thank you for your attention!

copyright: iStock photos