

Summary of the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament

2006 Environment Policy Review

ACHIEVEMENTS, TRENDS AND OUTLOOK IN THE 6TH ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN PRIORITY AREAS

1. Climate change

Highlights

Second phase of the EU Climate Change Programme:

- Air transport in EU emissions trading scheme
- Progress in reviewing Reduction CO₂ emissions from cars
- Possible legislative proposal on carbon capture and storage
- Policy options for adaptation to climate change's impacts

Mid-term review of the Transport White Paper

EU Emissions trading scheme (ETS): 1st compliance cycle ended

10 000 energy-intensive installations (1/2 Europe's CO₂ emissions) reported for their 2005 emissions

National Allocation Plans (NAPs) notified by the Member States (2nd cycle)

In November, the EC adopted 10 NAPs and reduced the average proposed amount of emissions by 7%.

International agreements

- 5-years work programme for climate adaptation, promotion of a global energy savings and RES fund and governance principles for an adaptation fund.
- Bilateral agreements with third countries, including China

European Energy Strategy (Sustainability, security of supply and competitiveness)

- October : Action Plan to reduce energy use by 20% by 2020.
- Integrated energy and climate change package: 30% reduction target in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, if other industrialised countries do the same. Until an agreement is reached, a unilateral 20% reduction was proposed.

New findings

- *EU greenhouse gas emissions: the EU should reach its Kyoto targets by 2010.*

EU 15 emissions: decrease 0,9% since 1990

EU 10 emissions: 31,9 % below 1990 level

EU 10 emissions expected in 2010: 12 % below 1990 level

- Increasing forest fires in North Eastern Europe might speed up the melting of glaciers and sea ice.
- Annual costs of drought in the EU doubled between 1976-1990 and 1991-2006.
- Sea level rise have physical and economic impact: adaptation to sea level rise could reduce total costs by 70% in the long-term.

Outlook for 2007

- Proposal to improve the functioning of the **ETS** (for the period post-2013)
- Regulatory framework on **Carbon capture and storage** technologies
- Green Paper on **Adaptation to Climate Change**
- Draft decision on a **Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund**
- Communication on **water scarcity** and droughts

2. Nature and biodiversity

Even though the overall EU policy framework is largely in place, significant efforts are required to meet the targets of halting biodiversity loss by 2010.

Highlights

- Communication on Biodiversity

It set priority objectives, key measures and calls for improved integration of biodiversity in sector-based and horizontal policies.

- **Natura 2000** covers 17% of EU-25 and 140 000 km² of marine areas.
- EU **forest Action Plan** adopted by the EC
- Council agreed on a **Marine Strategy Directive**
- Thematic strategy on **soil protection**, including a proposal for a Framework directive to preserve and restore deteriorating soils.
- **2nd Global Biodiversity Outlook** : biodiversity loss continues; significant efforts are needed to reach the global 2010 target to reduce this loss.
- Paris Conference on "Integrating biodiversity into European development cooperation.
- Cartagena Protocol on safety: documentation to identify GMOs in international shipments of agricultural goods.
- Bilateral Voluntary Partnership Agreements with Malaysia, Indonesia and Ghana on **Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. (FLEGT)**

New findings

- Eco-system damage causes severe losses
- Climate change is a threat to biodiversity, notably extinction of plant species
- Growth of artificial surfaces along the coasts is damaging coastal eco-systems.
- Marine eco-systems are losing populations faster, with unknown consequences.

Outlook for 2007

- **Marine guidelines** for implementing Natura 2000
- **Convention on Biological Diversity**: negotiations on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing
- 14th Conference of the Parties to the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species**
- Additional **FLEGT options** and new bilateral **Voluntary Partnership Agreements**
- EC Draft common position on commercial whaling

3. Environment and health

Highlights

- EU pilot project on Human bio-monitoring + Environment and Health Information Review and Implementation Plan

*Although methods for estimating impacts of the environment on human health need further development, the current indications are that **the known impact of the environment on health is limited.***

- 370 000 Europeans die every year from **diseases linked to air pollution.**
- Ongoing negotiations with Council and EP on the proposed **Air Quality Framework Directive.**

- Thematic strategy on the **sustainable use of Pesticides**, which focused on plant protection products.
- **Bathing Water and Groundwater Directives**
- Proposal for a Directive **restricting the use of mercury** and for a regulation on the banning of exports from the EU and safe storage for mercury

New findings

- In the Netherlands, **2-5% of all diseases may be due to air pollution**
- Assessed and managed use of **nanotechnologies** is expected to offer novel solutions to environmental problems

Outlook for 2007

- **REACH** enters into force
- Mid-term review of the **Environment and Health Action Plan**
- Revision of the **National Emission Ceilings Directive**
- Review of existing legislation on **industrial emissions**
- Community Implementation Plan on **Persistent Organic Pollutants**
- Directive on the **protection of laboratory animals**
- Further international binding agreement on further action on **mercury**

4. Resource use

Highlights

*Better **resource efficiency** and making **production and consumption patterns more sustainable** in order to deliver environmental benefits and improve economic competitiveness.*

- Thematic strategy for sustainable use of natural resources: progress in implementation with **European Environmental Data Centre** on natural resources, a **International Advisory Panel** and a **High Level Forum** to guide national measures.
- Thematic strategy on Waste Prevention and Recycling supported by the Environmental Council:
 - ✓ EC proposal for a Directive on Waste: life-cycle approach; how to put waste prevention policies into effect and work towards common recycling standards. (proposal currently being discussed in the Council and the EP)
 - ✓ Communication on industrial by-products and waste
 - ✓ Preparation of criteria for when specific waste flows are recycled ad stop being waste
 - ✓ Improvement of the knowledge base
- RoHS directive (Restriction of the use of certain Hazardous Substances): substitution of hazardous substances in new equipment after 1st July 2006.
- WEEE directive (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment): targets for separate collection, recovery and recycling
- Packaging Directive and End of Life vehicles Directive: ban on heavy metal.
- New battery directive: ban mercury and cadmium in all batteries
- EU Strategy on Ship dismantling: environmental care and safety

New findings

- In 2005, inspections showed **high rate of illegal waste shipments** among Member States, up to 48% sometimes.
- Food and drinks / private transport / housing sector account for **70-80% environmental impact** of consumption.

Outlook for 2007

- Green Paper towards an Action Plan **on Sustainable Consumption and Production**
- Measures to **green industrial policy**
- Voluntary EU-wide targets for **Green Public Procurement**
- Report on **Environmental Technologies Action Plan's implementation**
- Support environmental technologies and eco-innovation via **FP7 and CIP**
- Reinforce implementation of the **waste shipment regulation** and Directive on **port reception facilities**
- Green paper on **ship dismantling**

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND BETTER REGULATION

Highlights

Simplification: Several directives reviewed as part of the Simplification Rolling Programme.

- Proposal to revise the Waste Framework Directive: merge and clarify 3 directives.
- **Directive to protect surface water** from pollution (repeals 5 directives)
- **EMAS** (EU Eco-Management and Auditing System) and **Eco Label** schemes to be **simplified** and **improved**
- **REACH** legislation adopted in December 2006: replaces 40 existing legal acts.

Application of legislation

End of 2006, 420 infringement cases on environment legislation.

Close cooperation with stakeholders to ease the implementation of the legislation, such as REACH, Environmental Liability and Water Framework Directive for instance.

New Findings

- Costs of EU environment legislation often overestimated because of the underestimation of the innovation induced by these policies.
- Environment legislation imposes about **4% of administrative costs** to business of all levels of legislation (regional, national or international)
- **EU emission standards are becoming world standards**, due to EU exports to other continents.
- **European car fleet 2-3 times more fuel efficient than US fleet** (essentially due to the different tax policies)

Outlook for 2007

- Communication on a **Shared Environmental Information System**
- Green Paper on **market-based instruments for environment and energy**. This paper will look at possible elements for review of the Energy Taxation Directive.
- Revision of the Community Guidelines on **State aid for environmental protection**
- **Compliance Assistance Programme**, to help SMEs comply with the legislation.
- Communication on **Implementation of the Water Framework Directive**
- **Water Information System for Europe**, to improve availability and quality of water data.