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PART 1/2

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

**Evaluation of the 7th Environment Action Programme to 2020
"Living well, within the limits of our planet"**

Accompanying the document

**Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Europe
Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

on the evaluation of the 7th Environment Action Programme

{COM(2019) 233 final}

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 7th Environment Action Programme (7th EAP), which entered into force in 2014 guides European environment policy up to 2020. The Programme was adopted by co-decision, following a change in the legal base; Article 192(3) of the Lisbon Treaty made it a requirement for action programmes to be agreed jointly by the European Parliament and the EU Member States, following a proposal by the European Commission[1]. The 7th EAP sets out nine priority objectives for action, reflecting both past successes in tackling environmental pollution and continuing challenges. As discussed below, it fleshed out what needed to be done through a series of sub-objectives and then more detailed actions that the EU and its Member States should take.

The 7th EAP builds on the situation obtaining at the end of the 6th EAP. The final assessment of the 6th EAP concluded that the programme had benefited the environment and provided an overarching strategic direction for environmental policy. Despite these achievements, however, unsustainable trends persisted in the four priority areas identified in the 6th EAP: climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment and health, and natural resources and waste.

The process of agreeing the 7th EAP was important. Based on analysis and stakeholder discussion, the European Commission made a proposal, which was then discussed with the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (the Council). The subsequent Decision[2] was thus the product of stakeholders taking a strategic view of: the state of environmental policy; the narrative of how it supports growth and jobs as well as a healthy plant and people's wellbeing; what they jointly wanted to achieve and then, more operationally, of how they wanted to achieve it.

1.1. Purpose of this evaluation

Article 4 of the Decision committed the Commission to evaluate the 7th EAP, taking into account the European Environment Agency's work on the state of the environment and stakeholder consultation. This document fulfills that legal obligation, evaluating the 7th EAP in line with the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines[3].

This evaluation assesses whether the structure and strategic role of the agreed framework for action have helped improve environmental and climate policy in Europe. It builds on the European Environment Agency's work on the state of the environment, the European Parliament's mid-term review[4], and on evaluations of specific policy areas (water, air, biodiversity, chemicals etc.). In doing so, the evaluation looks at the 7th EAP as a strategic document and asks whether it was the 'right' framework for EU environmental and climate policy-making.

1.2. Scope of the evaluation

The focus of this evaluation is on the strategic role played by the 7th EAP, that is:

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[1] "General action programmes setting out priority objectives to be attained shall be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions"

[2] Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'.

[3] SWD (2017) 350.

[4] "Implementation of the 7th EAP – mid-term review", European Parliamentary Research Service, November 2017.

- **Multi-layered approach**: the 7th EAP guides EU environment policy up to 2020 in the light of a long-term vision for where it wants the Union to be by 2050. The 7th EAP sets nine priority objectives to be met by 2020 together with 36 sub-objectives and 60 actions.

- **A dual focus through different types of objectives**: the *three main thematic priority objectives* (preserving our natural capital, turning our economy into a resource-efficient and low-carbon one, and protecting the public from environment-related pressures) are complemented and supported by *four enabling framework objectives* (better implementation, information, investments and integration) and by *two horizontal objectives* (ensuring action in cities and at the global level).

- **Joint responsibility to produce results**: the EU and Member States together agreed to deliver on its nine priority objectives.

Through this evaluation, the Commission is assessing whether this structure is helping the EU and its Member States to deliver on the nine priority objectives, by, for instance, prompting better co-ordinated, more ambitious and more effective action, successfully engaging strategic stakeholders, and contributing to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

This evaluation involves assessing the link between the structure of the 7th EAP and the actions taken at EU and Member State level, and the progress towards the 7th EAP's objectives. This has involved gathering and analysing evidence about the various policy areas and priority objectives to provide an overview of the state of implementation. Since the evaluation is not an in-depth assessment of EU environmental and climate policy in any particular area, it does not prejudge the results of any other evaluation work[5].

The 7th EAP covers both climate and environment policy and environment related measures taken under other policies such as agriculture, regional, and research. For the sake of readability, the term 'environment' below is taken to cover both, unless otherwise specified.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE INITIATIVE

2.1. Description of the initiative and its objectives

The 7th EAP, adopted by the ordinary legislative procedure' (co-decision) in November 2013[6], entered into force in 2014. It sets a framework for action designed to improve the environment, while protecting the well-being of the public and contributing to the EU's objectives of smart and sustainable growth. Building on 40 years of EU environment policy and drawing upon strategic initiatives in the environmental field[7], the 7th EAP unifies under a shared agenda the commitments of EU institutions, Member States, regional and local administrations and other stakeholders up to 2020 and beyond.

The 7th EAP guides EU environment policy by setting nine priority objectives of equal value to be attained by 2020 (see Figure 1), together with 36 sub-objectives and 60 actions (listed in Annex 4):

Three thematic priorities:
1. to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital
2. to turn the EU into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy
3. to safeguard people from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing

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[5] For more information related to on-going and planned evaluations see: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/evaluating-and-improving-existing-laws/evaluating-laws/planned-evaluations_en

[6] Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 "Living well, within the limits of our planet".

[7] Including the Resource Efficiency Roadmap, the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, the Communication on improving delivery of benefits from EU environment services, and the Low Carbon Economy Roadmap.

Four so called 'enablers' will help Europe achieve these goals:
        4. better implementation of legislation
        5. better information by improving the knowledge base
        6. more and wiser investment for environment and climate policy
        7. full integration of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies

Two cross-cutting priority objectives complete the programme:
        8. making the EU's cities more sustainable
        9. helping the EU tackle international environmental and climate challenges more effectively

Figure 1: Structure of the 7th EAP
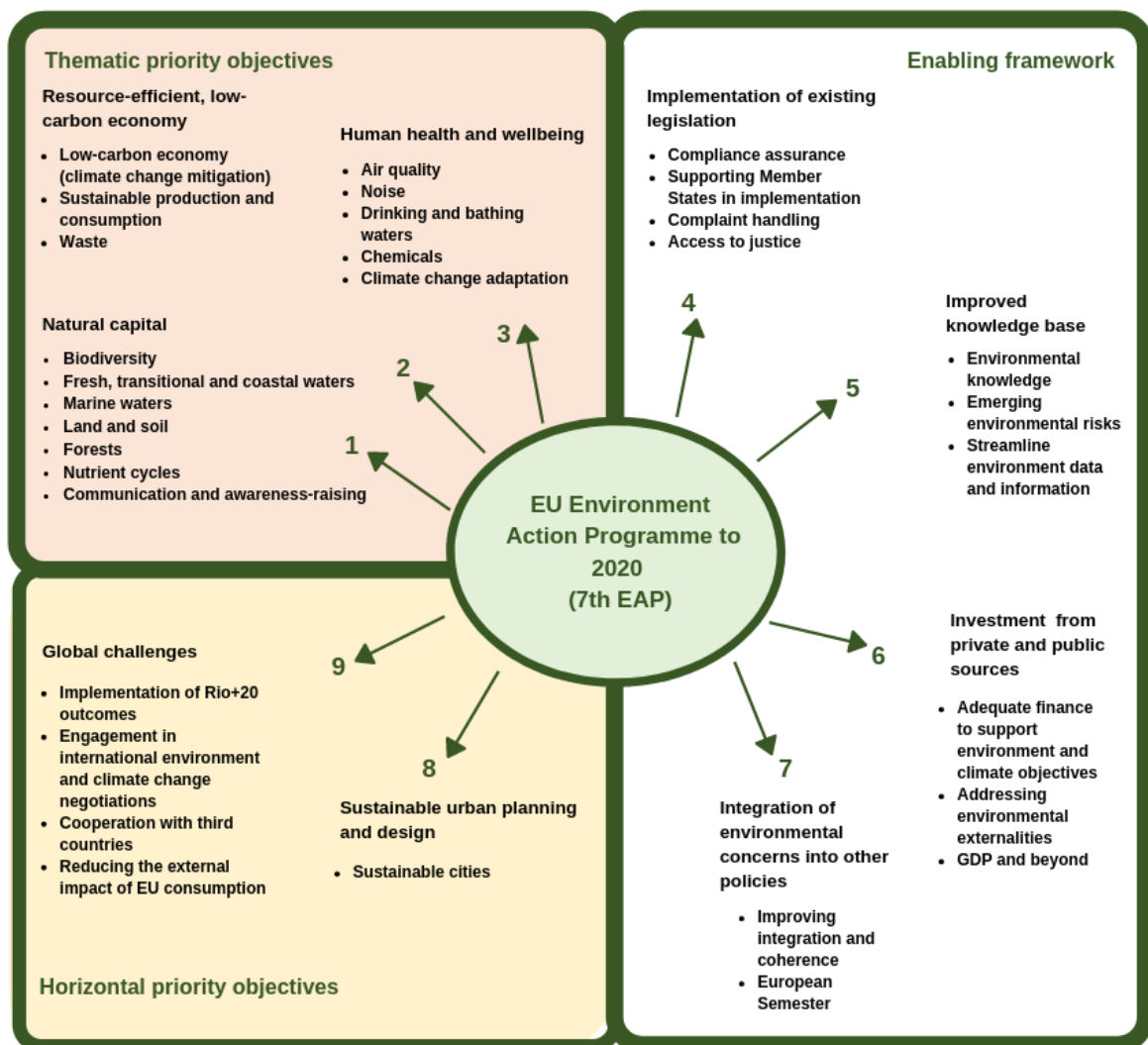
The enabling framework responds to the underlying barriers to meeting the thematic priority objectives. This is in recognition (from previous EAPs, and particularly the final assessment of the 6th EAP) that, for example, we can achieve clean air quality only if we implement legislation, develop the knowledge base, free up investment, and ensure that environmental concerns are incorporated into 'other' areas such as industrial policy and agriculture.

Together with these nine priority objectives, the 7th EAP sets a long term vision until 2050 for current and future environment and climate action, providing a stable and predictable environment for sustainable investment and growth.

> *"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"[8]*

The 7th EAP drew on the ongoing work of the EEA[9] on the state of the environment and lessons learned from the final assessment of the 6th EAP[10]. It also drew on a long history of environment action programmes (EAPs) going back to 1973 (see Annex 9). These EAPs have evolved in response to the needs of the time, and the accumulated experience in strategic environmental policy. In particular, the first four focused on legislative measures, while subsequent ones reflected the shared responsibility of the various organisations involved, the need for a wider set of cross-cutting measures, and for financial support.

2.2. Intervention logic

The intervention logic of the 7th EAP overall strategic framework, shown in Figure 2, shows support for policies pursued by both the EU and the Member States.

- Objectives should lead to results: the four objectives set out in the intervention logic are challenging to assess by themselves. One of the ways of assessing them is to see if the expected results materialised. There is a particular focus on the extent to which the 7th EAP's nine priority objectives and their sub-objectives and actions were achieved (considered in Annex 6 in detail, while Section 3 looks at the extent of their ongoing implementation).
- Results should lead to impacts: the state of the environment should be improved if the 7th EAP's nine priority objectives and their sub-objectives and actions are achieved. This is seen in the 'impacts' section of the intervention logic, and is monitored by the European Environment Agency as part of its 'state of the environment' process (see Section 3 below).

Hence, this evaluation looks at both the four objectives in the intervention logic and at the extent to which the priority objectives, sub-objectives and actions because have been achieved. Whilst the focus of this evaluation is on the structure of the 7th EAP, the structure does not exist in isolation. The only way to assess whether the objectives of the intervention logic are being achieved is to assess the extent to which the priority objectives and their sub-objectives and actions have been achieved, leaving the environment in a better condition.

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[8] Decision No 1386/2013/EU, para. 1 of the Annex.
[9] European Environment Agency, "The European environment – state and outlook 2010" (SOER 2010).
[10] COM(2007) 225 final.

Figure 2: Intervention logic of the 7th EAP

Needs → **Inputs** → **Types of actions** → **Expected results** → **Impacts**

Needs

To have a strategic framework for action to deliver more predictable, faster and better co-ordinated environment and climate policy

Objectives

a) Provide a set of common goals and related strategic actions

b) Ensure commitment from all: the EU and Member States; regions and cities; business and relevant stakeholders

c) Provide a tool to hold the EU and Member States to account

d) Increase the predictability of environment and climate policy-making

Inputs

Lessons learnt from the 6th EAP

EEA's SOER 2010

Information base on drivers, pressures, states, impacts and responses

Global trends and challenges

Types of actions

Identification of thematic and horizontal priority objectives and an enabling framework

Identification of sub-objectives and actions

Inter-institutional discussion and endorsement

Outputs

A common narrative characterized by

A multi-layered approach
The 7th EAP guides the EU environment policy until 2020 in light of a vision until 2050 of where it wants the Union to be

A dual focus
Three main thematic objectives complemented by four enabling framework objectives and two horizontal objectives

A joint responsibility to deliver
The 7th EAP calls both the EU and Member States to deliver on its priority objectives.

Expected results

Inclusive, integrated and flexible framework for policy making

Successful engagement and commitment of different stakeholders and at all levels

Delivery of the sub-objectives and actions set out in the 7th EAP (assessed in Annex 6)

Impacts

- Improved state of the environment allowing for healthier planet and people (assessed by European Environment Agency through its State of the Environment process)

- More competitive economy

External factors
- Technological developments

- Global trends

- Economic and financial constraints

2.3. Baseline

Unless otherwise specified for this evaluation, the counterfactual scenario used as a baseline is that there is no EAP, and that policies were developed and applied without any overall strategy. In other words, after the 6th EAP came to an end, it was not replaced by another EAP. This has the advantage of providing a clear point of comparison, and enables questions to be asked about whether the structure was right.

In some areas, however, comparison is also made with the 6th EAP. For example, the evaluation questions take account of the structural changes between the 6th and 7th EAP (see below for a discussion of the changes). The review of the 6th EAP and the Impact Assessment of the 7th EAP provide a strong evidence base and a clear view of the situation at the start of the 7th EAP. The section below explains this pathway.

2.3.1 *Pathway from the 6th to the 7th EAP*

The final assessment of the 6th EAP fed into the definition of the 7th EAP, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities ahead. The final assessment of the 6th EAP showed that a framework for action with a shared agenda and narrative enables the EU to capitalise on synergies between different policies, and to guide future developments of environmental and climate policy in a coherent and concerted way. A shared framework offers predictability for business, thus enabling better and sustainable investments.

However, the European Environment Agency's State of the Environment Report for 2010 stated that, despite progress in some areas, the EU was not on track to achieve any of its environmental targets. Europe's natural capital, biodiversity and ecosystems were still being degraded and depleted; global and European cuts in greenhouse emissions were far from sufficient to keep average world temperature increases below 2 °C and severing the link between natural resources and economic growth remained a challenge. Air pollution, exposure to multiple pollutants and chemicals and the effects of climate change severely threatened human well-being and health.

In this light, the Impact Assessment for the 7th EAP[11] identified and assessed three priorities needing strategic action:

- Protecting, conserving and enhancing the EU's natural capital
- Turning the EU into a resource efficient and more competitive low-carbon economy
- Safeguarding people from environment-related pressure and risks to health and wellbeing

The final assessment of the 6th EAP showed that it was less effective as a common framework than it might have been because of:

- Failure to implement it appropriately
- Lack of a sound knowledge base for policy making
- Lack of right incentives for environment and climate action
- Lack of policy coherence and integration

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[11] SWD (2012) 398

Recognising the multidimensional nature of environmental and climate policy, the 6th EAP also stressed the importance of complementing actions building on the strategic role of cities in triggering transformative actions at local and regional level with a comprehensive global approach.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND STATE OF PLAY

Since its adoption in November 2013, the 7th EAP provided a basis on which the European Commission could organise its environmental policy work.

At the start of his mandate, the Environment Commissioner Karmenu Vella stated in his September 2014 hearing with the European Parliament that he intended to focus on implementing the 7th EAP. Accordingly, the 7th EAP priorities continued to form the backbone of the Commission's environmental work. For example, in DG Environment:

- The DG's policy directorates are structured in line with the 7th EAP objectives, with staff resources allocated to those objectives.
- The strategic planning and annual management plans are based on the 7th EAP structure and entirely consistent with it.
- Separate procedures, such as the environment implementation review[12], are based on the structure of the 7th EAP. The bi-annual reviews identifying the main shortcomings in implementation in each Member State have provided significant input into the policy area assessments and the final evaluation of the 7th EAP.
- DG Environment has been monitoring the implementation of the 7th EAP since the programme's adoption in November 2013. Annual stock-taking has fed into the assessments of the 32 policy areas in Annex 6.

Whilst the structures and work of DG Environment and DG Climate Action are most clearly linked to the 7th EAP commitments, the same principle holds for other Commission DGs with policies that touch on the environment (e.g. agriculture).

The Commission is not, of course, the sole organisation responsible for implementing the 7th EAP. Most Member States have an environmental strategy, and whilst these differ considerably, they are often clearly linked with the objectives of the 7th EAP, and none are inconsistent with these objectives. The various players concerned are thus interlinked by a consistent web of intentions, which continues to develop.

3.1. *Assessment and scoring*

Annex 4 lists the sub-objectives and actions set out in the 7th EAP. Annex 5 contains a selection of the **main outputs** including legislative and non-legislative action, major events, instruments, programmes and evaluations, with the main outputs given by area.

As in many political strategies, some sub-objectives and even suggested actions, although agreed, are not fully SMART:[13] (see list of actions in Annex 4):

- they are accepted, having gone through co-decision, and
- they should be realistic and timely,

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[12] The Environment Implementation Review, founded in 2016, is a mechanism to improve the implementation of environment legislation and dialogue with the Member States.

[13] Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Realistic, Timely.

- but, crucially for any presentation of the overall level of implementation, many are not specific or measurable.

The best way to gauge the level of implementation is systematic monitoring coupled with assessment of progress, both of which are to some extent subjective. This method, presented below, is discussed in detail in Annex 6. The methodology was to:

- Take the various sub-objectives and actions, and to cluster them into 32 policy areas. A typical policy area covers one sub-objective and one to two actions, though this varies. For example, forests covers two sub-objectives and three actions, while communication and awareness raising relates to a single action.
- For these 32 policy areas, there is an assessment of implementation against the sub-objectives and actions of the 7th EAP.
- The degree of progress was scored by policy area and the sub-objectives and actions they cover. Clearly, the allocated scores are not free from subjective judgements.

Assessment category	Definition
No progress	The EU/Member State has not announced or adopted any measures to address the actions and sub-actions under the 7th EAP.
Limited progress	The EU/Member State has announced some measures to address the actions and sub-actions, but they appear insufficient and/or their adoption/implementation is at risk.
Some progress	The EU/Member State has announced or adopted measures to address the actions and sub-actions. These measures are promising, but not all of them have been implemented yet and it is uncertain whether they will in all cases.
Substantial progress	The EU/Member State has adopted measures, most of which have been implemented. These measures go a long way to addressing the actions and sub-actions.
Fully implemented	The EU/Member State has adopted and implemented measures that address the actions and sub-actions appropriately.

3.2. *Implementation State of Play*

For some sub-objectives or actions, it has always been understood that we are moving towards a target but expectations have not been made fully explicit. Actions, for instance, are often in the legal text along the lines of "urgently increasing efforts" or "taking further steps" or "improving". Moreover, progress within any policy area varies (as does progress within an action, with most actions having multiple clauses: for instance, the waste action includes 6 numbered sub-actions and some general actions).

Finally, the EAP sets goals on taking legislative action which are a spur to further work but cannot imply automatic implementation in themselves as this would pre-empt the usual steps of policy development, and the various institutions' rights.

The scores below by priority objective are the average of the policy areas covered by that objective.
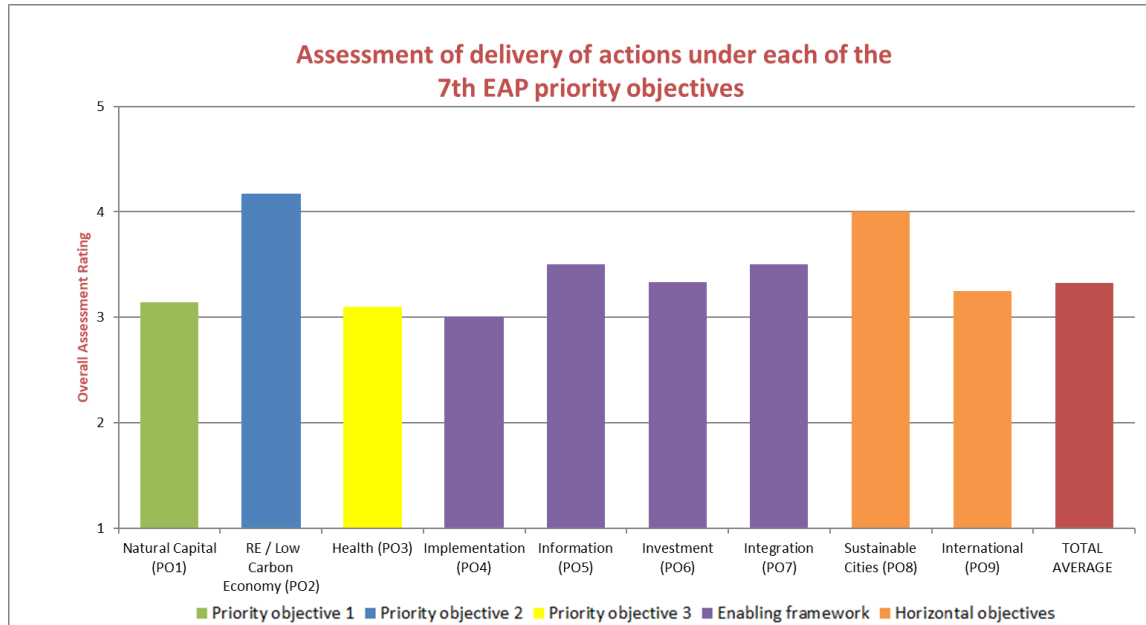
Figure 3: Assessment of delivery of sub-objectives and actions under the 7th EAP priority objectives (1= no progress; 2 = limited, 3 = some; 4 = substantial, 5 = fully implemented)

3.3. *European Environment Agency assessment*

Stronger progress in delivering 7th EAP sub-objectives and actions should help improve the state of the environment in practice: there may be time lags, but the correlation is clear. The European Environment Agency publishes an annual indicator assessment of progress for the three thematic priority objectives[14]. The scoreboard results confirm that:

"*the European Union continues to fall short of achieving a number of environmental objectives by 2020, especially in areas aimed at protecting biodiversity and natural capital. When it comes to 'boosting sustainable, resource-efficient, low-carbon economy', trends and outlooks cause more concern compared to the assessment from last year, while progress in addressing environment-related threats to health remains rather mixed.*"

In more detail:

• *For priority objective 1, Protect nature and strengthen ecological resilience:*

The outlook to 2020 remains bleak. There continues to be a considerable negative impact on the EU's natural capital, to the point that the EU is not on track to reach almost all of the selected 2020 objectives. For example, common birds – a key indicator for biodiversity – continue to show a declining trend and over-

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[14] "Environmental indicator report 2018 - In support to the monitoring of the Seventh Environment Action Programme", EEA Report No 19/2018.

fishing continues to be a problem. Also there are still no policies in sight to promote the necessary reductions in the rate of land take (land lost to artificial surfaces such as buildings and roads).

• *For priority objective 2, **Boost sustainable, resource- efficient, low carbon growth:***

The outlook to 2020 remains mixed. The EU is on track to meet climate and renewable energy related targets for 2020, although it is uncertain whether it will meet its energy efficiency target. There have been resource efficiency improvements. However, waste generation increased recently, and a reduction in environmental impact of production and consumption is uncertain for the housing sector and unlikely for the food and mobility sectors. Overall, this year's scoreboard has modified the outlook towards meeting this objective from uncertain to unlikely to be met by 2020.

• *For priority objective 3, **Effectively address environment-related threats to health and well-being:***

The outlook to 2020 remains mixed. There have been substantial reductions in emissions of air and water pollutants in recent decades. However, there are still key concerns over air quality and noise pollution in urban areas, and chronic exposure of the population to mixtures of chemicals. Ammonia emissions, arising mainly from agricultural production have continued to increase.

Figure 4 below sets out the EEA's independent assessment of past trends and outlooks for the various 7th EAP indicators they use. While these are focused on the state of the environment, they cover the full DPSIR range (drivers-pressures-states-impact-responses).

Figure 4: European Environment Agency 7th EAP indicators (December 2018)

Indicator	EU indicator past trend (ᵃ)	Outlook for meeting the selected objective by 2020
Priority objective 1: 'to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital'		
(!) Exposure of terrestrial ecosystems to eutrophication due to air pollution (*)	▲ (green)	● (red)
Gross nutrient balance in agricultural land: nitrogen	▲ (green)	● (red)
(!) Land take (*)	▲ (green)	● (red)
(!) Forest: growing stock, increment and fellings	▲ (yellow)	● (green)
Status of marine fish and shellfish in European seas	▲ (green)	● (red)
Abundance and distribution of selected species (common birds (*) and grassland butterflies)	▲ (red)	● (red)
(!) Species of European interest	▲ (red)	● (red)
(!) Habitats of European interest	▲ (red)	● (red)
Status of surface waters	▲ (yellow)	● (red)
Priority objective 2: 'to turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy'		
Resource productivity	▲ (green)	● (green)
Waste generation in Europe (excluding major mineral wastes) — absolute and per capita	▲ (red)	● (yellow)
Recycling of municipal waste (*)	▲ (green)	● (yellow)
Use of freshwater resources	▲ (green)	● (yellow)
Total greenhouse gas emission trends and projections	▲ (green)	● (green)
Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption	▲ (green)	● (green)
Progress on energy efficiency in Europe	▲ (green)	● (yellow)
Energy consumption by households	▲ (green)	● (yellow)
Greenhouse gas emissions from transport	▲ (red)	● (red)
(!) Animal product consumption (animal protein)	▲ (yellow)	● (red)
Share of environmental and labour taxes in total tax revenues	▲ (yellow)	● (red)
Employment and value added in the environmental goods and services sector (EGSS) compared with the whole economy	▲ (green)	● (yellow)
Environmental protection expenditure in Europe (deflated absolute value)	▲ (green)	● (green)
Priority objective 3: 'to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being'		
Exceedance of air quality standards in urban areas (nitrogen dioxide: NO_2; dust particles: PM_{10}; fine particulate matter: $PM_{2.5}$; ozone: O_3)	▲ NO_2, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$ (green) ▲ O_3 (yellow)	● (red)
Emissions of the main air pollutants in Europe (sulphur oxides: SO_2; nitrogen oxides: NO_x; fine particulate matter: $PM_{2.5}$; non-methane volatile organic compounds: NMVOCs; ammonia: NH_3) (*)	▲ SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$, NMVOCs (green) ▲ NH_3 (green)	● SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$ NMVOCs (green) ● NH_3 (yellow)
Bathing water quality	▲ (green)	● (green)
Number of countries that have adopted a climate change adaptation strategy and/or plan	N.A.	● (yellow)
Exposure to environmental noise	▲ (yellow)	● (red)
Consumption of chemicals, by hazard class	▲ (green)	● (yellow)
Total sales of pesticides	▲ (yellow)	● (yellow)

EU indicator past trend		Outlook for meeting the selected objective by 2020	
▲ (green)	Improving trend	● (green)	It is likely that the EU will meet the objective by 2020
▲ (yellow)	Stable or unclear trend	● (yellow)	It is uncertain whether or not the EU will meet the objective by 2020
▲ (red)	Deteriorating trend	● (red)	It is unlikely that the objective will be met by 2020

3.4. European Parliament and Committee of the Regions

In its med-term review of 2 November 2017, the European Parliament[15] concluded that:

> *"while the EAP scope remains relevant to current needs and adds value to EU and national policy-making efforts, its objectives are unlikely to be fully met by 2020, despite sporadic progress in some areas. Another key finding in this document is*

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[15] See: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_STU(2017)610998

that environmental and climate-related concerns are not sufficiently integrated into a number of EU policies."

The Committee of the Regions in its opinion 'Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme'[16]:

Concludes that the 7th EAP has demonstrated its added value and has had a positive influence on EU environmental policy, citizens, the environment and the economy. Its long-term vision is key in providing a stable environment for sustainable investment and growth, within the planet's ecological limits;

Highlights that the 7th EAP was comprehensive and very complex, with many sub-targets and detailed descriptions. Also, as it was rather static by setting targets for a given period, the 7th EAP was not able to respond to new technology developments, changing circumstances and new international strategies;

Points out that the 7th EAP outlined actions for improving the sustainability of cities, but neglected other types of communities, such as rural, coastal or mountain areas. While cities are important hubs for achieving the objectives, they do not exist in isolation from their surroundings. More attention should be given to the interrelations between cities and their hinterland;

4. METHODOLOGY

This evaluation focuses on January 2014 to December 2018. It looks at the extent to which the structure and strategic role of the 7th EAP improved environmental and climate policy-making in Europe. In doing so, it examines three aspects: 1) What a good strategy for policy-making is? 2) To what extent does the 7th EAP meets the success criteria of a good strategy? (details in Annex 3), and 3) To what extent did the 7th EAP implement the promised actions?

The Commission's assessment builds on an internal analysis of action implementation; external input, such as the stakeholder consultation; an external study with issue papers on different topics; and the EEA indicator reports. It reflects the Commission's ongoing work and expert views, as well as documented sources. As far as possible, the external inputs are integrated in the Commission's analysis, but in Section 5 it was decided, for the sake of transparency, to keep the Commission's assessment separate from stakeholders' views. In Section 5, the 'Commission findings' take those stakeholder views into account and then presents the Commission's views on the basis of all the available evidence.

In line with the **European Commission's guidelines for evaluations**[17], the evaluation includes an assessment of the 7th EAP against the Better Regulation guidelines using a number of evaluation questions, set out in the Roadmap.

Effectiveness:
- To what extent has the 7th EAP enabled more predictable, faster and better co-ordinated actions by the EU and the Member States?

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[16] May 2019: https://cor.europa.eu/EN/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-1672-2018
[17] See: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/toc_guide_en.htm

- To what extent has the 7th EAP been useful in terms of engaging different stakeholders?
- How has the 7th EAP structure contributed towards achieving its nine priority objectives?

Efficiency:
- To what extent has the 7th EAP created synergies or opportunities for streamlining, and cost saving at various levels?
- To what extent has the 7th EAP been useful in identifying and addressing information needs and thus supporting efficient and effective policies?

Relevance:
- To what extent does the 7th EAP address the challenges of EU environmental policy in a proportionate way?
- How flexible is the 7th EAP approach to allow new and emerging issues to be taken into account?

Coherence:
- How consistent with each other are the nine priority objectives and their actions?
- To what extent is the 7th EAP integrated and coherent with other EU policies and strategies, including the Juncker priorities and the Europe 2020 Strategy?
- To what extent is the 7th EAP coherent with international commitments, including the 2030 Agenda and SDGs?

Added value:
- What is the additional value resulting from the 7th EAP, compared to what could be achieved by EU environmental policy without such a framework? [18]

4.1. Process

In line with standard practice for Commission evaluations, after adoption of the Roadmap, the main questions were divided into sub-questions, which are easier to answer[19]. Answers were provided[20] on the basis of:

- **Implementation assessments** (see Annex 6): these provide an overview of developments and implementation of the 7th EAP and its various objectives, sub-objectives and actions across 32 policy areas. They cover (together with Annex 5)

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[18] Usually, evaluations look at EU value-added but this was considered inappropriate in this case because the initiative is a joint commitment by the EU and the Member States.

[19] For example, a better way to look at the first effectiveness question is to break it up into sub-questions such as: Have the 36 sub-objectives been achieved? Have the 70 actions been achieved? Has any progress been made with the enabling framework? Is there any evidence that the enabling framework is helping to meet the other priority objectives? Is there any evidence that policy is 'smarter'? Is there any evidence that policy is 'faster'? Is there any evidence that policy is 'better coordinated'? Do Member States and regions have a consistent EAP?

[20] The Commission used an external contractor to support the stakeholder consultation through administrative and logistical support and also to undertake some specific literature research. The external contractor was not asked to provide answers to all of the evaluation questions, or to summarise evidence for all of them. The contractor also provided papers on selected issues such as the mapping of environment policy to SDGs, development of EAPs over time, assessment of the 7th EAP against good governance criteria.

the main outputs in terms of: legislation, evaluation, information, improving the knowledge base, implementation, major conferences; an assessment of the current situation in the light of the 7th EAP's objectives and sub-objectives; and indicators of progress. These help with the basic assessment of the link between the structure of the EAP and the actions taken, and progress made at Community and Member State level (the results in the intervention logic). Given their focus on implementation, they do not aim to evaluate what would have happened in the absence of the 7th EAP, although explicit links are reported in some cases. These summaries helped to identify examples of implementation (good and bad), used in this evaluation.

- **Stakeholder consultation** (summarised in Annex 2) in line with the consultation strategy. Firstly, a 12 week **online public consultation** held in 2018 received 153 responses. Also, a series of **workshops** and **targeted consultations** involving specific interest groups to allow different aspects of the 7th EAP to be explored in more depth. The targeted consultation focused on specific groups of stakeholders, including:
  - o representatives of EU environment and climate NGOs and European think tanks
  - o independent academics specialising in EU environment and climate policy
  - o business operating in key environmental sectors

However, not all stakeholder groups responded and commented (e.g. agriculture representatives did not respond), and so the responses despite best efforts are not a representative sample.

- **EU Member States** (summarised in Annex 2) were all consulted through a questionnaire targeting National Ministries for Environment and Climate Change, and follow-up discussions. Although all were invited to respond, responses were received in detail from 14 Member States (Ministries of Environment). EU Member States also discussed the 7th EAP in an Informal Environment Council and then at the Environment Council of December 2018, and expressed unanimous support for EAPs in principle.

- **EU institutions**. The European Parliament issued a review of the 7th EAP and the stakeholder consultation also benefited from the views of regional and local authorities through the involvement and opinion of the Committee of the Regions.

- The evaluation also draws upon the following **reports, datasets and indicators**:

- Communication on the Final Assessment of the 6th Community Environment Action Programme[21]
- Impact Assessment of the 7th EAP[22]
- EU Environment Implementation Review
- the European Environment Agency (EEA) indicator reports and the EEA's work on the next State and Outlook of the Environment Report (SOER)

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[21] COM (2011) 531
[22] SWD (2012) 398

- Eurostat's indicator work through the resource efficiency scoreboard, the circular economy monitoring framework and the indicators on the Sustainability Development Goals
- Progress reports on greenhouse gas reductions
- relevant evaluations, studies and datasets relating to EU environment and climate policy areas and indicators on good governance

- **Benchmarking of the 7th EAP against the features of a 'good' strategy.** Annex 3 identifies the features of a strategy that generally enable it to meet its objectives, and then scores or benchmarks the 7th EAP against them. The assumption is that scoring well on these features means the 7th EAP is likely to be meeting the four objectives set out in its intervention logic. Some of these criteria overlap with the objectives in the intervention logic (which should be reassuring and allows for double checking of analysis elsewhere in this evaluation) whilst others are more about the process, and so do not appear in the objectives of the intervention logic. The identification and scoring of the 7th EAP against these criteria was done independently by a contractor; the criteria are based upon ample knowledge about good governance including the Commission's 'Quality of Public Administration – a Toolbox for Practitioners'.

4.2. Limitations – robustness of findings

The evaluation requires a comparison with the counterfactual, which in this case is the **baseline** of environmental policy if no 7th EAP had been agreed. The evaluation investigates this, but it is hard because there is an issue of **causality**:

- What would have happened without an EAP? Are achievements a result of the 7th EAP, or were they unaffected by it? For example, if an action set out in the 7th EAP is not carried out in full, the result might still be better than if it had not been included in the 7th EAP.

The response to this was to develop a series of sub-questions by: breaking broader questions down into smaller and more manageable questions. For example, a question such as 'Is policy smarter' can be better answered by looking at whether policy is based on better information, whether integration has improved allowing for more coherent responses etc. This approach reflects the way in which the 7th EAP strands reinforce each other. It also reduces the degree of subjectivity enabling more evidence based judgements.

Also in response, extra efforts were also made to hold discussions with stakeholders. The Online Public Consultation and public workshops were complemented by additional targeted consultations. This led to wider feedback and a broadly representative response, even though there could have been more feedback from some groups where environmental issues are not their primary focus (such as business or agricultural stakeholders[23]). However, their views are also reflected in government responses.

Overall, efforts to triangulate multiple sources of evidence and views are considered to lead to robust findings in terms of evidence.

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[23] These groups were explicitly included in the targeted consultation attempts, but with limited success

5. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

5.1. Effectiveness

5.1.1 *Better-coordinated*

Evaluation question: "To what extent has the 7th EAP enabled more predictable, faster and better co-ordinated actions by the EU and the Member States?"

Overall response: Overall, the 7th EAP helped to provide more predictable, faster and better co-ordinated actions. It matches good governance criteria for developing a strategy, and this is logically linked to better policies. The 7th EAP has increased predictability by bringing together distinct issues and having everyone agree them. This has helped with the implementation of some measures (such as the Environment Implementation Review, designation of small drinking water suppliers, tackling invasive alien species, following up the Rio+20 agenda which eventually led to agreement on the SDGs). As in most broad long-term strategies, some of the actions envisaged did not take place (non-toxic environment strategy by 2018 and headline target for reduction in marine litter), while others were added (Plastics strategy). Stakeholders have raised the question of whether the change in political leadership from one Commission mandate to the next led to reduced predictability.

What is the issue?

The EAP involved co-ordinating and agreeing a list of sub-objectives and actions. This should lead to a smoother implementation for the duration of the EAP because strategic decisions have been taken, translated into more operational sub-objectives and actions, discussed and then agreed amongst a broad range of interested parties. That means they should be more predictable, in the sense of having a degree of strategic buy-in.

What are the Commission's findings?

Section 3 sets out the extent to which the 36 sub-objectives and 60 actions have been implemented. Clearly, there has been progress overall, many sub-objectives and actions have been implemented, and there is policy progress in all areas.

Looking at the different objectives, sub-objectives and actions, there is widespread agreement (see 5.1.2) that they cover the main issues and provide a comprehensive framework for action. The process of agreeing through co-decision has enabled policy to be better co-ordinated thanks to the explicit co-ordination of the parties involved (i.e. cities to regions to national governments to EU level) and explicit agreement on shared actions. Stakeholders (see below) have generally appreciated the co-ordination and clarity provided by a shared programme.

Better co-ordinated policy should be more predictable. The priority objectives are the right ones (see the first relevance question), and the involvement of stakeholders in the process has ensured better co-ordination. However, a possible limiting factor mentioned by stakeholders was loss of predictability with the transition from one Commission to the next (as in 2013), with the new Commission having its own mandate and priorities.

The governance assessment (see Annex 3) suggests that the 7th EAP met the criteria for good governance. There is widespread acceptance (see 5.5.1) of having a periodic high-level discussion on priorities amongst all interested parties, followed by agreement on a strategy which guides all parties involved and helps with resource allocation. This is in line with the requirements for good policy making promoted by the Commission[24] and is common practice across EU policies (e.g. Europe 2020, EU trade for all strategy, EU global strategy, EU plastics strategy, EU migration strategy). More specifically, the 7th EAP meets to a high degree the quality criteria for good policy making: political commitment; adequate resources; vision, objectives and targets; monitoring, continuous learning; and broad participation.

Although national strategies tend not to quote the EAP directly, they often are heavily influenced by it so coherently reflect the policy framework at the EU level.

- The 7th EAP has influenced the strategic approaches and action programmes of Member States, regions and cities (see Annex 8). In several Member States, the 7th EAP has been taken into consideration when developing specific national policies. Examples include climate policies (e.g. Cyprus, Czechia and Finland) and waste policies (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland). Some Member States say they have taken explicit account of the 7th EAP when developing their national strategy on climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Strategies in other Member States show a considerable degree of consistency with the 7th EAP. This holds both for larger countries, such as. Poland, and for smaller ones with fewer resources, which confirm that the 7th EAP has been a crucial source of inspiration for their national strategies.

Assessing whether policy is 'faster' inevitably involves a subjective judgement. However, it is reasonable to suppose that a more predictable and better coordinated policy will proceed at a faster rate.

Having a strategic framework to back up policy proposals can support change, but strategic frameworks also need firm political backing in the longer term. For instance, waste proposals in 2014 and 2015 included references to the 7th EAP, yet negotiators were not consider themselves to be bound by the commitments in that programme, such as the commitment to phase out landfilling of recoverable waste[25] and so this is not fully reflected in the final proposals[26].

However, there are some clear positive examples – even if it remains difficult to prove causality– such as the development of the Environment Implementation Review process (see box below). There is also evidence that the enabling framework is contributing positively to meeting the other priority objectives. One Member State suggested that the implementation focus of the 7th EAP was effective at pushing stronger consideration at national and provincial level.

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[24] See '*Quality of Public Administration, A toolbox for Practionner's*, 2015.

[25] See Annex 4 and the action: "*landfilling is limited to residual (i.e. non-recyclable and non-recoverable) waste*"

[26] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/index.htm

An example of success of the 7th EAP in facilitating delivery of the objectives of existing EU environmental policies and legislation is the Environment Implementation review (EIR) process. The EIR process is inclusive and participative, flexible and in synergy with existing work on environmental implementation.

The EIR improves the knowledge base about implementation gaps on EU environmental policy and law in each Member State; provide new solutions complementary to legal enforcement; address the underlying root and often cross-sectoral causes of these gaps; and stimulate exchanges of good practices. Based on the diagnostic, the Commission can accompany the Member States' own efforts with technical and financial support and if necessary, with expertise underpinning structural reforms. It follows a two-year cycle of Member State reports and analysis.

The EIR process was first put forward and agreed as part of the discussions on the 7th EAP, and in light of the implementation challenge identified during the period of the 6th EAP. Having this recognition of the strategic issue of implementation, and agreement on the broad response, allowed for a smoother adoption of the first EIR reports.

Examples of how the 7th EAP helped include:

- The key role played by the EU in the process for agreeing the **2030 Agenda**. Reaching agreement at the EU level on all the issues covered by such a wide-ranging agenda was a challenge. Having the 7th EAP was helpful as it provided a common agreed starting point within the EU, particularly on the Agenda's environmental aspects. The shared point of departure was not far from what was eventually needed for the SDG negotiations.

- An action on **drinking water** in small supplies was included in the 7th EAP because it coincided with a related discussion that took place while preparations for the 7th EAP were under way, between 2011 and 2013. The issue was that more than a third of the EU's 85,000 small supplies were not properly monitored or complying with all quality standards. The way it was followed up through the implementation of the 7th EAP thus cross-fertilised each other. In other words, the 7th EAP action was a helpful catalyst.

There are examples where the 7th EAP highlights issues that are relevant but where major challenges remain in relation to the objectives it lists for 2020 (more details in Annex 6):

- **Sustainable nutrient management**: the 7th EAP notes that excessive nutrient releases continue to affect air and water quality, adversely affecting ecosystems and causing significant problems to human health. Despite some progress thanks to efforts relating to the implementation of the Nitrates Directive and the Urban Waste Water Directive, more needs to be done to meet the 7th EAP 2020 objective of managing the nutrient cycle in a sustainable and resource-efficient way.

- **Noise pollution**: The Environmental Noise Directive has raised awareness of the need for action, and initiated a process of adopting and revising action plans. However, the 7th EAP target[27] has not been met and actions remain scattered with instances of ambitious plans, but also instances where almost nothing was achieved.[28] For example, the evaluation reported that more than 125 million people in Europe are exposed to excessive levels of road traffic noise, nearly 8 million people to excessive rail traffic noise, almost 3 million people exposed to excessive levels of aircraft noise, and 300,000 people exposed to excessive industrial noise in urban areas.
- Move to a **non-toxic environment**: Despite some progress in the chemical policy area, including in the continued implementation of REACH and through actions to address issues identified in the REACH review, policy assessments have identified remaining policy gaps, inconsistencies and development needs, where further action is needed. The 7th EAP agreement to develop a Union strategy for a non-toxic environment by 2018 has not been met.
- The specific reference to a **marine litter** headline target in the 7th EAP did not provide enough impetus to establish such a target. However, this has been responded to through the Plastic Strategy and the legislative action to reduce marine litter from single use plastics and fishing gear.

A typical criticism of strategic frameworks is the difficulty of measuring its performance. One solution offered is to include a realistic target for each action, and to make it legally binding. However, it is unclear whether this should be the purpose of a strategic framework with the 7th EAP leaving it for directives and regulations to lay down the details of the actions.

Overall, compliance with good governance principles suggests that the 7th EAP resulted in more predictable, faster and better coordinated action on the part of the EU and the Member States than would have been the case without it.

Views of stakeholders

In the online public consultation[29], stakeholders largely agreed that the 7th EAP was an effective tool to promote predictable and coordinated EU environmental and climate policy. They strongly agreed (69 %), or agreed (67 %), that the programme provides more environmental and climate policy predictability and facilitates policy coordination among Member States. The 7th EAP was also described as a key success factor in terms of making EU environmental policy more predictable and accountable in future.

The main message from interviews with Member State representatives was that the 7th EAP was useful in providing high-level strategic guidance at the EU-level that can be used or referred to at all levels of governance if desired. Because it is an accessible reference document it is used in national discussions. However, it was also noted that the

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[27] 54b) *noise pollution in the Union has significantly decreased, moving closer to WHO recommended levels*

[28] Evaluation of the Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise, SWD (2016) 454

[29] See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-evaluation-7th-environment-action-programme_en

7th EAP is probably not the sole reason for the adoption of any specific policy. One comment was that the European Parliament and NGOs attach more importance to the 7th EAP than the Commission does (Parliament uses the 7th EAP in letters to highlight failures). Moreover, the 7th EAP is a handy reference text for Parliament as it brings together all EU environmental policy in a single document.

Parliament's European Implementation Assessment:

> *"found that while the EAP scope remains relevant to current needs and adds value to EU and national policy-making efforts, its objectives are unlikely to be fully met by 2020, despite sporadic progress in some areas. Another key finding in this document is that environmental and climate-related concerns are not sufficiently integrated into a number of EU policies. These findings were made on the basis of publicly available sources of information (specifically aimed at informing the evaluation of the 7th EAP) and views shared in the course of the targeted stakeholder consultation in support of this document."*

The targeted stakeholder consultation of Member States asked if the EAP made the decision-making process more effective, and the overwhelming response was 'yes'. One Member State suggested that the 7th EAP made it easier to agree legislative proposals, suggesting it gave increased legitimacy to the topics it covered. Others suggested that it helped to integrate climate and environmental concerns into other policy areas. Still others highlighted its importance as a strategic tool to set out clear objectives and drive policy at the national level.

In its opinion, the Committee of the Regions praises the EAP as a tool for coordinating EU, national, regional and city-level policies, to align priorities, avoid duplication, minimise contradictory or disconnected processes, and close existing policy gaps. However, it also points out weaknesses in addressing rural communities.

Other stakeholders commented on the predictability between an 'old' and 'new' Commission: generally the EAP helped provide predictability between the two but predictability was reduced in a 'new' Commission, which had less ownership.

The 7th EAP has probably been of some help in coordinating Member States' environmental action, particularly as regards the Circular economy and tackling knowledge gaps. One respondent noted that the programme was considered to be a driving force in their focus on coordinating measures to close gaps amongst Member States.

5.1.2 *Engagement of stakeholders*

Evaluation question: "To what extent has the 7th EAP been useful in terms of engaging different stakeholders?"

Overall response: Overall, the 7th EAP has been very useful in engaging different stakeholders. The 7th EAP is a cooperative product, with systematic attempts to engage stakeholders in the Commission proposal followed by co-decision. This broad participation makes it a shared product, and increases buy-in. Although there has been broad buy-in from stakeholders, there have been shortcomings in

implementation that could have been addressed through a clearer follow-up mechanism, including explicit information on who does what.

What is the issue?

This evaluation question examines whether there has been broad participation and whether all the parties that should have been involved in the discussion, negotiation and delivery actually have been.

What are the Commission's findings?

In the Commission's view, the process of agreeing the 7th EAP was an inclusive process in which stakeholders were involved and had every opportunity to give their views.

The process by which the 7th EAP was adopted was a significant one. The co-decision process for EAPs was a Treaty requirement for the first time for the 7th EAP,

- A **sound analytical basis** was created including the evaluation of the 6th EAP, the state of the environment report, and an Impact Assessment of the 7th EAP. Of these, the evaluation work was more valuable than the Impact Assessment in determining the shape and content of the 7th EAP.
- The Commission **consulted a wide range of stakeholders** in drawing up its proposal for a 7th EAP. Through multiple public events, an open consultation process and written inputs, it gave all major stakeholders opportunities to state their position. Those consulted included the business community, NGOs, academia, bodies responsible for implementation in EU countries and representatives of civil society. Stakeholders broadly agree that the process was inclusive. Engagement was considerable both in terms of breadth and depth (for example, representatives of agriculture were asked to contribute to this evaluation, but did not become involved, whereas they did become involved in reaching agreement on the 7th EAP). The stakeholder consultation process was seen as extremely useful.
- Subsequently the proposal went through the co-decision process resulting in a legal decision under which the proposal was discussed and amended with the European Parliament and the Council. In terms of **negotiations with the other institutions**, these were productive and relatively rapid. One caveat, however, is that the Commission's proposal was detailed, which encouraged the creation of a long list of actions judged less useful elsewhere in this evaluation.
- The 7th EAP comprises a **range of commitments**: some were relatively new, others were next steps that had not been discussed by everyone before this process, while others were existing commitments. This rich variety is not a problem, but simply reflects the fact that there tend to be more strategic discussions under way in certain areas. Even in these cases, it was useful to have a clear discussion of how to put the commitments into practice.

In terms of the pros and cons of this approach:

- In general, having a strategic discussion was extremely with stakeholders has been useful to develop a common narrative, reference point and vision for the next steps: a shared understanding of priorities is not to be underestimated.

- As the product of an inter-institutional discussion it benefited from the contribution of NGOs, business and other stakeholders including those from cities and regions. The Committee of the Regions, for example, was able to put forward local needs.
- The emphasis on engagement continues a trend that could be seen with the 6th EAP which was developed in a more cooperative way than the 5th. This reflects changes in thinking about environmental governance, and a stronger emphasis on cooperative processes reflecting the need to move away from top-down solutions when tackling increasingly complex issues.
- The cooperative decision-making process stemming from the adoption of decisions as a legal form broadens and strengthen the political buy-in of the structure and content of the 7th EAP. While other Commission's policy proposals and documents are also based on broad consultations with stakeholders and the publics, the added value of a decision for an EAP is that it helps to secure the commitment of Member States and Parliament and what it takes to achieve them. Indeed, the EAP provides an overarching framework for action on objectives whose implementation is under the shared responsibility of both the EU and its Member States. A Communication would not allow for such good discussion or for other institutions to amend the text.

However, despite these important positive aspects, adopting the EAP as a decision also has drawbacks:

- A co-decision process is time-consuming and, by welcoming different views and perspectives, it risks transforming the EAP into a long wish-list that is difficult to monitor and prioritize. The large number of specific actions of the 7th EAP reflects this drawback, while offering a useful lesson learnt for any future EAP. A clear follow-up mechanism accompanied by a clear allocation of responsibilities among stakeholders and a limited number of actions could contribute to streamline and strengthen the effectiveness of the EAP.

Leaving aside the co-decision process, other positive examples include:

- The Member States referred to the 7th EAP in a letter sent to President Juncker, on becoming Commission president, to maintain continuity in environmental policy between the 'old' and 'new' Commissions.
- In many Member States, policy reflects the EAP's general principles and/or structure, although no explicit reference is made to the programme.
- The involvement of the local actors, in relation to priority objective 8, with for example the Covenant of Mayors showing consistent commitments.

Whilst some less positive examples include:

- Some Member States commented that the 7th EAP was not used directly to set policy. This could reflect the fact that it was a one-off commitment, or the lack of detail in the actions along with the need to preserve flexibility.
- It was thought to be harder to engage business in developing the 7th EAP, compared with other stakeholders. This is perhaps reflected by less focus on how to support business in responding to environmental challenges (although there are

still some good examples of such co-operation). At the same time, business focused increasingly on the Sustainable Development Goals.

More generally, it was difficult to involve stakeholders from some sectors (agricultural associations and cities networks) through the Commission's stakeholder consultation process for this evaluation (even though they were targeted). These stakeholders are more involved with the specific pieces of legislation referred to under the 7th EAP, whose development is shaped by the 7th EAP, and inevitably they have to concentrate their limited resources on following such exercises after the initial period of agreement[30]. Cities' views are captured and well represented by the Committee of the Regions.

Views of stakeholders

Respondents to the Online Public Consultation stated how important certain factors were for the success of the 7th EAP. All the factors mentioned were viewed as either very important or important[31]. This suggests an endorsement of the approach to the 7th EAP, and specifically for this evaluation question an endorsement of stakeholders' shared responsibility and involvement in the process (first four bars/lines of Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Importance of various aspects of the 7th Environment Action Programme

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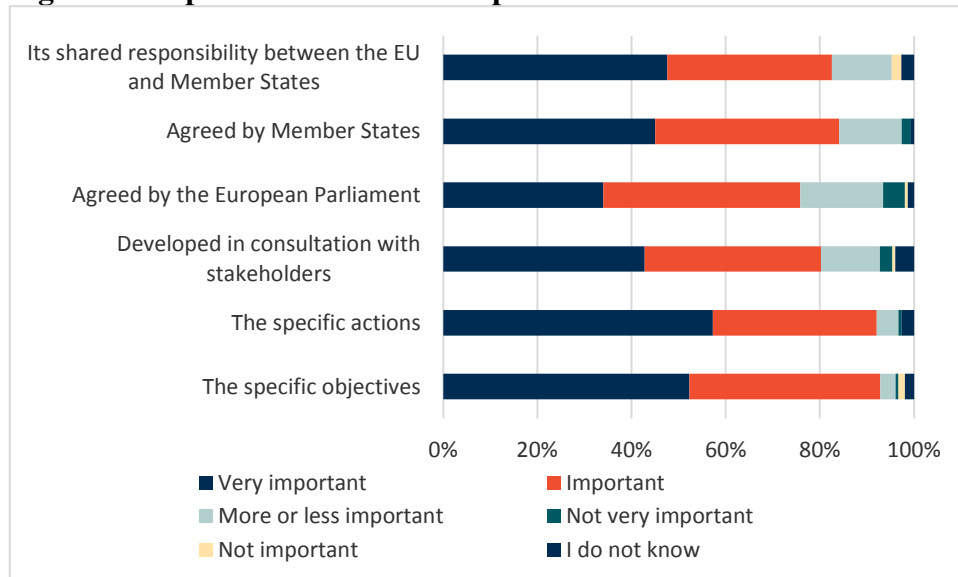
[30] For example, agricultural representative bodies such as Copa-Cogeca and agriculture stakeholders were asked to participate in public workshops and in the targeted consultation, but chose not to do so. It is likely that they are more involved in responding to core business, e.g. the ongoing discussions on EU budget spending in the CAP. Farming representatives did not take part in the stakeholder consultation held by the European Parliament either.

[31] All the factors for the 7th EAP's success were viewed by the OPC respondents to be very important or important for the success of [the] 7th EAP. However, the two with the strongest positive reactions were the specific actions and objectives of the programme. Conclusions did not differ noticeably between stakeholder groups apart from some small variations such as: NGOs were relatively more supportive of objectives; private individuals of the specific actions noted by the programme were very important, rather than important; private individuals were least positive about the 7th EAP being agreed upon by the European Parliament. See Support Study for more details.

The targeted consultation of Member States found the 7th EAP to be 'politically useful', in part because stakeholders were involved and the programme was debated and approved by the Council and Parliament. More generally, the participatory policy-making process mean that stakeholders played a more active role in its development.

5.1.3 Structure of the 7th EAP

Evaluation question: "How has the 7th EAP structure contributed towards achieving its nine priority objectives?"

Overall response: The overall structure (of a limited number of thematic objectives, supported by increasingly more operational sub-objectives or actions) helped meet the priority objectives. While the principle of a multi-level EAP is endorsed and reflects good practice, the evaluation findings call into question the degree of complexity and depth of the actions.

What is the issue?

The structure of the 7th EAP comprises nine priority objectives, 36 more operational sub-objectives and 60 actions. Is this the right structure, is it detailed enough, or is it too detailed?

What are the Commission's findings?

The overall structure (a limited number of thematic objectives, supported by increasingly more operational sub-objectives and then actions) enables priorities and actions to be communicated to different groups and for different purposes.

The nine thematic objectives chosen are still largely relevant and appropriate. In particular, the enabling framework has been very relevant: for example, the focus on investment was a cross cutting issue which benefited from increased attention. On the other hand, international and city-level issues could have been mainstreamed within the other priority objectives.

Annex 9 shows that the structure was simplified by comparison with that of the 6th EAP, with the 7th EAP given the format of a 'narrative brochure' to highlight and focus on a few priority objectives and enabling objectives. All stakeholders view this improvement in the clarity of the narrative as appropriate and helpful.

The sub-objectives and actions are rather long and have been criticised by a number of stakeholders (from a mixture of stakeholder groups) with some justification on two grounds: (a) they are too complex, and (b) it is difficult to monitor them and assess whether they have been achieved.

- As regards complexity, the actions often have multiple sub-clauses and so move away from the intention to identify priorities and instead becoming a long wish list.
- As regards monitoring, the state of the environment report and the EEA indicator reports provide the environmental picture on the ground, but it is an incomplete picture with no coverage of the enabling framework. Of course, the lack of a comprehensive monitoring framework may be inevitable and does not necessarily indicate that the structure is wrong, but simply that monitoring can be a challenge.

One indication that the structure is appropriate is the extent to which it is copied or reflected in national strategies or in other EU strategies (see 5.2.2 and Annexes 3 and 8). A first and important point is that most Member States also have an environmental strategy, and they appear to be consistent with the 7th EAP (see Annex 8). The differences between them reflect the need to have national ownership and reflect national issues.

The structure of the 7th EAP was also in part a response to findings about the 6th EAP in the Impact Assessment of the 7th EAP. Whilst the relevant issues are discussed elsewhere in this evaluation report, it is worth looking at the key issues together and in particular the problem drivers identified in the Impact Assessment:

- inadequate implementation

- insufficiently coordinated data and information on the environment and gaps in the knowledge base

- lack of coherence (consistency) in addressing increasingly interlinked challenges

- problems related to incentives for investment in environment-related measures

The 7th EAP explicitly addresses the problem drivers that were identified at the time of its design. These issues led to the enabling framework and the four 'Is': implementation, information, integration and investment. There has been progress in all of these areas (see Annex 6), related to their prominence in the structure and the added focus on them.

Overall, the structure of the 7th EAP has been helpful in meeting priority objectives. Its concepts and objectives have been picked up and reflected and given more emphasis by Member States. The principle of a multi-level EAP is generally endorsed, but the degree of complexity or depth is more open to question.

Views of stakeholders

The online public consultation found that stakeholders perceived some action in all nine objective areas (see Annexes 5 and 6). There was no explicit assessment of the causality; while action has been taken, stakeholders did not explicitly link this to the structure. In general, they noted that the objectives requiring most improvement were objectives 4 (improved implementation of policy), 5 (an improved knowledge base), and 9 (addressing international challenges).

The targeted stakeholder consultation of Member States found that 7th EAP has affected individual countries differently. Its influence is more direct in some and indirect, in others (so it has always helped improve understanding, but sometimes influences policies and strategies). Another distinction can be drawn from the different areas of influence of the 7th EAP, for example in some Member States the 7th EAP's natural capital approach and the resource-efficiency approach were both mentioned as influential.

Some Member States suggested that the 7th EAP was too complex. This perception was echoed by stakeholders.

5.2. Efficiency

5.2.1 *Synergies and opportunities*

> **Evaluation question: 'To what extent has the 7th EAP created synergies or opportunities for streamlining, and cost saving at various levels?'**
>
> **Overall response: The 7th EAP's structure and in particular the enabling framework, have supported synergies: both horizontally (between policy areas) and vertically (between levels of government). The programme's focus on better integration and implementation have supported actions designed to make cost savings and improve efficiency. Failing to implement environment legislation costs the EU around EUR 55 billion every year. Despite increasingly ambitious environmental targets and increased efforts in many policy areas, spending on environmental protection has remained broadly constant in Europe over many years at about 2 % of GDP. This may reflect improvements in efficiency, although it is difficult to prove causality.**

What is the issue?

Having a well-designed EAP should allow for better-designed and more effective actions, in particular through better integration and the generation of synergies. This should lead to actions that are more efficient, achieving their desired effects at lower regulatory cost. This could be seen through either the overall regulatory cost burden, the enabling framework facilitating better delivery of other objectives or a direct link between the 7th EAP and changes in costs and streamlining.

What are the Commission's findings?

A particular issue for synergies and streamlining is integration and mainstreaming. The policy levers to best tackle environmental issues are increasingly owned by other policy areas, e.g. agriculture for biodiversity, transport for air quality, employment on healthy and non-polluted work environment. There are also synergies and trade-offs between climate change policies and environment: for example, there is increasing recognition of solutions that act on both climate change and air pollution, such as methane emissions reductions and development of non-combustible renewable energy sources (e.g. wind, solar). Also, there is increasing awareness of the benefits of a circular economy in meeting climate objectives.

Whilst integration can achieve cost synergies, it is difficult to measure as it cannot be 'separated out'. This means that any assessment of it needs to rely on looking at where the logic is applied and the processes in place to deliver it.

For example, the common agriculture policy reform of 2013 introduced a more targeted cross compliance, new greening direct payments and more focused rural development policy to reinforce the coherence between the CAP and environmental and climate policies. On 1 June 2018, the Commission published the legislative proposals for the next CAP (2020-2027) for a smarter, simpler, modern and more sustainable CAP providing significant added value for farmers and society, which aims at strengthening integration and delivering a higher degree of ambition for the environment and climate.

Annex 6 shows many improvements in cost-efficiency, though these are challenging to link specifically to the 7th EAP.

- There has been an increased use of evaluation to investigate the fitness for purpose of the acquis. As regards the rules and laws for which DG Environment is responsible, about three fifths of the legislation has either undergone evaluation or is currently being evaluated, including consideration of regulatory burdens and the scope for streamlining. This includes the most costly legislation (air, water, chemicals, industrial emissions, and nature). However, while this is reflected in the 7th EAP actions, it is unclear if this was driven by the 7th EAP or by the Commission's Better Regulation agenda.
- There are changes associated with reductions in regulatory costs as part of the Commission's REFIT Programme[32]. For example, the Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal on the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment[33] found the proposal would reduce costs for business and public authorities, have a positive social impact for EU hospitals, and save about EUR 170 million. The exclusion of pipe organs from the scope of the Directive would also help avoid the loss of jobs and an annual loss of up to EUR 65 million, and have no material environmental impact.
- The focus on compliance assurance and the Environmental Implementation Review will have helped improve implementation.
- The one-stop-shop for cities[34] is a good example of an effort to improve efficiency. There is a single entry point for information on the funding available for cities, as requested in the 7th EAP.

Overall, the 7th EAP's focus on improving implementation and integration is very likely to have improved efficiency and driven down the regulatory cost of environmental policy (at a given level of ambition). In terms of the overall regulatory burden, Eurostat's statistics on environmental protection expenditure show that while spending has gone up in line with inflation, total spending on environmental protection in the European economy has remained fairly static at around 2 % of GDP since 2000 despite increasingly ambitious environmental targets in many policy areas. At the same time, efforts to improve the environment have improved and there is additional effort (further implementation) now in many areas[35]. This means that environmental policy is gradually becoming more efficient, although whether this is due to EAPs or smarter policy and technological advances is unclear. These figures need to be seen in the context of the costs of non-implementation estimated to be around EUR 55 billion Euros per annum (with an estimated range of EUR 30-80 billion)[36].

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[32] The European Commission's regulatory fitness and performance (REFIT) programme ensures that EU legislation delivers results for citizens and businesses effectively, efficiently and at minimum cost. REFIT removes unnecessary burdens and adapts legislation without compromising policy objectives.
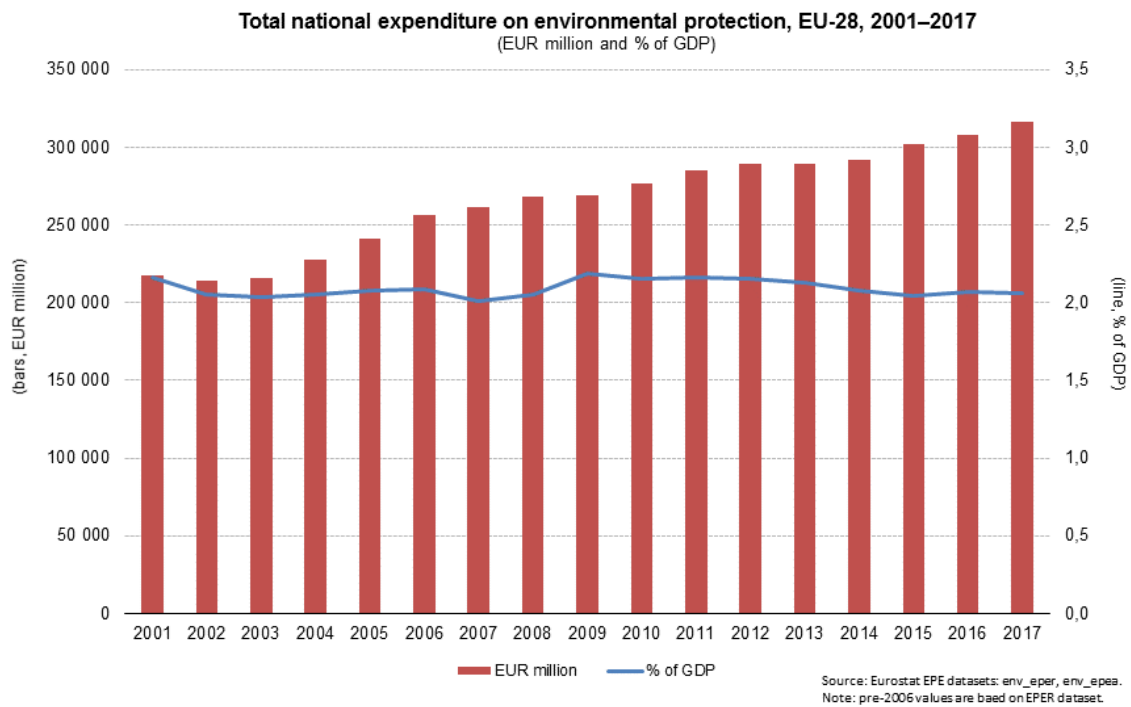
[33] SWD (2017)23

[34] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/portal/

[35] For example, in air, water and waste quantified targets have increased and performance has also increased in line with this.

[36] Forthcoming study, COWI et al (2019).

Figure 6: EU-28 expenditure on environmental protection

Total national expenditure on environmental protection, EU-28, 2001–2017
(EUR million and % of GDP)

Source: Eurostat EPE datasets: env_eper, env_epea.
Note: pre-2006 values are baed on EPER dataset.

Views of stakeholders

In the online public consultation, stakeholders noted that the streamlining/mainstreaming of environmental protection concerns was one of the programme's more positive aspects.

Stakeholders see efficiency as a key principle running through the 7th EAP. Some Member States have suggested that the 7th EAP has been useful in achieving synergies and streamlining actions. Others have expressed doubt, or noted that there are so many other factors at play that the extent of synergy/interaction between policies is not defined by the 7th EAP.

One Member State mentioned that the EIR process itself has been very useful, particularly as a vehicle for discussion across government departments and an opportunity for debate between ministers and senior officials at EU level (e.g. Environment Council, Informal Environment Council, meetings of Directors general from environment ministries). As such, the process has had quite a high political profile, and could support integration and the spread of best practices, hence efficiency.

5.2.2 *Supporting efficient policies*

Evaluation question: 'To what extent has the 7th EAP been useful in identifying and addressing information needs and thus supporting efficient policies?'

Overall response: Knowledge is a priority objective under the 7th EAP. Consequently, advances have been made in identifying and addressing information needs (both through research, the Environmental Knowledge Community, and increased evaluation). The Commission has streamlined reporting obligations, which are an important source of legislation-specific information and link various levels (local, national, EU, the general public). Member States need to share the

> **results of their Better Regulation activities more openly so as to create synergies with the EU level.**

What is the issue?

This question asks whether the 7th EAP has enabled better information to be identified, helping to meet objectives more effectively. In practice, this can mean: identifying emerging environmental risks; ensuring research is productive; and ensuring better knowledge provision. The management of information flows, from the local level through Member States to the EU level and then onwards through active dissemination, is also relevant.

What are the Commission's findings?

The fitness check of environmental reporting looked at the costs and benefits of the current reporting system[37]. It estimated total annual costs of EUR 22 million and benefits that by far exceed these costs. It was estimated that ongoing activities would already allow EUR 2 million to be saved annually at EU and national level, and the Commission also adopted an action plan[38] to improve environmental reporting and make it more transparent and better targeted. Administrative burdens were reduced while maintaining or improving benefits, mainly through efficiency gains and increased transparency (i.e. wider public dissemination of information). Action 1 of the action plan relates to the streamlining of reporting through legislative changes, which the Commission subsequently implemented by amending several pieces of environmental legislation. These efforts have been driven by both the 7th EAP and the Better Regulation agenda.

The 7th EAP identified the need, in the context of Better Regulation, for environmental policy to be evaluated in the interests of simplification and better implementation: this is a knowledge intensive process. In 2013, 13 % of the EU rules and legislation directly managed by DG Environment had been subject to an ex-post evaluation (ongoing or finalised) within the last five years. The percentage now stands at around 60 % (including ongoing evaluations). However, while surveys of Member States find they are committed to evaluation, few systematically undertake such analysis and it is rarely publicly available (see Annex 6, priority objective 7). As a result, in many cases analysis is not channelled from the Member States to the Commission as it should be and Commission analyses lack the information they need. This represents a failure at all levels of government to meet the relevant 7th EAP commitments in full.

Annex 6 details the progress made on priority objective 5, where there has been progress. Some positive examples include:

- The focus on knowledge as a priority objective in the 7th EAP has probably improved knowledge provision, with a positive impact on policies. For example, the 7th EAP has helped improve the knowledge underpinning the implementation of the EU strategy thanks to the upgrade of the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE[39]). The 7th EAP also boosted the launch of the MAES initiative

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[37] SWD(2017) 230

[38] COM(2017) 312

[39] BISE was created to act as a single entry point for data and information on biodiversity and strengthen the knowledge base.

(Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services), a transparent and inclusive process designed to build the knowledge base for environmental policy.

- The Climate-ADAPT platform has developed as a 'one-stop shop' for information on adaptation to climate change in the EU. Between 1 March 2013 and 31 March 2018, Climate-ADAPT had 409 565 visitors, with 5 000 registered users receiving a newsletter. As regards research and dissemination of knowledge, around 120 research projects, reports and articles have been identified as focusing on climate adaptation under Horizon 2020, and the European Climate Change Adaptation Conference (ECCA) conference .
- The 7th EAP has helped develop and improve the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) and the pilot version of an overall Forest Information System for Europe (FISE).
- Research programmes such as Copernicus have proved critical in generating and disseminating knowledge on the environment, in Europe and beyond. The 3rd edition of the World Atlas of Desertification is a comprehensive tool for analysing land degradation as a global problem of human dominance involving complex interactions between social, economic and environmental systems.

Overall, the 7th EAP has addressed the right issues as regards knowledge, and led to an improved situation.

Specific work on environmental knowledge has progressed substantially. The work of the Environment Knowledge Community[40], for instance, has played a significant role in a number of actions. However, major knowledge gaps remain in areas such as: various environmental and climate polices; the transitions needed in global systems of production and consumption; further technological and social innovation and the dissemination of innovations; synergies and trade-offs between social and environmental policies and their implementations for sustainable development outcomes; and the development of effective science-policy and science-society interfaces at all levels of governance.

As regards active dissemination of environmental policy, there are overlapping scoreboards, and indicator frameworks that are not always consistent. There would be advantages in moving to more targeted communication by applying a core set of indicators more consistently, covering both policy and the state of the environment, which could also strengthen links with SDG indicators.

The European Semester is one of the ways in which actions are monitored, but this is arguably insufficient. As regards monitoring of the 7th EAP itself, the European Environment Agency's indicator reports are valuable. However, a more focused process could have helped.

Views of stakeholders

In the online public consultation, a few respondents (drawn from across the stakeholder groups) in the open answers noted that addressing knowledge gaps would facilitate transparency, allowing more actors (particularly civil society) to support policy-making, implementation, and enforcement.

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[40] The Environment Knowledge Community brings together the main knowledge providers to regularly discuss and ensure coherence in environmental knowledge provision (see Annex 6).

In the targeted consultation, stakeholders thought it hard to say whether the EAP had helped with updating new information.

5.3. Relevance

5.3.1 *Address the challenges of EU environment policy*

Evaluation question: 'To what extent does the 7th EAP address the challenges of EU environmental policy in a proportionate way?'

Overall response: The 7th EAP 2050 vision has been helpful and continues to be valid. The 7th EAP covered the right areas, whilst new areas should be considered for the post 2020 era (such as digitalisation and governance). The principle of a multi-level EAP is endorsed and reflects good practice, but there are questions about the degree of complexity or depth which also makes some actions hard to monitor.

What is the issue?

This question is about whether the 7th EAP included an appropriate range of the various challenges, and whether these were then addressed at the right level of detail.

What are the Commission's findings?

As regards the long term vision, what follows remains a relevant statement about the long-term challenges facing EU environmental policy: '*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'*.

There was support from stakeholders for this vision, and there is no evidence that it does not correctly encapsulate future challenges. Relatively little time has elapsed since its adoption, compared with the period it covers, and that is one reason why it has not been overtaken.

Thematic priority objectives

The three thematic priorities correctly reflect the environmental challenges and are still valid and relevant. This was concluded after considering the European Environment Agency indicator reports, on feedback from stakeholders (see below) and the actions in the various policy areas (see Annexes 5 and 6). So, they have adequately captured the key issues also because they recognised that these problems would endure beyond the end of the 7th EAP.

Enabling framework

The four enabling priority objectives also remains largely relevant and call for continued effort. Again, this was concluded after examining feedback from stakeholders (see below) and actions in the various policy areas (see Annexes 5 and 6). However, there could have been more of focus on certain emerging issues. This is linked with the issue of future-

proofing and how to ensure that EAPs can take on board new issues as they move up the policy agenda during the lifespan of a single programme (see Section 5.3.2 for more details).

- Digitalisation and the link to the Digital Single Market agenda could have been strengthened (e.g. the eGovernment action plan).
- Social justice, as an enabler for environment policy, given that environmental policies may be harder to implement if they are perceived as harming vulnerable groups.

Cross-cutting priority objectives

The cross-cutting priorities of tackling environmental challenges as a whole and within the context of urban sustainable development remain very relevant.

While certain environmental problems are most concentrated in cities, cities are also a source of solutions. Under priority objective 8, progress has been made towards making cities in the EU more sustainable, with many of them applying sustainable development approaches – not least European Green Capital Award (EGCA)/ European Green Leaf Award (EGL) applicants and winners. However, more cities need to be mobilised to achieve real change on a European scale.

In the spirit of the 7th EAP's priority objective 9, most environmental challenges can be tackled only by combining internal and global action. Since the 7th EAP predates the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the goals and actions under priority objective 9 (tackling international environmental challenges) are partially obsolete, and need fine-tuning. The goal of following up the Rio+20 outcome[41] was completed with the agreement on Agenda 2030, and the focus is now on implementing the SDGs.

Views of stakeholders

Overall, most respondents thought the 7th EAP had a relevant focus and addressed pressing issues. Most respondents to the open public consultation were positive about the current breadth, longevity, and focus of the 7th EAP, and very positive about the long-term vision. All stakeholder groups were, generally positive about these three criteria. NGOs were more likely to strongly agree, while private individuals predominated among those who disagreed (though private individuals still agreed on average).

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[41] *"the outcomes of Rio + 20 are fully integrated into the Union's internal and external policies and the Union is contributing effectively to global efforts to implement agreed commitments, including those under the Rio conventions and to initiatives aimed at promoting the global transition towards an inclusive and green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication"; (106.(a))*

Figure 7: The importance of different aspects of the 7th EAP
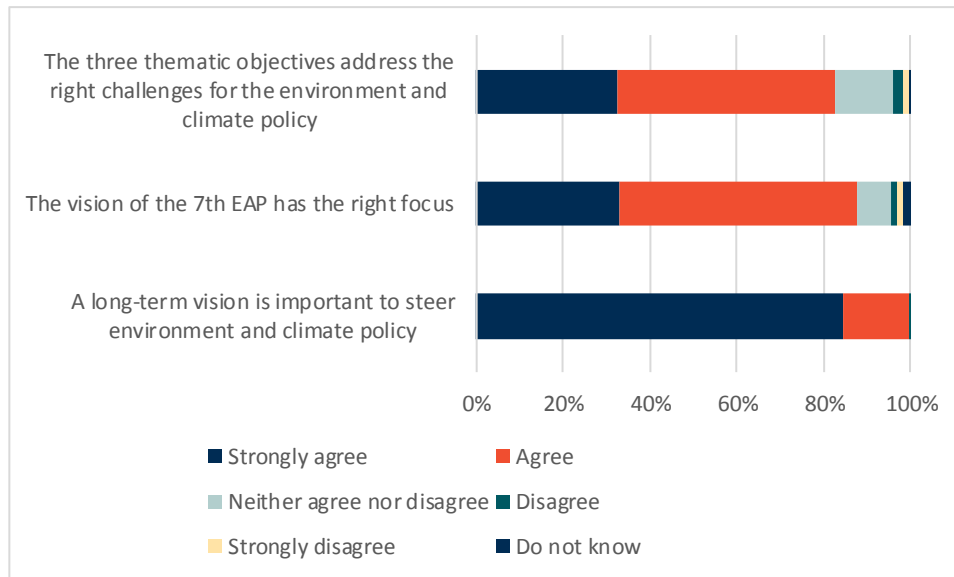
The respondents to the online public consultation were also asked if there were any environmental and climate challenges that were not addressed by the 7th EAP. Respondents were split over this question, with 51 % saying there were unaddressed challenges, while 49 % sad there were not (but there was no marked differences between stakeholder groups). Many respondents referred to challenges, which the 7th EAP does actually deal with. However, broader issues referred to included:

- Meeting international commitments and objectives, such as the Paris Agreement, World Health Organisation (WHO) objectives and the SDGs.;
- Closer cooperation and alignment with neighbouring third countries, i.e. promoting the objectives of the 7th EAP vis-à-vis these states. Additionally, some mentioned the need to do more to promote social and climate equality;
- How environmental policy is modernised in the context of the digitalisation of society;
- Indoor air quality;
- How to tackle overpopulation; and
- Including health issues in other policy areas.

As regards feedback from stakeholders, some of the issues identified (such as including health issues in other policy areas or indoor air pollution) are included in the 7th EAP, and the Commission's view is that the feedback reflects a wish for further action. Although the SDGs were agreed after the 7th EAP, it is consistent with them (see Section 5.4.3). Other issues (such as overpopulation) are beyond the 7th EAP's remit or environmental policy more widely.

There is less agreement on whether the 7th EAP addresses the challenges to the right level of detail or specification. Analysis has revealed criticisms that the 7th EAP is disproportionately detailed – too long and complex - yet vague at the same time. The actions set out (see Annex 4) show a very long list of things to do, but often it is unclear what is to be done, by whom, or by when. This results in a loss of focus and of the capacity to monitor implementation properly.

Another example mentioned in the interest of improving focus in the future is the need to further strengthen governance, and particularly to ensure that interested parties at different levels (local, regional, national, EU) are involved in implementing the actions.

5.3.2 *Respond to new issues*

> **Evaluation question: How flexible is the 7th EAP approach to allow new and emerging issues to be taken into account?'**
>
> **Overall response: The analysis shows that the non-prescriptive nature of the 7th EAP has allowed for flexibility in terms of achieving the programme's overall goals and long-term vision, even if the actions taken were not detailed in the text. Two specific examples are the circular economy agenda and the Environmental Implementation Review, as actions following up the overall priority objectives of *moving to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy*, and *improving implementation of environment legislation* respectively. The 7th EAP also led to improvements in identifying and responding to emerging risks.**

What is the issue?

This question is about whether new and emerging issues arose, or required increased attention and whether the 7th EAP allowed (or supported) this.

What are the Commission's findings?

Annex 6 shows that on the issue of emerging risks, good progress was made on setting up an integrated system to identify emerging environmental issues. Further progress needs to be made on understanding the environmental risks associated with technological developments. Systems are being set up to improve the monitoring of emerging risks.

More generally, EU policymaking during the 7th EAP has focused more on certain issues than was predicted in 2013. In these cases, the 7th EAP was successful in setting broad parameters and paths, but did not specify in detail on how they should be delivered. Having nine priority objectives established a focus, but allowed for flexibility thanks to the non-prescriptive nature of the text. Some positive examples include:

- Rapid development of circular economy policy; the Commission adopted an ambitious circular economy package including measures to promote the EU's transition towards a circular economy, boost global competitiveness, encourage sustainable economic growth and generate new jobs. The package included EU-wide rules targeting the 10 single-use plastic products most often found on Europe's beaches and seas, plus lost and abandoned fishing gear. Although these rules were not part of the 7th EAP, they are in line with its objectives.

- The Environmental Implementation Review is a successful approach to improving implementation and beefing up governance. The 7th EAP was sufficiently flexible to allow for the original objective to be met through an action other than the one for which provision was originally made.

- There is no evidence that the EU has adopted anything contradicting the EAP or delaying progress.

The 7th EAP itself reflected issues that emerged during the 6th EAP (see Annex 9): in particular, sustainable growth required a move toward a green, resource-efficient, competitive and low-carbon economy. The impact assessment of the 7th EAP highlighted underlying problems, which prevented the key environmental objectives during the 6th EAP from being achieved in full. These were reflected in the way 7th EAP's was designed.

Significant progress was also achieved in terms of mainstreaming environment in the security and migration agendas, and working at the nexus between environmental degradation and climate change, and migration and stability. Land restoration and the sustainable management of natural resources are acknowledged as a key contribution to tackling key drivers of forced migration by the Rabat Process and in the conclusions of the La Valetta Joint action plan.

Overall, the 7th EAP allowed for a fairly dynamic environmental policy and thus appears to have avoided any lock-in or blocking of new technologies. If the downside of a strategic framework is the lack of details in terms of follow-up to actions, the plus side is that it allows for flexibility at a later stage.

Views of stakeholders

Most stakeholders said the 7th EAP did not fully address new and emerging issues, but they felt that this was not something it needed to do.

One of the interviewees noted that some priorities now get more attention (as the policy debate evolves). For example, plastics and chemicals have become increasingly important topics during the 7th EAP. This underlines the need for flexibility in an EAP, to allow for changes in the policy debate.

The Committee of the Regions was more sceptical about the 7th EAP's capacity to respond to new issues, feeling that it suffered from some lock in.

5.4. Coherence

5.4.1 *Internal coherence*

Evaluation question: 'How consistent with each other are the nine priority objectives and their actions?'

Overall response: There is a high level of internal consistency: the 7th EAP was designed to be internally coherent, and this seems to have worked well in practice. In particular, the enabling framework contributed positively to the thematic objectives. However, the linkages with the horizontal priority objectives as regards local, regional and global challenges are less clear. The nine priority objectives, their sub-objectives and actions are mutually reinforcing and encouraged actions to be developed in a consistent way (addressing synergies and trade-offs).

What is the issue?

This question looks at the internal consistency of the 7th EAP. This includes whether the enabling framework contributed to the thematic objectives, and whether the cross-cutting priority objectives as regards local, regional and global challenges were consistent with

the other objectives. This involves an understanding of whether synergies were achieved, and whether trade-offs were identified and either mitigated or taken into account.

What are the Commission's findings?

The enabling framework contributed positively to the thematic objectives, as it reflects a successful promotion of a more coherent and internally consistent environmental policy. Some positive examples include the following (See Annex 6 for more details):

- The 7th EAP improved the knowledge underpinning the implementation of the EU strategy with the upgrade of the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE). It boosted the launch of the MAES initiative (Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services), a transparent and inclusive process designed to build the knowledge base for environmental policy.
- Forest protection and restoration is an important part of the broader protection, enhancement and preservation of Europe's nature and natural capital. The 7th EAP has helped to highlight connections, and the EU forest strategy stresses the continued need for sustainable forest management and policy coherence.
- The system to identify emerging issues is helping to bring policies and methodologies into line with each other (see Annex 6, Section 5.2). For the first time, it has brought together within a single framework all services and experts working on emerging environmental issues , and will bring together all relevant policy actors to discuss the consequences of the issues identified. It will help to ensure trade-offs are detected at an early stage and that opportunities for the environment are exploited.
- The increased focus on information allowed for better identification of synergies: such as those between biodiversity or air pollution and climate action. There are similarly some trade-offs in environmental media either at national or EU level (diesel cars versus petrol, biomass). Where these trade-offs exist, there have been efforts to reconcile them, such as in the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive and the reinforcement of sustainability criteria for the use of biomass.
- The structure of the 7th EAP highlights the interlinkages between key policy concerns and the need for systemic approaches, as the wording itself shows: 'enabling framework'. Examples include the importance of terrestrial and marine ecosystem services and nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and the potential for sustainable consumption and production to reduce air pollution and the resulting links to climate change.

The horizontal priority objectives relating to local, regional and global challenges are in principle consistent with the other objectives. However, there is less evidence that their potential was properly reflected in policies. Arguably, these could have been integrated into the other seven priority objectives.

Views of stakeholders

The interviewees did not perceive any major material inconsistencies between the nine priority objectives, although some inconsistencies were questioned in terms of specific actions.

5.4.2 Coherence with other EU policies and strategies

Evaluation question: 'To what extent is the 7ᵗʰ EAP integrated and coherent with other EU policies and strategies, including the Juncker priorities and the Europe 2020 Strategy?'

Overall response: There is some clear (and welcome) synergy between the 7ᵗʰ EAP objectives and the Juncker priorities (i.e. Commission priorities), such as the shared objective of climate action. In general, they are mutually supportive i.e. environmental policies are good for growth and jobs. There are examples where the 7ᵗʰ EAP and other policy areas reinforce each other (sustainable cities/urban agenda, making increasing use of the European Semester to address air pollution, transport and health issues collectively). There are no obvious inconsistencies, and the 7ᵗʰ EAP seems to have helped to incorporate environmental considerations into other policy areas. However, other ways of integrating the environment into other policy fields could be identified and prioritised.

What is the issue?

In 2014, the Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, identified 10 Commission priorities for 2015-2019 as his 'agenda for jobs, growth, fairness and democratic change'. The Europe 2020 strategy is the EU's agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade. It emphasises a move towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth through overcoming the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy, improving its competitiveness and productivity and underpinning a sustainable social market economy. This question looks at the 7ᵗʰ EAP's consistency with the Juncker priorities and the Europe 2020 Strategy.

What are the Commission's findings?

The 7ᵗʰ EAP and other EU policies are mutually reinforcing in many ways, with environmental policies supporting other policy objectives. This is important because these policy agendas have political support, so this leads to more and better action. Integration is one of the priority objectives of the 7ᵗʰ EAP, and so it is not surprising that it has helped to integrate environmental considerations into other policy field. Examples include:

- The 7ᵗʰ EAP objectives as regards the low-carbon economy are consistent with meeting air quality objectives. The policy is also in line with the Juncker priority of the energy union and the climate priority of making energy more secure, affordable and sustainable. It is also in line with SDG 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) and SDG 7 (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all).
- Green infrastructure is a network of healthy ecosystems that provides cost-effective alternatives to traditional 'grey' infrastructure. The Natura 2000 network is the backbone of EU green infrastructure. It helps to integrate green infrastructure into regional policies, by improving the local quality of life and supporting economic development.
- The management of small water supplies requires cooperation between health and environmental policies. The 7ᵗʰ EAP facilitated the Commission's drinking water

proposal and has thus improved the integration of drinking water policy and health policy.

- The Environment Knowledge Community has brought together key data providers engaged in projects that could serve the needs of different policies, such as natural capital accounting, integrating of citizen science into EU policies, and planetary boundaries.

- Eliminating environmentally harmful subsidies (EHS) leads to more efficient use of resources and is in line with circular economy policy, the energy union and clean air policy. Eliminating EHS is part of the jobs and growth priority and is one of the SDGs.

- The 7th EAP's ambition of integrating the environment better into the European Semester has led to more attention being paid in the country reports to structural reforms that are relevant to climate and environmental objectives, while also aiming for growth and jobs and sustainable public finances (in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the 10 Juncker priorities).

Areas where further work is needed include achieving coherence between the CAP objectives and EU environmental objectives:

- The current CAP supports biodiversity and promotes sustainable farming systems through cross compliance, greening practices and rural development measures and interacts with the on-going action plan for nature, people and the economy. Agri-environmental measures and organic farming are the main instruments in the second pillar for improving the impact of agriculture on the environment. Positive local experiences supported by the CAP and promoted by the European Network for Rural Development have demonstrated the importance of communication, co-operation between stakeholders and advisory services for farmers on the compatibility of nature protection with socio-economic activities. Ensuring sufficient funding for climate and the environment in the CAP and the EU in general is crucial to ensure the protection and enhancement of the environment in agriculture-related ecosystems, including Natura 2000 sites.

- In the legislative proposals on the CAP beyond 2020, three out of nine of the CAP's objectives concern the environmental and climate dimensions and would provide a new legislative framework for a smarter, simpler, modern and more sustainable CAP providing significant added value for farmers and society, in line with the EU's international commitments under the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The policy will shift the emphasis from compliance and rules towards results and performance.

The 7th EAP is consistency with the Juncker priorities. When it was agreed in 2013, the narrative of the 7th EAP clearly linked environmental protection to a stronger economy.

- Most of the potentially relevant interactions are effects that the Juncker priorities have had on the EAP (Juncker → EAP), while the EAP had had a more limited impact on the achievement of the Juncker priorities (EAP → Juncker). In general, interlinkages are positive. Whilst some stakeholders see economic growth as leading to environmental degradation, the Commission's view, and indeed the underlying narrative of the 7th EAP, is that the EU should promote green growth

(see Annex 7). The number of green jobs in Europe has risen to around 4.1 million[42].

Notable interactions between the 7th EAP and the Juncker priorities include:

- The 7th EAP is one of the main mechanism for meeting the Juncker priority of 'A resilient energy union with a forward-looking climate change policy'.
- In the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, more work could be done to connect environmental, social and economic policies, building on linkages between environmental policy on the one hand, and, on the other, employment and social policy; the 2020 targets with regard to poverty, social exclusion, and employment and education; links with other Juncker priorities stressing inclusive growth and fair markets; and links with other social SDGs.
- The EU agenda on migration does not explicitly address environmental issues, but they are a key driver of migration. Tackling international environmental problems thus has the side benefit of reducing the factors that drive migration.
- Enhanced free trade could result in environmental impacts by increasing trade and the scale of economic activity ('scale effect'), producing shifts in an economy's product mixes ('composition effect') and changing sectoral emission intensities ('technique effect') or shifting environmental impacts outside the EU (pollution havens). Trade can be consistent with environmental policy only if economic growth is decoupled from resource consumption and environmental impacts (in this case through sustainable trade)[43].

Many of the stakeholder comments concern recurrent issues that were also discussed under the 6th EAP, and to which the EU is responding. As regards food systems, for example, the EU is investing in the sustainability and resilience of its agri-food sector, to ensure the production of safe, high-quality, affordable, nutritious and diverse food for consumers and strengthen the socio-economic fabric in rural areas. The legislative proposals for the common agricultural policy after 2020, adopted by the Commission on 1 June 2018, are designed to promote sustainable development in farming, food and rural areas, and include an objective on health and nutrition.

Views of stakeholders

In the online public consultation, 60 % of respondents thought the programme had some influence on achieving the 2020 strategy[44].

In the targeted consultation of Member States, respondents addressed consistency with other policies, though not necessarily at EU level (they could also be national policies). Member States suggested that there were synergies between the 7th EAP and other policies, whether at Community level or national level. One Member State, for example, said it was good the 7th EAP to ensure linkages, as the 7th EAP indicates interlinkages among policies and hence that those interlinkages are being transferred to the national

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[42] Eurostat data, based on environmental goods and services sector

[43] For developments in EU Trade policy see 2015 Communication *'Trade for All: Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy'*.

[44] NGOs and private individuals were slightly more positive than those in business.

level. Another highlighted the fact that the 7th EAP to foster the integration of policies, albeit in collaboration with these other policies rather than as a steering force. Some Member States suggested that other EU strategies, such as Europe 2020, are higher profile and that the 7th EAP was just one of many such strategies 'fighting for attention'. Others suggested that the 7th EAP had encouraged interaction between different national policies and promoted the development of processes at the local level including the Covenant of Mayors.

Some stakeholders outlined areas where they felt more coherence was needed:

- Commission coherence: environmental targets must coherent with each other and with current broad targets. In addition, the EAP should guide the environmental dimension of other policy fields, for example, linking energy policy with circular economy policy.
- Sustainable food system: some stakeholders said the food system put a significant pressure on the environment. At the same time, food production was increasingly suffering from climate change.
- Synergy between the circular economy and climate action: this was positively received.
- Lack of coherence between various directives: e.g. incoherence between the Water Framework Directive and Renewable Energy Directive.

One general point raised by some interviewees (mainly from NGOs) concerned perceived silo mentality hindering mainstreaming of environmental considerations into other policies, while also pointing at important trade-offs between different policy fields.

5.4.3 Coherence with international commitments

Evaluation question: 'To what extent is the 7th EAP in line with international commitments, including the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?'

Overall response: The 7th EAP is largely in line with international commitments. It influenced and now reflects the UN 2030 Agenda: it fully anticipated the SDGs' three dimensional approach, i.e. that social and economic wellbeing depend on natural resource conditions. The 7th EAP is a mechanism for meeting SDG commitments, although the latter's call for a 'just transition' could have been stressed more. The feedback from stakeholders shows that the 7th EAP needs to be used to step up the ambition of environment policy-making globally, and to anchor the actions soundly in the SDGs, which are seen as more effective in communication terms.

What is the issue?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) was adopted under the aegis of the United Nations (UN) in September 2015. The agenda is a universal programme for action comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The following have also been adopted: the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's Paris Agreement (2015), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), and the UN Habitat's New Urban Agenda (2016).

This question examines the extent to which the 7th EAP is consistent with the 2030 Agenda (including the Sustainable Development Goals). Are the 7th EAP priority objectives reflected in the SDGs (and vice versa)? In other words: are there overlaps between the 7th EAP and the SDGs? Are the 7th EAP and the SDGs consistent with each other (resulting in synergy) or inconsistent?

What are the Commission's findings?

Almost all nine EAP priority objectives are reflected in the SDGs (see Annex 7). The exception is the priority objective 9 ('To increase the Union's effectiveness in addressing international environmental and climate-related challenges') as obviously the SDGs are not specifically designed to make the EU more effective. The EAP's 'low-carbon economy' objective is not explicit in the SDGs, but is enshrined in the Paris Agreement, which boasts a wide international membership and is expressly recognised in the 2030 Agenda as the primary forum for the global response to climate change.

The 7th EAP, which predates the SDGs, anticipated their three dimensions. However, it is naturally focused on environmental policy and therefore contains less detail on the social and economic aspects of the SDGs. As regards social aspects, there is a clear focus on health through safeguarding EU citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being. To some extent, this also includes employment issues, such as the value of green jobs. There is less of a focus in the 7th EAP on inequality, social inclusion, poverty, and a socially just transition, though it does refer to citizens' democratic involvement. The enabling framework is also largely reflected in the SDGs, although the 7th EAP is more detailed on certain issues than the SDGs. For example, a sub-objective of the 7th EAP, 'Address environmental externalities', reflects a higher ambition for the EU 28 than the SDGs' more limited call to phase out fossil fuels subsidies.

It is worth mentioning that other international commitments, such as the Hyderabad's Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity agreed objective of doubling biodiversity-related financing in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, were achieved under the 7th EAP.

The Commission's view that the 7th EAP is very much in line with international commitments is shared by stakeholders. Indeed, both the Commission and stakeholders see it as one way of achieving SDG commitments.

Views of stakeholders

The Online Public Consultation asked if the 7th EAP is coherent with the EU's international commitments to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Overall respondents noted there was some level of coherence with both international commitments. 48 % noted that the programme is more or less aligned with the SDGs, while 40 % said the same of the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, 40 % and 42 % respectively said the 7th EAP was coherent with the SDGs and Paris Agreement. Only small minorities (4 % and 7 %) did not consider the SDGs or the Paris Agreement to be coherence with the 7th EAP: the few respondents who submitted a negative answer were from NGOs or were private individuals. Other stakeholders said the 7th EAP and the SDGs were in line with one another. Nevertheless, there were some comments.

- **EU maintains leadership:** several stakeholders said the 7th EAP outlined a more ambitious environmental policy than the SDGs. One said this was true of EU practice in general. For instance, in a United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), EU banks were much more advanced in terms of taking account of the environment.
- **Explicitly use SDGs more**: several stakeholders said the SDGs were higher profile for some stakeholders (both within and outside the EU, and across sectors and especially for business). One stakeholder said Agenda 2030 was the only global policy process that people 'wear on their vests". Stakeholders therefore suggested that the EU and any future EAP should make a more explicit link with the SDGs, to take advantage of the strong symbolic resonance they currently hold, while maintaining EU ambition.

5.5. Added Value

5.5.1 *Did the 7th EAP help?*

> **Evaluation question: 'What is the additional value resulting from the 7th EAP, compared to what could be achieved by EU environmental policy without such a framework?'**
>
> **Overall response: Environmental policy often sets a framework and then spreads responsibility for its implementation across different levels of government in line with the principle of subsidiarity. It is the interlinked nature of environmental policy that partly explains stakeholders' opinion that the 7th EAP has had added value. An overwhelming majority (80 %) in the open public consultation considered the 7th EAP to be useful or very useful. It has proven to be a valuable guiding tool, enabling policy-makers at various levels (EU, national, regional, local) to address, the environmental challenges facing the EU at the appropriate level.**

What is the issue?

Essentially, this question asks if the 7th EAP has helped implement better environmental policy at EU, national and regional level. It is easier to answer this if we firsts consider the programme's contribution to effectiveness and efficiency, and its relevance and coherence. All these questions feed into the most important question - whether this programme represent value added - but their analysis is not repeated here.

What are the Commission's findings?

Firstly, the fact that this question is about 'value added', not 'EU value added', reflects the joint ownership of the programme. This is important because subsidiarity plays a fundamental role in environmental policy - one of the reasons why, such an EAP is needed.

Examples of value added by the 7th EAP include the following. These examples also reflect the success of effectiveness, efficiency, coherency and relevance (i.e. value added can flow from these):

- The 7th EAP has provided added value through promoting the agenda on natural capital (biodiversity and ecosystem services) emphasising the importance of

biodiversity for well-functioning ecosystems which support our socio-economic model and human long-term well-being.

- The 7th EAP was helpful in the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, both in the Council and in the UN.
- The focus on the urban aspect of sustainability has helped shape the new Urban Agenda for the EU, and support the development of various greening mechanisms.
- The focus on environmental implementation resulted in rapid endorsement of the Environmental Implementation Review. In addition, the role of IMPEL was strengthened and more effort went into sharing best practice.
- 7th EAP Priority provided the mandate for the establishment of the Environment Knowledge Community.

The discussion of value added is also linked with the discussion of subsidiarity and proportionality[45], which leads to a spread of responsibilities between levels of governance that in turn increases the value-added of strategic co-ordination. For example, DG Environment directly manages 66 pieces of legislation (directive, regulations and recommendation) in the area for which it is responsible. Many of these have had subsidiarity assessed: 45 % have had it assessed as part of an evaluation in the last five years (and that proportion will rise to about 60 % in coming years), and 42 % in an Impact Assessment. Overall, some 64 % of this legislation has already had subsidiarity assessed in either an evaluation or an impact assessment (some are covered by both). This is necessary because the subsidiarity principle has led to a wide sharing of competences in the environmental policy field.

- Subsidiarity means identifying the most efficient level at which to take action. About three quarters of legislation in this field clearly has to do with issues that cross boundaries (and, to some extent, this holds for the whole environmental acquis). This means environmental policy often leads to economies of scale through co-ordination.
- While in around 70 % of cases the legislation set a clear environmental objective, much of the legislation has strong process requirements to ensure those objectives are met efficiently. Process requirements appear in about four fifths of the legislation. In around 65 %, the EU harmonises measurements or similar process issues to ensure comparability. Finally, in around 30% of legislation it makes stakeholder involvement mandatory, thus helping to ensure that objectives are met while bringing together members of the public and government.
- Beyond core environmental legislation, the benefit of a strategic document may be higher as it supports mainstreaming of environmental concerns.

The overall picture is of an environmental *acquis*, which often deals with transboundary issues and responsibilities spread across government levels. The 7th EAP helps the EU, national and regional or local levels to work together more closely on decisions taken at the lowest level possible within a given framework. It is the closely interwoven but

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[45] Subsidiarity means that the EU should act only where the envisaged objectives cannot be achieved sufficiently by the Member States acting alone (centrally or at regional or local levels) but can be better achieved at EU level because of the scale or effects of the proposed action. Proportionality means that the content and form of European Union action shall not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.

decentralised nature of this cooperation that accounts in part for the EAP's value added in terms of coordinating EU environment policy.

On the other hand, sub-objectives and actions are not implemented in full, perhaps because of the remaining trade-offs and costs, or because costs and benefits fall on different groups. At the same time, there will always be some intentions adopted in an EAP that are amended once subject to Impact Assessment or more detailed examination and / or new information. The value added of the 7th EAP to respond to this was limited somewhat by the lack of a scrutiny mechanism to ensure continued co-ordination throughout the 7th EAP (which runs to the end of 2020).

Views of stakeholders

A Commission Eurobarometer public opinion survey held in 2017 with around 27 000 participants across the Member States found that 67 % of respondents though national governments should take environmental decisions jointly with the EU. Less than a third (29 %) though that only national governments should take decisions. This represents an increase in support for joint decision-making of around 7 % compared with a previous survey in 2014.

It was clear that respondents to the online public consultation thought the 7th EAP provided added value beyond what could be achieved without such a high-level strategy. When asked if they thought the 7th EAP as useful, most respondents said it was to at least some extent (44 % said it was very useful, 36 % useful, and 12 % more or less useful). The NGOs were most sure that it was very useful.

Figure 8: The importance of a long-term strategy like the 7th Environment Action Programme
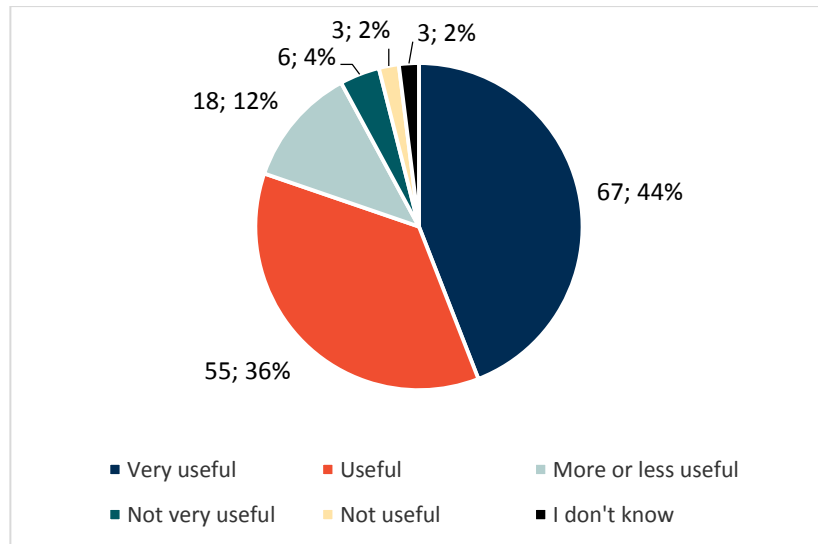
The online public consultation also asked stakeholders which aspects they perceived as the most successful and which areas could provide more added value. This question was in an open answer format and 96 respondents provided additional feedback.

Table 1: Frequency of successful aspects and areas for improvement for the 7th Environment Action Programme

Successful aspects	
Issue	**Number**
High-level and ambitious strategy	17
Timeframes and longevity	12
Predictability and accountability	8
Environmental mainstreaming	6
Financial backing	5
Focus on cities/regions	3
Areas for Improvement	
Issue	**Number**
Implementation	32
Knowledge-base (monitoring)	12
International commitments	9
Prioritising objectives	7
Local action	6
Communication strategy	6
Link to other strategies	4
Further Longevity	2

In the targeted consultation, Member States were asked if it was beneficial to have the 7th EAP, as opposed to just Member State-based objectives; the response was yes. Responses included: a suggestion that the EAP process should be maintained, as it provided an effective policy approach; praise for the overarching nature and direction for implementation; confirmation that the priorities for action were essential; confirmation that the 7th EAP was essential in encouraging action requiring require transnational responses; that the programme would remain essential as a reference point to provide long-term goals for policy coherence and to hold legislators to account at the EU and national level; and that the programme had proved useful in the past as a way of helping to justify applications for specific EU project funding.

Most Member States suggested that the 7th EAP had been useful as a strategic document, providing a wide-ranging vision for consistent and long-term policy-making at national level. On the political side, one Member States emphasised the continued usefulness of having such a tool to express agreed priorities for harmonised action across the EU and Member States. This politically agreed aspect also helps to ensure the continued relevance of the document, since it covers broad goals.

Some Member States suggested that the programme's added value lay in generating dialogue and raising awareness. Others highlighted its importance to particular policy areas, such as chemicals policy. Some also suggested that its added value was unclear, it being hard to separate the programme from specific EU policy initiatives.

Member States provided a number of specific pointers regarding the 8th EAP (if the next Commission decides to have one). These are useful to encourage discussion of essential aspects that may have been missing from the 7th EAP. These include paying more attention to integration across policy areas; including the SDGs so as to ensure that any 8th EAP and the SDGs are mutually reinforcing; translating the EAP into a business case and improving the link between business and industries; ensure shared responsibility across Member States and EU institutions; implementing a more focused approach or

more quantifiable objectives and steps to achieve targets; including an official midterm evaluation and a monitoring system; establishing a to-do list, with more precision on how to achieve coherence and integration; providing a broad long-term strategy towards 2030 (i.e. covering all environmental goals and actions).

A clear majority of other stakeholders noted that 'without doubt' the 7th EAP adds value to EU environmental policy.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The 7th Environment Action Programme entered into force in 2014 with the purpose of guiding EU environment policy up to 2020. It does this by setting out nine priority objectives for action and a series of sub-objectives and then more detailed actions to be implemented by the EU and its Member States.

The European Environment Agency is responsible for monitoring the extent to which objectives relating to the state of the environment are met. This evaluation has focused instead on the structure of the 7th EAP and its added value compared with a baseline (no EAP in place). It will be for the next Commission to decide on the successor to the 7th EAP taking account of this evaluation and "*if appropriate, present a proposal for an 8th EAP in a timely manner, with a view to avoiding a gap between the 7th EAP and the 8th EAP*"[46].

The 7th EAP evaluation shows that the programme has helped bring about a major shift in policy-making; today it is more widely accepted that environmental protection and economic growth go hand in hand. The programme has helped drive forward important new agendas such as the circular Economy and the Sustainable Development Goals. Having a long-term vision to 2050 for the first time in an EAP has provided a useful tool for policy-making, both as a complement to more short-term policy goals, and as a feature that all stakeholders could buy into as guidance for their activities. Finally, the enabling framework brought – in a unique way - focused attention and resources to the main challenges we face in EU environment policy: lack of implementation, information, investments and integration.

Effectiveness: the structure has contributed towards achieving the various priority objectives by enabling more predictable, faster and better coordinated action to be taken with the involvement of stakeholders.

The following factors have a positive impact on effectiveness:

- The 7th EAP benchmarks well against good governance criteria for developing a strategy.
- The overall structure of a multi-level EAP seems appropriate but it goes into too much depth and becomes too complex.
- The 7th EAP has increased political ownership of environmental policy by involving stakeholders systematically and by having such policy agreed subsequently with Council and Parliament.

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[46] Article 4.3 of Decision 1386/2013/EU

The following factors limiting effectiveness:

- The 7th EAP has helped implement action in all policy areas, but its original sub-objectives and actions have been implemented only in part so far. This may reflect longer timetables, or actions being too complex and detailed, or reflect the fact that the programme is not yet over. Partial implementation of actions has some bearing on the mixed progress reported by the European Environment Agency on the state of the environment.
- Effectiveness could have been increased if there had been a regular review mechanism with Member States and civil society as well as a mid-term review.
- Many of the actions are not SMART (specific, measurable, accepted, realistic and timely). This may be difficult to avoid, but limits commitment to those same actions, and contributed to only partial monitoring of delivery of the 7th EAP. On the other hand, this also allowed more scope for flexibility.

Efficiency: the 7th EAP appears to have helped improve the efficiency of environmental policy. It has both made such policy more effective (see above) and enabled it to be simplified, thereby reducing the cost burden.

The following factors have a positive impact on efficiency:

- The 7th EAP has facilitated actions designed to save costs and improve efficiency. The enabling framework is geared towards improved efficiency: for example, the focus on integrating environmental considerations into other policy areas.
- The 7th EAP has identified and addressed information needs and thus supported efficient policies. Efforts have been made to streamline and modernise reporting obligations, and a step up has taken place in evaluation of policy.

The following factors limit efficiency:

- The enabling framework actions show mixed progress. Given their importance to overcome barriers to environmental policy delivery, they need continued commitment.
- There needs to be more systematic sharing by Member States of the information they gather through their evaluation and Better Regulation work.

Relevance: the 7th EAP remains highly relevant and addresses the right challenges in a proportionate manner, although of course there has been progress and the sub-objectives or actions need to be updated.

The following factors have a positive impact on relevance:

- The long term vision, the thematic priority objectives and many of the sub-objectives remain valid, for example, because they are work in progress.
- Relevance has been maintained thanks to flexibility in interpreting the 7th EAP's mandate to work on issues that have become more prominent during the period (such as the circular economy).

The following factors limit relevance:

- Issues such as digitalisation and governance (and the links between the EU and national level in terms of follow-up and implementation of the 7th EAP) could have been better reflected.
- In terms of proportionality, the 7th EAP is too detailed in many areas. The actions become too complex and detailed, losing their strategic focus and so become less relevant over the period covered by the programme.

Coherence: there is a high level of consistency both within the 7th EAP and with other EU strategies such as the Juncker priorities and with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. The 7th EAP helps make policies in different areas coherent by integrating environmental considerations in other policy areas. However, coherence could have been improved by considering social issues more in environment policymaking.

The following factors have a positive impact on coherence:

- During the development of the 7th EAP, actions are agreed across all environmental policy areas simultaneously. This helps to make them consistent with each other and facilitate mainstreaming of environmental policies into other areas.
- There are clear links between the 7th EAP and the Juncker priorities, such as the shared objective of climate action. Europe has passed decisive climate legislation, and this is expected to bring important co-benefits for other 7th EAP priority areas. In general, the 7th EAP and the Juncker priorities are mutually supportive, with environmental policies positive for growth and jobs. There are clear overlaps with the SDGs, with the 7th EAP helping to achieve the environmental related SDGs.
- Many EU countries have oriented their environment policy strategies towards the 7th EAP. This has improved policy coherence between the EU and the Member States.

The following factors limit coherence:

- Coherence with other agendas could have been improved through better consideration of social issues in the EAP. Relatively little attention is given to this aspect within the 7th EAP given the links between environmental policy and social policy (impacts on vulnerable groups, jobs, social inclusion, inequality, etc.).
- The enabling framework has contributed positively to the thematic objectives; the linkages to the cross-cutting priority objectives on local, regional and global challenges, though, are less obvious.

Added value: The 7th EAP has made environmental policy more effective and more efficient. It is welcomed by stakeholders. It is an important co-ordination tool in an area subject to a wide spread of responsibilities across the EU, national and local levels.

The following factors have a positive impact on value added:

- There is widespread demand from stakeholders for an EAP, with appreciation of a strategic programme given the shared responsibility.

- Much of environmental policy involves frameworks set at EU level, with choices for implementation delegated to national or local level. This is fully in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, but means there is more value added in having such an overarching agreement and strategy.

The main conclusion of this evaluation is that the 7th EAP has improved the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of EU environmental policy and remains relevant. As a result, it has brought value added and improved the co-ordination and strategic planning of the various different levels that need to work together. This can be said with some confidence on the basis of the analysis and, in particular, the widespread support and feedback of stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED

This evaluation of the 7th EAP has identified a number of lessons, including both positive aspects and some areas that could have been improved.

- **Having a strategy for EU environment policy-making provides added value.** The 7th EAP is a solid strategy with strong links to national environment strategies. Many Member States have taken it as a blueprint for their own environment policy strategies or for specific actions. As a result, the 7th EAP has supported more predictable, faster and better coordinated actions in environment policy. Predictability has helped in taking effective action.

- **Progress towards achieving the 7th EAP goals is linked with improvements in the state of the environment:** in an implementation analysis of the 60 actions listed in the 7th Environment Action Programme, the Commission concludes that *some progress* has been made towards achieving the goals (bearing in mind that the programme runs until 2020). The EEA's specific reports on implementation of the 7th EAP[47] show a similar picture: some significant progress has been made but in many areas we are lagging behind. It looks unlikely that goals linked to protecting nature will be met (indicators relating to nutrients, biodiversity, freshwater, and so on), and it is uncertain whether we will meet all our goals related to environment and health. The EEA's assessment as regards the likelihood of achieving our 2020 goals linked to a *resource-efficient and low-carbon economy* changed from *likely* to *uncertain* in 2018.

- **This Environment Action programme is broadly in line with good governance practice**. The programme shows a solid analytical foundation; political commitment; adequate resources; a clear vision, objectives and targets; monitoring, continuous learning and improvement. However, the programme could have benefited from **more strategic actions**, as **concrete** as possible to best allow for **stocktaking**, and **better prioritisation by having a limited set of actions** as opposed to covering the entire EU environment acquis. The 7th EAP would also have benefited from a **monitoring mechanism** to ensure ownership and fulfilment of commitments, plus clear and agreed **indicators** to measure progress.

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[47] https://www.eea.europa.eu/airs

- **Wide stakeholder participation is crucial**, both before an EAP and throughout its life span. It increases buy-in to the programme and its follow-up actions. The 7th EAP was the result of a broad consultation process and consequently we have a wider buy-in today from different stakeholders to pursue the overall goal of sustainable development. However, more could have been done to maintain active participation by different stakeholders throughout the programme.

- **The 7th EAP covers the right areas and its 2050 vision continues to be valid.** However, adjustments need to be made as new challenges arise. In particular, some enabling issues could be more explicitly addressed, such as digitalisation and governance.

- **The 7th EAP is largely coherent with the political agenda, both in Europe and globally.** However, more could have been done to integrate environmental concerns across other EU policy areas. Stakeholders agree that EAPs should be fully **coherent with the political priorities of the European institutions**, guaranteeing their political ownership. This could have been achieved by linking the EAP lifespan both to the EU parliamentary election cycle and to as other important long-term strategic frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ANNEX 1 – PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

1) Lead DGs and internal references

This evaluation is co-led by DG Environment and DG Climate Action. It was included as item PLAN/2017/1389 in the Agenda Planning (AP).

2) Organisation and timing

An inter-service group to steer and provide input for the evaluation was set up in 2017 with representatives from the Directorates General for Environment (ENV); Energy (ENER); Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI); Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO); Legal Service (SJ); European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR); European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO); Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW); Health and Food Safety (SANTE); Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL), Mobility and Transports (MOVE); Justice and Consumers (JUST); Trade (TRADE); Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN); Research and Innovation (RTD); Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Secretariat-General (SG).

The group met four times during the evaluation process – topics and dates are listed below.

DATE	TOPICS OF DISCUSSION
14 Nov 2017	1st ISG meeting: discussion of overall process, roadmap
8 Feb 2018	2nd ISG meeting: discussion of stakeholder consultation and online public consultation questionnaire and process
20 Nov 2018	3rd ISG meeting: discussion of results of stakeholder consultation and 1st draft of evaluation report
19 Feb 2019	4th ISG meeting: final draft discussions

3) Exceptions to the better regulation guidelines

No exceptions were made to the Better Regulation Guidelines[48] during this fitness check, apart from examining 'added value' instead of 'EU value added'.

4) Opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board

On 30 January 2019, a meeting was held with the Regulatory Scrutiny Board. The Board gave a positive opinion on the evaluation report, and recommended improvements with respect to the following aspects:

RSB main considerations	Reflection in the text
The report does not examine whether the process of co-decision has achieved its objectives.	This consideration is addressed in section 5.1.2.
The report is not sufficiently clear about the standards against which it evaluates the 7th EAP's performances. Some of the conclusions are not sufficiently supported by evidence.	Section 4 on the methodology has been strengthened. The report stresses that the risk of subjectivity has been addressed through data triangulation and extensive stakeholders consultations.

This is done throughout the report. Vague forms of words that are not sufficiently supported by evidence have been removed (e.g. 'the 7th EAP may have contributed to' or 'presumably the 7th EAP helped create'). |
The report does not do enough to examine how the 7th EAP may have shifted the narrative and raised the prominence of environmental policy and sustainable development goals.	This is done throughout the report and in particular in Section 5.5, in the conclusions (Section 6), which better highlight the added value of the 7th EAP.
Further considerations and recommendations	
The 7th EAP was the first environmental action programme that the Lisbon Treaty required to be agreed in co-decision. To learn from this first round for the future, the evaluation should examine what went well under this regime and what did not.	This consideration is addressed in Section 5.1.2.
The evaluation should clarify its intervention logic, including with regard to the objectives of the 7th EAP. The logic should make clear the relationship between how the strategy has operated and the observed progress toward policy objectives.	Section 4.2 explains better the relationship between the intervention logic, the information reported in Annex 3 and the objectives of the 7th EAP.

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[48] See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

Some analysis of the performance of the 7th EAP as a strategy that is currently in Annex 3 should be better integrated in the intervention logic and the main report. A clearer comparison to the 6th EAP would also help the reader to understand what changes the 7th EAP brought, and whether those were successful.	
The report should draw more attention to the bigger picture, i.e., the role of the 7th EAP in reframing the narrative of environmental policy and bringing it to the fore in the general economic context. Internationally, this arguably includes anchoring negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals. The report might elaborate on how the 7th EAP accommodated the Commission's priorities, helped develop positions for international negotiations, and generally guided environmental policymaking. While it may be difficult to establish causal links, it is useful to know the sequence of main activities and actions carried out in agreeing the 7th EAP or guided by it.	This is addressed throughout the report and particularly in the conclusions.
The report's narrative should come out more strongly. In the current version, main messages are difficult to distil from the abundance of detail. The conclusion and executive summary might focus more on the main messages and reflect the overall picture rather than comprehensively summarise all analyses. The report should ensure that all of its conclusions are evidence-based. It should be transparent about what relevant information is not available, including with regard to stakeholder views.	This is addressed in the conclusions (Section 6) and the section on lessons learned.

5) Evidence, sources and quality

The evaluation was largely internal but was supported by a study that provided support focused on stakeholder consultation and:

- The support study, 'Service contract to support the Evaluation of the 7th Environment Action Programme', Trinomics et al., was completed in January 2019. It includes support for stakeholder consultation and issue papers on:

    1. Links between the 7th EAP, SDGs and the Juncker priorities

2. The evolution of the EU environment and climate policy framework: from the 6th to the 7th EAP

3. 7th EAP – a sound environmental strategy?

4. 7th EAP as a lever to reach the SDGs, with particular focus on the social and economic dimension

5. Environmental investment gap – review of data to estimate the investment need and/or gap in a variety of EU environment policy areas

Introduction

The stakeholder consultation activities ran from May until November 2018. The purpose was to gather views and evidence from all stakeholders on the 7th EAP.

The evaluation roadmap was published and feedback invited. Comments were received from three Member States insisting on the importance of having an 8th EAP and on the need for it to ensure more consistency among policy sectors.

Several consultation methods were used in order to engage with a broad variety of stakeholders. The methods included:
- Online public consultation;
- Targeted consultation with Member States, and other interested stakeholders
- Public workshops.
  - Stakeholder perceptions of the programme.
  - Interim findings of the evaluation.

The 7th EAP is a shared responsibility. The European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions consulted stakeholders and members respectively for their implementation review and opinion, and the Environment Council also considered the usefulness of EAPs. The conclusions of their consultations and comments are not explicitly included in this summary, but are broadly in line with the Commission's own stakeholder consultation conclusions.

Online public consultation

In line with Better Regulation Guidelines, an online public consultation ran for 12 weeks from 3 May to 26 July 2018. The objective was to consult with as many stakeholders as possible to gain a variety of views and opinions about the 7th Environment Action Programme (7th EAP). An invitation to respond as sent to stakeholders, to encourage their response. Twitter was also used, e.g. to advertise the public workshop where the emerging findings were discussed. 153 responses were received from several stakeholder types and Member States.

Most respondents were private individuals (69 in total, or 45% of the 153). 39 respondents (26%) were from NGOs, 17 (11%) were business representatives, and 16 (10%) were from public authorities. There were also responses from two academics, a citizen association and an EU institution. 95% of the respondents were based within the EU. Responses were received from 22 of the 28 EU countries. Most responses were received from Italy (16%), Belgium (14%), Germany (12%), and France (12%). Belgium's high response rate is due to the large number of EU interest groups that are located in Brussels. This is discernible from the proportion of NGOs that responded from Belgium.

Of the eight non-EU respondents, one was based in Morocco (a private individual), one in the USA (a private individual), one in Serbia (an academic), and one in Switzerland (an NGO). There was also one respondent from a UN organisation. There were three stakeholders that are part of international businesses with offices in multiple countries.

Figure 1: Participants in the online public consultation
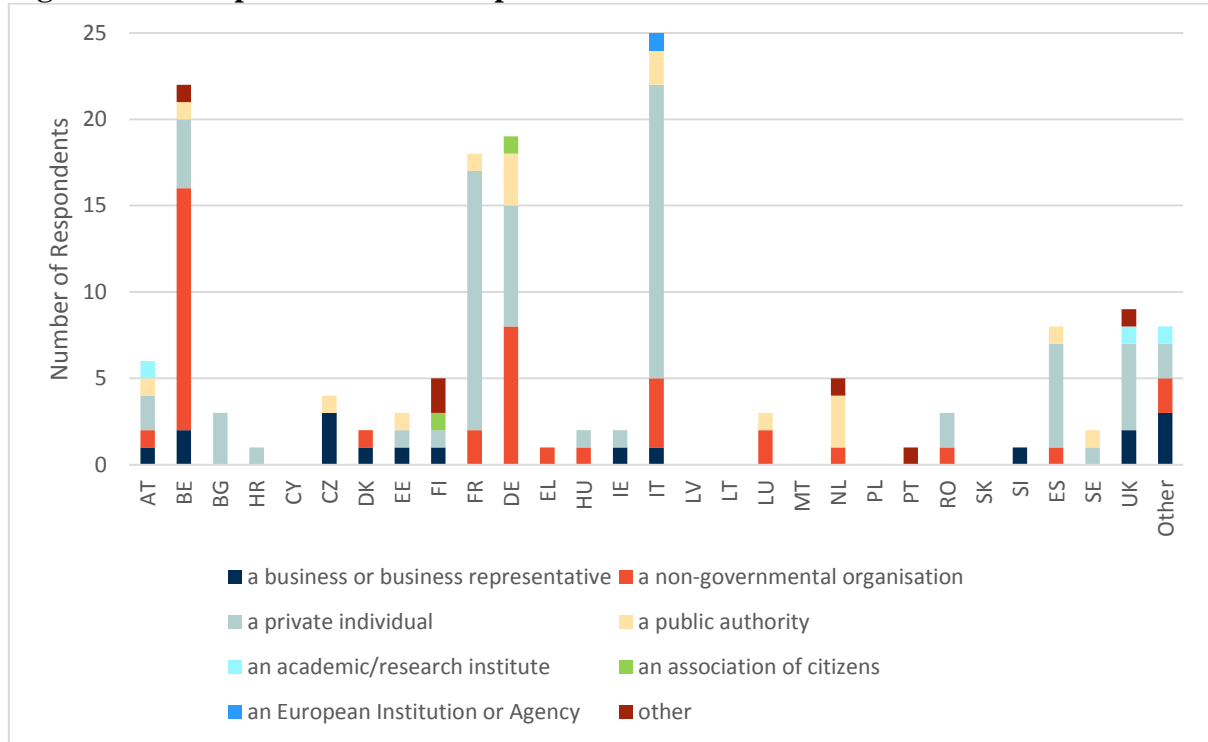
Targeted consultation

Targeted consultations were held with key stakeholders. These were intended to enable more detailed inputs on issues closest to the stakeholders' experience and involvement with the 7th EAP. The stakeholders contacted (on the basis of whether they had responded to the online public consultation, or through the approaches made to all Member States) were split into two main groups - Member State representatives and non-Member State stakeholders. Most stakeholders were interviewed via telephone or video conference. Some stakeholders chose to provide written responses to the interview questions, and a small number of stakeholders were interviewed in person.

Fourteen Member States replied; responses were received from: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United Kingdom. Several Member States were able to give specific examples of where their national policy had been directly influenced by the 7th EAP. These included:

- **Bulgaria**: 2020 National Development Programme, Waste Strategy;
- **Cyprus**: Biodiversity Strategy, Action Plan for Soil Sealing, Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, Waste Management Strategy;
- **Finland**: Environmental Ministry Strategy, Waste Plan to 2022, Air Pollution Control Programme, Water Protection Policy;
- **Italy**: Collegato Ambientale, Made Green in Italy;
- **UK**: 25-year Environment Plan (England);
- **Czechia**: State Environmental Policy (SEP), Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change;

- **Estonia**: General Principles of Climate Policy 2050, Energy Sector Development Plan 2030+; and
- **Poland**: National Ecological Policy 2030

The table below shows the nature of the 18 non-Member State stakeholders that were interviewed. Many of these, (39%), were NGOs. Few private businesses/industrial stakeholders were interviewed. This is believed to be because this group of stakeholders are less aware and/or interested in the programme after its agreement, and instead focus on specific policy consultations.

Business	EU / international organisation	NGO	Regional authority	Industry association	Bank	Sustainability association	Total
1	4	7	1	2	1	2	18

Public workshops

The first workshop was held on 21 June 2018, with a second one on 13 November 2018. The objective of the first workshop was to collect input for the consultation procedure (e.g. what questions should we ask?) The second one was designed to give stakeholders an opportunity to validate and/or challenge the emerging evaluation findings.

Both workshops allowed stakeholders to provide in-depth feedback via breakout sessions on detailed questions. The first workshop focused: if the 7th EAP influences environment/climate policy, what the utility of a long-term strategy is, and if the structure of the programme was appropriate. The discussions in the second workshop were structured against the evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, and EU added value and allowed for a broad validation of the emerging conclusions.

Summary of all consultation activities by evaluation criteria:

Effectiveness

The consultation process has revealed that stakeholders broadly perceive the 7th EAP as an effective high-level strategy for promoting environmental issues at the EU-level. Most Member States highlighted that the 7th EAP was a strategic tool that guided environmental objectives and had an indirect impact on policy developments. Member State governments reported using it as a package with other strategies and policies, such as Europe2020, and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). A non-Member State stakeholder highlighted how they perceived few direct policy developments caused by the 7th EAP, however they did see more alignment of EU-Member State environment/climate/energy ministries. This was particularly apparent with regard to actions on the circular economy (CE) and in addressing knowledge gaps. This view was supported by workshop participants who felt that the effectiveness of the document was its high-level which more easily facilitates a systemic and holistic outlook on the future. Many stakeholders support the high-level nature of the long-term vision which is deemed fundamental in inspiring action towards a positive future. 84% of stakeholders in the online public consultation agreed that a long-term vision was crucial to steer environment and climate policy.

As a high-level strategy, stakeholders expressed difficulty in perceiving and/or monitoring direct contributions from the 7th EAP to relieving environmental pressures. The UK and Poland reported that their national strategies do not directly quote the 7th EAP, but it is part of the suite of influences on these strategies. Germany and Estonia also noted that the programme did not directly inspire Member State action, but that it more directly stimulated the development of EU legislation, and initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors. Some stakeholders highlighted priority objective (PO) 3 (health and wellbeing) of the 7th EAP as being an area with less progress since the adoption of the programme. It was also noted that implementation of environmental policies across Member States could be more coherent, with waste shipment and CE policy noted as areas lacking in coherence. Some stakeholders perceived better general progress in other areas of the 7th EAP. This was particularly the case for PO 2 (resource efficiency, and the green low-carbon economy). There was a recognition of some progress in PO1 (natural capital), and PO8 (sustainability in cities).

The 7th EAP was regarded by many stakeholders as an effective means of providing accountability and predictability for European Commission actions. A clear majority (69%)[49] of the surveyed stakeholders highlighted the programme's effectiveness in doing this. An interviewee also stated that this predictability creates a positive environmental continuity across Commissions. The 7th EAP also functions as a planning tool to provide policy-makers with a to-do-list and outline their future objectives. Workshop participants noted that the long-term vision helped the focus on resource-efficiency and the CE in 2014. Both Member State and non-Member State stakeholders stated that NGOs and the European Parliament (EP) were the most likely to utilise the programme for accountability. Some stakeholders felt that the 7th EAP's effectiveness could be improved as a tool for predictable and accountable environmental policy if it included more actions in the form of concrete roadmaps and/or milestones targeted towards various EU actors. Some stakeholders perceived a lack of Commission ownership of the 7th EAP, due to the transition from the previous to the current Commission. Some felt that 7th EAP had become a lower priority for the new Commission, in comparison to other issues (e.g. the Juncker Priorities). Some felt that 7th EAP had become a lower priority for the new Commission, in comparison to other issues (e.g. the Juncker Priorities). It was suggested that improving the ownership of the 7th EAP across the whole EC would improve its effectiveness.

In theory, the 7th EAP should provide all stakeholders with a 'predictable framework for action'[50]. It is clear that individual citizens, businesses and local authorities are not as engaged by the 7th EAP as EU, Member State, or NGO actors. This reflects these groups being the initial target for the 7th EAP. From those interviewed, it is clear that NGOs and public agencies are most aware of the intricacies of the programme. This was supported by the Open Public Consultation, where NGOs and public authorities were the largest groups to note their 'close familiarity' with the 7th EAP. Business and industry stakeholders were poorly represented in the two workshops, although an even distribution of stakeholder types were invited. An industrial stakeholder confirmed they

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[49] NGOs made up the strongest proportion (56%) of those who 'strongly agreed' with this statement.

[50] Paragraph 15: 'Clear goals and objectives also provide policy makers and other stakeholders, including regions and cities, businesses and social partners, and individual citizens, with a sense of direction and a predictable framework for action'.

were involved with 'setting the goal-posts' during the development of the programme, but they are much more affected by specific directives or roadmaps in their daily work. Some stakeholders outlined that the document should be more accessible to businesses and individual citizens. They feel that this would make it more effective. It was suggested any future programme should have a stronger communication strategy in order to address this lack of awareness. Local authorities noted that they are often interacting more with the national level, as part of the framework so there are links, but they are not so evident.

Efficiency

The 7th EAP was generally felt to have a positive influence on mainstreaming environmental policy and in streamlining policy actions. Both of these influences should result in more efficient policies (as they help to avoid contradictions between policies). Within the open public consultation, streamlining and mainstreaming of environmental protection concerns was considered one of the more positive aspects of the programme. Seven respondents outlined in their open answers that the programme helps policy-makers identify linkages across policy sectors. Another stakeholder noted that they are aware of attempts from the EC to improve synergies (particularly DG ENV, GROW, and EMPL), however it was difficult to prove the extent to which the 7th EAP was responsible for this. Member State stakeholders had a mixed reaction on whether the 7th EAP facilitated the streamlining of national legislation. Austria, Cyprus, and Poland stated the 7th EAP was definitely used to achieve the streamlining of actions. Czech thought the programme had some influence in this regard, whereas Bulgaria and Italy doubted its use for creating such synergies. The UK noted that there are many factors that feed into a more streamlined policy and action agenda, which makes it difficult to attribute successful streamlining to the 7th EAP.

Stakeholders outlined that there is an ever-growing acquis of environmental legislation and there are some areas in which implementation could be improved. Therefore, some stakeholders believed that a greater focus on implementation was necessary. To better mobilise EU funding, these stakeholders thought more explicit reference should be made to the 7th EAP in EU financial tools, such as the multi-annual financial framework (MFF), the cohesion policy funds, and the EU's framework programme for research. If these programmes were all more explicitly aligned with the objectives of the EAP, it should help direct funding and lead improved implementation of environmental legislation.

Information was also viewed as key to ensuring efficient EU policy. Within the 7th EAP, priority objective (PO) 5 focuses on improving the knowledge and evidence base for EU environmental policy. Many of the responses to the online public consultation noted that the 7th EAP had helped to address information gaps. Twelve respondents in the open answers noted that addressing knowledge gaps also helps to provide public transparency. This facilitates the public playing a more active role in policy-making, implementation, and enforcement. There were also positive stakeholder views on the influence of the 7th EAP in basing this knowledge on scientific data. Interviewed stakeholders agreed that an updated knowledge-base, particularly via monitoring and scientific data, is crucial for efficient and effective environmental policy. One public agency noted that PO5 has influenced their work. Another stakeholder noted that PO5 could be improved if it outlined a common approach to sharing information at EU level. This would facilitate

more information sharing and subsequently more efficient policy decisions across the EU.

Coherence

The internal coherence of the 7th EAP, i.e. the coherence of the document's POs was considered satisfactory. There was some stakeholder concern though. One noted that coherence and synergies should be made more explicit within each PO, and there should not be a reliance on PO7 (integration and coherence) to ensure coherence. For example, biodiversity concerns (within PO1) could be more explicitly referenced within PO2 (resource-efficiency) and PO3 (health and well-being). One stakeholder mentioned the CE as another example of the need for more explicit cross PO coherence. The CE concerns a wide range of sectors and links close to the sustainable bioeconomy – which is the renewable segment of the circular economy. Therefore, it links to food and agricultural waste, which links to water management, which links to chemical use (biocides and pesticides) etc.

It was noted that there areas where there are potential trade-offs within the EU policy landscape. The Water Framework Directive and the Renewable Energy Directive was noted by stakeholders as an example of where coherence could be improved. Stakeholders also noted some lack of coherences between environmental issues and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and chemical policy. For example, some felt that environmentally-harmful subsidies continue to exist in the CAP and energy policies. This suggests that there is still a need for the 7th EAP's PO7 to keep promoting 'joined-up policy approaches'. Other stakeholders referred to the need for more coherence with funding policy. Examples again included the MFF, the cohesion policy funds, Horizon2020, and the EU's framework programme for research. One stakeholder noted the draft of the new LIFE programme has no reference to a future EAP, which was a point of concern. It was suggested that the 7th EAP should try and reference more funding tools, to try and improve environmental coherence within the EU.

Stakeholders outlined some positive aspects of coherence. Seven stakeholders from the online public consultation stated that helping mainstream environmental issues into other EU policies was one of the key successes of the programme. Example from interviewees of these were the CE and climate action synergies, which many saw as being driven (in part) by PO2 in the 7th EAP. The EU's Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) used the 7th EAP to create their strategic programme for 2016-2020. They felt that this provided a clear example of the 7th EAP generating environmental coherence related to implementation.

The 7th EAP's coherence with other EU strategies was discussed. From the surveyed stakeholders, 60% believed that the 7th EAP helped achieve the EU2020 strategy. The Bulgarian and Finish representatives noted that the 7th EAP often has to 'fight for attention' with other EU environmental strategies, such as Europe2020. A particularly prominent example was with the Juncker priorities, which stakeholders broadly perceived as overshadowing the 7th EAP within the EU, and in the Commission in particular. It was suggested that if the Commission as a whole more explicitly utilised the EAP as its high-level environmental strategy, then environmental coherence would be improved. 'Silo thinking' was discussed as a key contributor to this issue, with some stakeholders perceiving that environmental issues are not a key concern for DGs other than DG ENV.

Coherence at Member State level was a key discussion point with the various Member State authorities. Member States suggested that there were several synergies between the 7th EAP and other policies. Poland, for example, was positive about the ability of the programme in ensuring inter-national or national-level environmental synergies. Czech, Estonia, and Italy also suggested that the programme stimulated interaction between different national policies. The UK noted that it stimulated coherent local-level action through encouraging EU level action such as the Covenant of Mayors and the programme's focus on sustainable cities (PO8). Some states noted the difficulties they had in integrating environmental issues more coherently into other areas of public policy. This suggests that the EAP needs to retain a focus on this challenge. Finland gave the example of the difficulties of integrating biodiversity into economic and social activities. Estonia felt that there needs to be continued focus on encouraging environmental synergies via EU led financial instruments. The UK representative highlighted that it is important for the EU to continue to push for further coherence and synergy through initiatives such as the 7th EAP.

The 7th EAP's coherence with other international programmes such as the SDGs and the Paris Agreement was also discussed. Overall, 40% and 42% respectively stated that the 7th EAP was coherent with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. A small minority (4% and 7% respectively) did not consider these to be coherent. This was confirmed by the interviewees that all regarded the 7th EAP and the SDGs to be coherent. There were some comments on their relationship. All stakeholder types emphasised the need to more explicitly incorporate the environmental SDGs into any future high-level environmental strategy. This was suggested as the SDGs have higher visibility in the international forum and are generally regarded as being better at engaging stakeholders globally. A particular focus for positive EU-SDG coherence was SDG12 (responsible consumption and production). Interviewees noted that there was coherence here with the EU's circular economy package, and workshop attendees stated this SDG could be the starting point for incorporating the SDGs into a future EAP. A small number of stakeholders highlighted the need to focus the 7th EAP on more coherence and cooperation with neighbouring and third countries. This was deemed an important addition in order to improve social and climate equality in the EU's neighbourhood.

Relevance

A clear majority of stakeholders believed the 7th EAP was a relevant document. Respondents to the online public consultation believed that the scope of POs1-3 was still relevant[51] and that the focus of the long-term vision remained relevant[52]. NGOs were more likely to strongly agree with these two statements. Member State stakeholders emphasised the long-term relevance of the 7th EAP. Estonia and Poland highlighted the EAP's relevance as a guiding structural strategy. France and Germany were positive in their support of the EAP's relevance, with the former regarding the document as 'indispensable' and the latter highlighting its use as a legal reference point to defend

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[51] When the 153 participants were questioned if the three thematic objectives had the right focus, 50% agreed and 33% strongly agreed.

[52] When the 153 participants were questioned if the long-term vision had the right focus, 55% agreed and 33% strongly agreed.

national policy-making. Some non-Member State stakeholders pointed out that the 7th EAP was very innovative for its time, addressing relevant contemporary challenges.

Most stakeholders agree that the 7th EAP addresses the relevant environmental challenges. However, many stakeholders think that some issues are not as well covered as they should be. Topics that stakeholders wanted a greater focus on included:

- **Funding instruments**: the focus on funding in PO6 was deemed important. Stakeholders wanted a greater mobilisation of funding tools, such as the cohesion policy funds, European Investment Bank (EIB), and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) the EAP's environmental mandate.
- **Policy interface and systemic logic:** a greater focus on addressing policy interface issues as outlined in PO7 was sought. This was thought to be a particular issue in chemical and waste policy, where action is needed to help facilitate the transition to the circular economy. Workshop participants also noted a need to focus more on systemic logic. Policy should utilise and consider its effects on entire systems in order to maximise the value of EU policy. Health was noted by survey participants as a key issue that should be integrated in all policy areas.
- **Implementation:** a variety of stakeholders noted that legislation is heading in a positive direction, however there is still a need to see more action on the ground. One stakeholder regarded this as the most relevant PO in the 7th EAP.
- **Communication:** stakeholders believed this aspect of the 7th EAP could have been improved. It was unclear to many stakeholders who the programme was targeted towards. It was therefore believed that the communication strategy should be improved in order to more effectively engage and mobilise stakeholders from all across the EU (especially private citizens and businesses). A stakeholder noted that communication should – without becoming alarmist – more clearly outline the severity of the current environmental/climate situation. This would add to the document's necessity and relevance. Some stakeholders felt that the relevance of the 7th EAP could be better communicated if the SDGs were better incorporated into its structure.
- **Emerging issues:** Stakeholders pointed out that certain issues have become more pressing and politically relevant overtime, and this is not reflected in the 7th EAP. Chemicals and plastics were provided as examples of this. However, some believed the broad overarching nature of the programme captured these issues sufficiently well. The example of the circular economy was provided, which is only mentioned twice in the document. Nevertheless, PO2 was viewed as an influence in the political drive towards the circular economy. Therefore, keeping the EAP broad was deemed as an important means to maximising relevance. Stakeholders also suggested some new and emerging issues that should be included in a future EAP. These included; digitalisation, the sharing economy, and the rebound effects associated with these.

Added-value

All but one stakeholder agreed that the 7th EAP provides EU added value.[53] This view was often focussed on the EAP's status as the only EU strategy that prioritises

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[53] Only one non-Member State stakeholder stated the programme did not add value, as overall policy improvement comes from the political guidelines of the EC or from better regulation guidelines.

environmental concerns. This provides a clear reminder that the Union requires environmental protection. In the open public consultation's open answers, 17 stakeholders outlined that the 7th EAP's added value was that it steers the EU towards more ambitious legislation. This added value of pushing ambition can be retained if future iterations remain more ambitious than international standards. Some stakeholders felt that that the 7th EAP is a more ambitious high-level strategy than the SDGs. The EAP's role as a high-level structural guide was perceived by Germany as being positive in holding legislators to account and to push for the objectives described within the document. Survey participants agreed, with 84% believing that the long-term vision helps to steers environmental and climate policy. The 7th EAP's added value in setting priorities was noted by Finland and the UK. Czech and France stated that long-term priorities for action were essential. Such long-term priorities were noted by one stakeholder as having facilitated more concrete actions, such as the Resource Efficiency roadmap, and the circular economy action plan. Stakeholders noted that additional milestones or roadmaps to the long-term vision would help capitalise on this added value.

The 7th EAP was seen as adding value through its use as a tool for dialogue and communication. Many non-Member State interviewees stated that it provides a clear message and understanding of environmental issues for a broad range of stakeholders (EU, national, local). Some stakeholders noted that the 7th EAP created a common language for some EU citizens which made it easier to tackle certain environmental challenges. One stakeholder noted that they use it as a tool for engaging the interest of other stakeholders in environmental topics. As mentioned under effectiveness and relevance, stakeholders perceived that the programme would add more value if it had a stronger communication strategy throughout its lifespan, and if it could engage a broader range of stakeholders (including private individuals and businesses). Many Member States highlighted how the 7th EAP generated dialogue between EU nations and raised awareness as a whole. Germany, Austria and Bulgaria felt that the development phase of the EAP was noted as an effective time for the generation of dialogue. Finland felt that the EAP presented global and environmental challenges and helped provide EU predictability on future policy developments.

Stakeholders regarded the coherence generated by the 7th EAP as added value that would be absent without such a pan-EU strategy. One stakeholder noted that environment and climate action is becoming ever more necessary at an international level. Therefore, the existence of a strategy that manages a coordinated policy response at EU level is key. Another noted that the 7th EAP provides a buffer against the complete fragmentation of environmental policy. The overarching nature of the document is necessary, as it means it overlaps with a large variety of policy areas. France emphasised its added value is as a tool to express agreed priorities for harmonised action across the EU and Member States. Czechia, Estonia, and France noted that it stimulates action in areas that require a transnational response. Stakeholders also noted that the programme's focus on implementation added value. Workshop participants noted that the 7th EAP enables the sharing of best practices across a wide variety of stakeholders to further aid implementation. This was noted via the programmes influence on the Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) and the positive effects this has had on Member States.

A future EAP

Several stakeholders reported that they support the idea of an 8th EAP: although beyond the scope of an evaluation, it reflects on the value added of the 7th EAP. Several suggestions were made for how the programme could be improved, and these suggestions imply that there are some shortcomings with the 7th EAP. These points cut across the evaluation criteria, some of the key suggestions are:

- **Inclusion of the SDGs**: many stakeholders outlined this as a way to improve the accessibility of the document. Stakeholders did not want the SDGs to define the structure of the 7th EAP, which should remain as a more (environmentally) ambitious strategy.

- **Target currently unengaged stakeholders**: such as businesses/industry and private individuals, which/who were felt to lack engagement with the programme. Some workshop participants suggested adjusting the structure to have certain sections for certain stakeholders, i.e. one clear narrative section, for public awareness; one concise target section, for industry and business action; and one section outlining the commitments of the Commission departments, for NGOs and institutional accountability. An improved communication strategy would further facilitate this.

- **Structure**: other stakeholders noted the structure could be made more logical and targeted to improve usability. Keeping the programme concise and continuing the focus on broad environmental goals at EU level was considered to provide the most added-value for the programme.

- **Objective driven**: though not agreed by all, some stakeholders suggested that more quantifiable objectives would help drive the achievement of targets. This could be achieved by strengthening the action plan elements within the programme or creating a to-do-list for stakeholders to guide them on the broader objectives. This would require an official midterm evaluation and monitoring system. However, some stakeholders noted that there would be more added value in a less target-oriented document. A balance between flexibility and policy strength was highlighted.

Key conclusions

- Stakeholders strongly supported having an EAP. They saw the 7th EAP as helping to provide more predictable, faster and better coordinated actions and so also improving the efficiency of policies. However, predictability may have been reduced after the change of a European Commission, with new political priorities.

- There was broad buy-in from stakeholders on the structure and content of the 7th EAP, although it was also felt that the actions were too detailed / complex.

- Value added would have been increased by a better mechanism for ensuring ownership and complete fulfilment of commitments.

ANNEX 3. METHODS AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED IN PREPARING THE EVALUATION

The evaluation of this strategy is unique for the European Commission in terms of its scope (especially its focus on whether the strategy has been well-formulated) and because progress on the ground is assessed by the EEA through its work on the State of the Environment report. Given this, classical modelling was neither needed nor undertaken. Instead, the 7th EAP was compared against a conceptual model for judging whether a strategy is well designed and fit for purpose given its governance context: to what extent the 7th EAP meets the criteria of a sound environmental strategy. This comparison was done by breaking the evaluation questions into clearer sub-questions.

1. What makes a good strategy?

As a means to verify the analysis guided by the intervention logic, it was decided to identify in parallel *what makes a good strategy*. The supporting study examined what constitutes a 'sound' or 'well-designed' strategy and which success criteria can be identified, taking advantage of examples from other policy areas and also from the European Commission's 'Quality of Public Administration – A Toolbox for Practitioners'. Subsequently, the supporting study examines the 7th EAP against these criteria, highlighting both strengths and shortcomings and providing ideas for improvement.

This analysis identifies some criteria that are already fully reflected in the intervention logic but also others that are not. For example:

- political commitment is clearly included as an objective in the intervention logic, so it is considered in the evaluation;
- solid foundation relates more to the process, and so is less highlighted in the intervention logic; therefore the analysis of this aspect brings something new to the evaluation.

The hypothesis is that *the better the 7th EAP scores/benchmarks against these criteria*, *the better it will perform as a strategy.*

Purposes of strategies

Integrated strategies are increasingly common in contemporary policymaking in the environmental field. They can have three functions.

1. Policy function: integrated strategies constitute policy documents which analyse the status quo and provide direction and guidance to policymakers by defining a vision, priority themes and policy objectives. Potential synergies and trade-offs are identified. They may also propose concrete measures and instruments or include the same in additional action plans, sectoral strategies, etc.

2. Governance function: integrated strategies are designed to enable a cyclical and reflexive governing process to be established – contrary to the previous, one-off environmental action plans. As such, they can enable the integration of policymakers from other sectors (horizontal integration) and levels of governance (vertical integration) on a continuous basis, and involve responsibilities and resources being assigned as well as ensure learning and adaptation through monitoring and evaluation activities.

3. Capacity building function: the aim of integrated strategies is to build capacities. This includes building a knowledge base for formulating and implementing policy measures, establishing and strengthening policy networks, raising awareness for certain issues, mobilising stakeholders through participation activities and establishing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that informs policymakers.

In sum, integrated strategies can be considered as governing processes that serve the ultimate purpose of shaping broader political agendas and steering policy outputs, as the following figure illustrates.

Figure 1: Functions of an integrated strategy
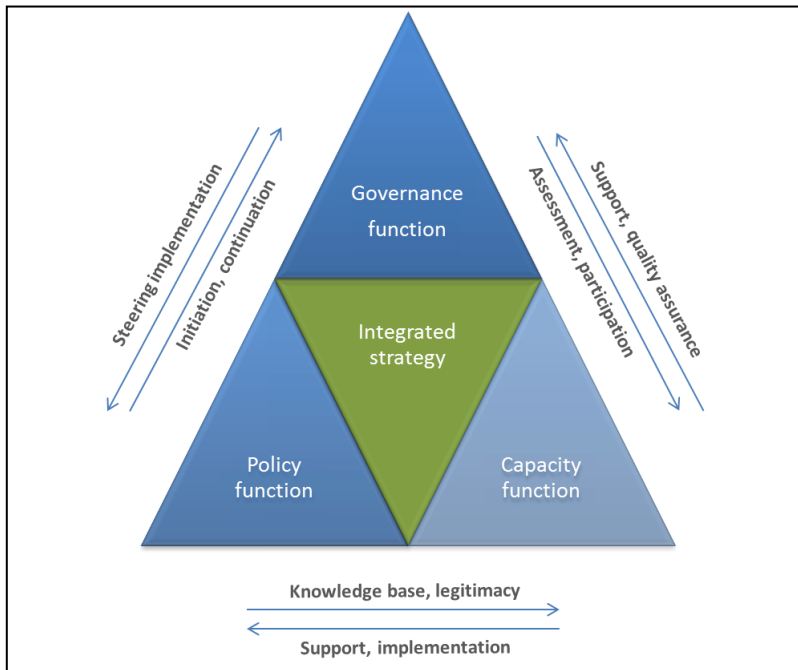
Source: Trinomics et al, adapted from Jacob et al. (2012)

Various principles, in turn, play into the various phases of designing, implementing, evaluating and revising a strategy. The following 'elements' or 'criteria' for developing a promising environmental strategy can be differentiated, even though they partially overlap:

Solid foundation: an in-depth analysis of the status quo, based on reliable scientific data, is an essential prerequisite for developing a credible, acceptable, relevant and ultimately effective environmental strategy.

Political commitment: high-level political commitment over time is essential for a strategy to be effective and for institutional changes to take place. Also, as environmental issues and, ideally, environmental strategies cut across both different sectors and different levels of government it is crucial to factor in and involve policymakers from different sectors and the downstream political levels.

Adequate resources: It is important for the strategy and its related processes to enjoy sufficient access to knowledge, funding and personnel so it can become cyclical, and so that a continuous process can be established that allows for a long-term vision, monitoring and continuous adaptation and improvement.

Vision, objectives and targets: formulating a vision helps spell out the strategy's overall aim and long-term goal, upon which all objectives and targets are based. Moreover, the strategy should define priorities, divided into themes or otherwise, which provide its overall structure (e.g. areas of action, pillars) and which are complemented by more concrete objectives.

Monitoring, continuous learning and improvement: All strategies should be monitored and evaluated regularly in order to track progress and change strategic direction if necessary. Suitable indicators need to be identified to track progress on the strategy's implementation and the fulfillment of its objectives and targets.

Broad participation: the broad involvement and participation of a wide variety of stakeholders including businesses, trade unions, academics and civil society representatives serve different purposes.

The 7th EAP: a sound environmental strategy?

Criteria for a good strategy	In the intervention logic explicitly?
Solid foundation	No, but there is a discussion of this in terms of involving stakeholders and the pros and cons of the process for agreeing the 7th EAP
Political commitment	**Yes**, and discussed throughout particularly in terms of effectiveness questions
Adequate resources	No, but it is discussed in terms of implementation
Vision, objectives and targets	**Yes**, and discussed throughout
Monitoring, continuous learning and improvement	No, but it is discussed in the different evaluation questions
Broad participation	**Yes**, and discussed throughout particularly in terms of involving stakeholders

An assessment of the 7th EAP by these six criteria[54]

The aim is not to provide an assessment of the 7th EAP's achievements (covered in both Annex 6 or by the European Environment Agency) but to look at the 7th EAP from the perspective of what an environmental strategy can and is supposed to accomplish, and to what extent the programme meets the above-defined criteria of a sound or well-designed strategy.

The analysis shows that the 7th EAP performs well in terms of solid foundation. The programme's extensive prior impact assessment is well-founded and evidence-based and

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[54] Note that the views expressed in this section are not necessarily those of the European Commission. They form part of the assessment made by external contractors supporting the evaluation, and in some cases they differ and are more reflective of the 'stakeholders views' found in the answers to the evaluation questions. All of the issues though are picked up within the main evaluation report where relevant.

provides a comprehensive analysis of, among other things, the current situation, prevailing and pressing environmental challenges, the policy context, and the impact of different options and the underlying rationale of the programme's focus and objectives. Stakeholder consultations that were carried out as part of the 7th EAP's mid-term implementation assessment also confirm that the programme as a whole is considered relevant in relation to environmental needs. However, there are shortcomings in terms of coherence and interlinkages. The prior analysis did not look in-depth at synergies and trade-offs with other policy areas and does not identify the necessary actions to integrate environmental concerns across sectors.

Inconsistencies between policy frameworks, i.e. the failure to effectively integrate environmental objectives across sectors (of relevance to the environment), are also considered a major weakness of the 7th EAP. The reasons for this lie less in the programme's preparation, but rather in stakeholders perceiving the 7th EAP to be lacking in political weight and influence compared to other political agendas. Therefore, the programme is garnering the necessary commitment from relevant policymakers. In particular, the dominance of economic and business interests is seen as hampering the fulfilment of environmental objectives within the Member States.

Consequently, the 7th EAP is seen by various stakeholders as mostly fit to:

- provide strategic guidance;

- act as an inter-institutional roadmap for policymaking and policy coherence;

- act as an agenda-setting tool for national authorities;

- raise awareness;

- support NGOs in advocacy; and

- hold the EU accountable.

However, it is considered less successful in serving as a tool for implementation.

In terms of adequate resources, the 7th EAP appears to enjoy sufficient access to funding, personnel and knowledge as it allows for a continuous process in which findings from previous programmes are thoroughly reflected and incorporated and current objectives closely monitored and evaluated. However, according to stakeholders as well as the 7th EAP itself (see priority objective 6), there are clearly problems with funding in relation to developing and implementing suitable policies in the EU and Member States.

While the 7th EAP meets the criteria of including a vision, priority objectives, targets and measures, the programme could significantly improve in clarity and structure by better separating and highlighting its different sections (rationale, objectives and actions). Overview tables on, for example, targets, actions[55] or indicators would also help illustrate the programme's focus, proposed actions and how it intends to track progress. Moreover, consulted stakeholders suggest that the programme is too broad and vague, and that a better organisation of the different topics into overarching themes should be adopted around the most pressing environmental challenges. It should also be clearer about its targets, the actions required and the stakeholders responsible for these actions.

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[55] The programme lists 60 concrete 'actions' to be taken by 2020, in order to fulfil the goals listed

Regarding the criterion on monitoring and evaluation, the 7th EAP has allowed for limited improvement. The programme is accompanied by monitoring and evaluation processes that assess both progress towards implementation (process monitoring) and progress towards the desired outcomes/impact (outcome/impact monitoring). The way in which the 7th EAP (and its predecessors) have been prepared also suggests that the Commission is making a considerable effort to learn from previous programmes and adapt and improve the upcoming one.

Lastly, in terms of broad participation, the consultations undertaken as part of the programme's preparation and evaluation appear comprehensive and adequate to allow for all relevant stakeholders to express their position, contribute to the strategy and gain a sense of ownership. However, the Commission could have looked into further institutionalising these processes and moving to a more continuous and regular dialogue.

2. Sub-questions

As discussed in Section 4.2, the approach used for carrying out the evaluation involved identifying clearer sub-questions as well as finding sources of evidence to answer these questions (Commission experts, stakeholder consultation, external reports etc.). These sub-questions served as inspiration for structuring the work at the beginning.

Questions	Sub-questions	Sources of data (apart from Commission expert views)	Judgment criteria/ indicators
Effectiveness:			
To what extent has the 7th EAP enabled more predictable, faster and better coordinated action by the EU and the Member States?			**Evidence that the programme's objectives are being met or that progress is made toward meeting them.**
	Have the 36 sub-objectives been met?	Assessment and scoring for policy area clusters (see Annex 6)	Level of implementation
	Have the 60 actions been implemented?	Assessment and scoring for policy area clusters (see Annex 6)	Level of implementation
	Has there been progress on the enabling framework?	Assessment and scoring for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Level of implementation
	Is there evidence that the enabling framework is contributing to meeting the other priority objectives?	Assessment and scoring for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Level of implementation for the enabling framework; links made from the other objectives
	Is there any evidence that policy is 'more predictable'?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, comparison against good governance model, comparison with Member State strategies	Links made across the different priority objectives
	Is there any evidence that policy is 'faster'?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, comparison against good governance model, comparison with Member State strategies	Links made across the different priority objectives

	Is there any evidence that policy is 'better coordinated'?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, comparison against good governance model, comparison with Member State strategies	Links made across the different priority objectives, evidence on stakeholder consultation, Comparison against criteria
	Do Member States and regions have a consistent EAP?	Stakeholder views, comparison against good governance model, comparison with Member State strategies	Evidence on stakeholder consultation, feedback on Member States' strategies
To what extent has the 7th EAP been useful in involving different stakeholders?			
	To what extent have stakeholders been involved in determining the 7th EAP?	Stakeholder views, comparison against good governance model	Evidence from stakeholder consultation
	Do stakeholders think that this was a useful exercise for them?	Stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation
	How much reference is made to the 7th EAP?	Assessment for policy area clusters, stakeholder views	Links made across the different priority objectives
	Has the 7th EAP influenced business?	Assessment for policy area clusters, stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation
How has the 7th EAP structure contributed towards achieving its nine priority objectives?			
	Is the state of the environment improving?	EEA	Trends as presented in the EEA Indicator reports
	Have the 36 sub-objectives been achieved?	Assessment and scoring for policy area clusters (see Annex 6)	Level of implementation
	Have the 60 actions been implemented?	Assessment and scoring for policy area clusters (see Annex 6)	Level of implementation
	Did the structure itself contribute to this?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Links made across the different priority objectives
	Does the structure match best practice for strategies?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, Comparison against criteria
Efficiency:			
To what extent has the 7th EAP created synergies or opportunities for streamlining, and cost saving at various levels?			**Cost savings or investments and other expenses (including non-monetary) incurred in connection with the programme's implementation.**
	Has there been streamlining or cost savings?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, evaluations and evidence from REFIT programme	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives

	How is the regulatory burden for environmental policy overall changing over time?	Eurostat data	Environment protection expenditure statistics
	Has the enabling framework helped to better achieve the other objectives?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, evaluations and evidence from REFIT programme	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives. REFIT findings
	Can the 7th EAP be linked to changes in costs and streamlining?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, evaluations and evidence from REFIT programme	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives. REFIT findings
To what extent has the 7th EAP been useful in identifying and addressing information needs and thus supporting efficient and effective policies?			
	Has our understanding of the different priority objectives improved?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives.
	Are we better at identifying emerging environmental risks?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives.
	Are there better flows of information (reporting to the Commission, active dissemination and reporting onwards)?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives. fitness checks on reporting
	Are we addressing information needs through research and innovation?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives.
	Has better information helped to better achieve the other objectives?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives
Relevance:			
To what extent does the 7th EAP tackle the challenges posed to EU environmental policy in a proportionate way?			**The extent to which people in the EU value and support the programme's objectives and actions**
	Were any challenges not addressed?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives
	Are the sub-objectives still relevant, and are they broadly addressed in equal depth?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives
How flexible is the 7th EAP approach in allowing new and emerging issues to be taken into account?			

	What new and emerging issues are there?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	Evidence on new and emerging issues that have been accepted as relevant for EU environment policy
	Would it be easy to incorporate new and emerging issues in the EAP?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views	The extent to which new and emerging issues have been incorporated into the EAP.
Coherence:			
To what extent are the nine priority objectives and their actions consistent with each other?			**The extent to which there is a (general) consistency between the programme objectives.**
	Have the enabling framework objectives contributed to the other objectives?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives, examples
	Have the objectives n.8 and n.9 ensured coherent action at the local and international level?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives, examples
	Are there examples of good synergies and co-benefits?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives, examples
	Are there examples of tradeoffs?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives, examples
	Are these trade-offs being taken into account?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives, examples
To what extent is the 7th EAP integrated and consistent with other EU policies and strategies, including the Juncker priorities and the Europe 2020 strategy?			**The extent to which there is a (general) coherence between the programme objectives and other EU policies and strategies.**
	Are sectoral policies at EU and Member State level consistent with the priority objectives?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Links made across the different priority objectives, examples.
	Is the 7th EAP consistent with the Juncker priorities?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Links made across the different priority objectives, examples.
To what extent is the 7th EAP consistent with international commitments, including the 2030 Agenda and SDGs?			**The extent to which there is a (general) coherence between the programme objectives and Agenda 2030.**
	What other international commitments are there?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Links made across the different priority objectives, examples

	Is the 7th EAP consistent with these other international commitments?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Links made across the different priority objectives, examples
	Is the 7th EAP consistent with the SDGs?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, issue paper by contractor	Links made across the different priority objectives, examples
Added value:			
What is the additional value resulting from the 7th EAP compared to what could be achieved by EU environmental policy without such a framework?			**The extent to which there is a clear additional value from the programme compared to what could have been expected from national or regional level actions**
	Has the 7th EAP led to more effective policy?	Previous answers	See effectiveness above
	Has the 7th EAP led to more efficient policy?	Previous answers	See efficiency above
	Has the 7th EAP led to more relevant policy?	Previous answers	See relevance above
	Has the 7th EAP led to more coherent policy?	Previous answers	See coherence above
	What have been the best 'features' of the 7th EAP?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, analysis of EU environmental law, subsidiarity profile	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives, examples.
	How could the 7th EAP have provided more added value?	Assessment for policy area clusters (see Annex 6), stakeholder views, analysis of EU environmental law subsidiarity profile	Evidence from stakeholder consultation, links made across the different priority objectives, examples.

ANNEX 4 LIST OF SUB-OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS BY THEMATIC PRIORITY

Priority objective 1: To protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital

Sub-objectives

The 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a) the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services, including pollination, are halted, ecosystems and their services are maintained and at least 15% of degraded ecosystems have been restored;

b) the impact of pressures on transitional, coastal and fresh waters (including surface and ground waters) is significantly reduced to achieve, maintain or enhance good status, as defined by the Water Framework Directive;

c) the impact of pressures on marine waters is reduced to achieve or maintain good environmental status, as required by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and coastal zones are managed sustainably;

d) air pollution and its impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity are further reduced with the long-term aim of not exceeding critical loads and levels;

e) land is managed sustainably in the Union, soil is adequately protected and the remediation of contaminated sites is well underway;

f) the nutrient cycle (nitrogen and phosphorus) is managed in a more sustainable and resource-efficient way;

g) forest management is sustainable, and forests, their biodiversity and the services they provide are protected and, as far as feasible, enhanced and the resilience of forests to climate change, fires, storms, pests and diseases is improved.

Actions:

i. stepping up the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy without delay, in order to meet its targets;

ii. fully implementing the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources, having due regard for Member States' specific circumstances, and ensuring that water quality objectives are adequately supported by source-based policy measures;

iii. urgently increasing efforts, inter alia, to ensure that healthy fish stocks are achieved in line with the Common Fisheries Policy, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and international obligations. Combating pollution and establishing a Union-wide quantitative reduction headline target for marine litter supported by source-based measures and taking into account the marine strategies established by Member States. Completing the Natura 2000 network of marine protected areas, and ensuring that coastal zones are managed sustainably;

iv. agreeing and implementing an EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change, including the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation into key Union policy initiatives and sectors;

v. strengthening efforts to reach full compliance with Union air quality legislation and defining strategic targets and actions beyond 2020;

vi. increasing efforts to reduce soil erosion and increase soil organic matter, to remediate contaminated sites and to enhance the integration of land use aspects into coordinated decision-making involving all relevant levels of government, supported by the adoption of targets on soil and on land as a resource, and land planning objectives;

vii. taking further steps to reduce emissions of nitrogen and phosphorus, including those from urban and industrial wastewater and from fertiliser use, inter alia through better source control, and the recovery of waste phosphorus;

viii. developing and implementing a renewed Union Forest Strategy that addresses the multiple demands on, and benefits of, forests and contributes to a more strategic approach to protecting and enhancing forests, including through sustainable forest management;

ix. enhancing Union public information provision, awareness and education on environment policy.

Objective 2. To turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy

Sub-objectives

The 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a) the Union has met its 2020 climate and energy targets and is working towards reducing by 2050 GHG emissions by 80-95% compared to 1990 levels, as part of a global effort to limit the average temperature increase below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial levels, with the agreement of a climate and energy framework for 2030 as a key step in this process;

b) the overall environmental impact of all major sectors of the Union economy is significantly reduced, resource efficiency has increased, and benchmarking and measurement methodologies are in place. Market and policy incentives that foster business investments in resource efficiency are in place, while green growth is stimulated through measures to foster innovation;

c) structural changes in production, technology and innovation, as well as consumption patterns and lifestyles have reduced the overall environmental impact of production and consumption, in particular in the food, housing and mobility sectors;

d) waste is safely managed as a resource and to prevent harm to health and the environment, absolute waste generation and waste generated per capita are in decline, landfilling is limited to residual (i.e. non-recyclable and non-recoverable) waste, having regard to the postponements provided for in Article 5(2) of the Landfill Directive and energy recovery is limited to non-recyclable materials, having regard to Article 4(2) of the Waste Framework Directive;

e) water stress in the Union is prevented or significantly reduced.

Actions:

i. fully implementing the Climate and Energy Package and urgently agreeing on the Union's 2030 climate and energy policy framework, with due regard for the most recent IPCC assessment report, taking into account the indicative milestones set out in the Low-Carbon Roadmap, as well as developments within the UNFCCC and other relevant processes;

ii. generalising the application of 'Best Available Techniques' in the context of the Industrial Emissions Directive and enhancing efforts to promote the uptake of emerging innovative technologies, processes and services;

iii. giving impetus to the public and private research and innovation efforts required for the development and uptake of innovative technologies, systems and business models which will speed up and lower the cost of transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient, safe and sustainable economy. Further developing the approach set out in the Eco-innovation Action Plan, identifying priorities for incremental innovation as well as system changes, promoting a larger market share of green technologies in the Union and enhancing the competitiveness of the European eco-industry. Establishing indicators and setting realistic and achievable targets for resource efficiency;

iv. developing measurement and benchmarking methodologies by 2015 for resource efficiency of land, carbon, water and material use and assessing the appropriateness of the inclusion of a lead indicator and target in the European Semester;

v. establishing a more coherent policy framework for sustainable production and consumption including, where appropriate, the consolidation of existing instruments into a coherent legal framework. Reviewing product legislation with a view to improving the environmental performance and resource efficiency of products throughout their lifecycle. Stimulating consumer demand for environmentally sustainable products and services through policies which promote their availability, affordability, functionality and attractiveness. Developing indicators and realistic and achievable targets for the reduction of the overall impact of consumption;

vi. developing training programmes geared towards green jobs;

vii. increasing efforts to reach existing targets and reviewing approaches to green public procurement, including its scope, in order to increase its effectiveness. Establishing a voluntary green purchaser network for Union businesses;

viii. fully implementing Union waste legislation. Such implementation will include applying the waste hierarchy in accordance with the Waste Framework Directive and the effective use of market-based instruments and other measures to ensure that: (1) landfilling is limited to residual (i.e. non-recyclable and non-recoverable) waste, having regard to the postponements provided for in Article 5(2) of the Landfill Directive; (2) energy recovery is limited to non-recyclable materials, having regard to Article 4(2) of the Waste Framework Directive; (3) recycled waste is used as a major, reliable source of raw material for the Union, through the development of non-toxic material cycles; (4) hazardous waste is safely managed and its generation is reduced; (5) illegal waste shipments are eradicated, with the support of stringent monitoring; and (6) food waste is reduced. Reviews of existing product and waste legislation are carried out, including a review of the main targets of the relevant waste directives, informed by the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe, so as to move towards a circular economy; and internal market barriers for environmentally-sound recycling activities in the Union are removed. Public information campaigns are required to build awareness and understanding of waste policy and to stimulate a change in behaviour;

ix. improving water efficiency by setting and monitoring targets at river basin level on the basis of a common methodology for water efficiency targets to be developed under the Common Implementation Strategy process, and using market mechanisms, such as water pricing, as

provided for in Article 9 of the Water Framework Directive and, where appropriate, other market measures. Developing approaches to manage the use of treated wastewater

Objective 3. To safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing

Sub-objective
the 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a) outdoor air quality in the Union has significantly improved, moving closer to WHO recommended levels, while indoor air quality has improved, informed by the relevant WHO guidelines;
b) noise pollution in the Union has significantly decreased, moving closer to WHO recommended levels;
c) citizens throughout the Union benefit from high standards for safe drinking and bathing water;
d) the combination effects of chemicals and safety concerns related to endocrine disruptors are effectively addressed in all relevant Union legislation, and risks for the environment and health, in particular in relation to children, associated with the use of hazardous substances, including chemicals in products, are assessed and minimised. Long-term actions with a view to reaching the objective of a non-toxic environment will be identified;
e) the use of plant protection products does not have any harmful effects on human health or unacceptable influence on the environment, and such products are used sustainably;
f) safety concerns related to nanomaterials and materials with similar properties are effectively addressed as part of a coherent approach in legislation;
g) decisive progress is made in adapting to the impact of climate change.

Actions:

i. implementing an updated Union air quality policy, aligned with the latest scientific knowledge, and developing and implementing measures to combat air pollution at source taking into account the differences between the sources of indoor and outdoor air pollution;
ii. implementing an updated Union noise policy aligned with the latest scientific knowledge, and measures to reduce noise at source, and including improvements in city design;
iii. increasing efforts to implement the Water Framework Directive, the Bathing Water Directive (65) and the Drinking Water Directive (66), in particular for small drinking water supplies;
iv. continuing to implement REACH in order to ensure a high level of protection for human health and the environment as well as the free circulation of chemicals within the internal market while enhancing competitiveness and innovation, while being mindful of the specific needs of SMEs. Developing by 2018 a Union strategy for a non-toxic environment that is conducive to innovation and the development of sustainable substitutes including non-chemical solutions, building on horizontal measures to be undertaken by 2015 to ensure: (1) the safety of manufactured nanomaterials and materials with similar properties; (2) the minimisation of exposure to endocrine disruptors; (3) appropriate regulatory approaches to address combination effects of chemicals and (4) the minimisation of exposure to chemicals in products, including, inter alia, imported products, with a view to promoting non-toxic material cycles and reducing indoor exposure to harmful substances;
v. monitoring the implementation of Union legislation on the sustainable use of pesticides products and reviewing it, as necessary, to keep it up to date with the latest scientific knowledge;
vi. agreeing and implementing an EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change, including the integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management considerations into key Union policy initiatives and sectors.

Objective 4. To maximise the benefits of Union environment legislation by improving implementation

Sub-objectives
The 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a) the public has access to clear information showing how Union environment law is being implemented consistent with the Aarhus Convention;
b) compliance with specific environment legislation has increased;
c) Union environment law is enforced at all administrative levels and a level-playing field in the internal market is guaranteed;
d) citizens' trust and confidence in Union environment law and its enforcement is enhanced;
e) the principle of effective legal protection for citizens and their organisations is facilitated.

Actions:
i.   ensuring that systems at national level actively disseminate information about how Union environment legislation is being implemented, and complementing such information with a Union level overview of individual Member States' performance;

ii.   drawing up partnership implementation agreements on a voluntary basis between Member States and the Commission, involving local and regional participation where appropriate;

iii.   extending binding criteria for effective Member State inspections and surveillance to the wider body of Union environment law, and further developing inspection support capacity at Union level, drawing on existing structures, backed up by support for networks of professionals such as IMPEL, and by the reinforcement of peer reviews and best practice sharing, with a view to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of inspections;

iv.   ensuring consistent and effective mechanisms at national level for the handling of complaints about implementation of Union environment law;

v.   ensuring that national provisions on access to justice reflect the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union. Promoting non-judicial dispute resolution as a means of finding amicable and effective solutions for disputes in the environmental field.

Objective 5. To improve the knowledge and evidence base for Union environment policy

Sub-objectives
the 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a)   policy-makers and stakeholders have a more informed basis for developing and implementing environment and climate policies, including understanding the environmental impacts of human activities and measuring the costs and benefits of action and the costs of inaction;

b)   the understanding of, and the ability to evaluate and manage, emerging environmental and climate risks are greatly improved;

c)   the environment science-policy interface is strengthened, including the accessibility of data for citizens and the contribution of citizens' science;

d)   the impact of the Union and its Member States in international science-policy fora is enhanced in order to improve the knowledge base for international environment policy.

Actions:
i.   coordinating, sharing and promoting research efforts at Union and Member State level with regard to addressing key environmental knowledge gaps, including the risks of crossing environmental tipping-points and planetary boundaries;

ii.   adopting a systematic and integrated approach to risk management, particularly in relation to the evaluation and management of new and emerging policy areas and related risks as well as the adequacy and coherence of regulatory responses. This could help to stimulate further research on the hazards of new products, processes and technologies;

iii.   simplifying, streamlining and modernising environmental and climate change data and information collection, management, sharing and re-use, including the development and implementation of a Shared Environmental Information System;

iv.   developing a comprehensive chemical exposure and toxicity knowledge base which draws on data generated without animal testing where possible. Continuing the Union's coordinated approach to human and environmental biomonitoring including, where appropriate, standardisation of research protocols and assessment criteria;

v.   intensifying cooperation at international, Union and Member State level on the environment science-policy interface.

Objective 6. To secure investment for environment and climate policy and address environmental externalities.

Sub-objectives
the 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a)   environment and climate policy objectives are achieved in a cost-effective way and are supported by adequate finance;

b)   public and private sector funding for environment and climate-related expenditure is increased;

c)   the value of natural capital and ecosystem services, as well as the costs of their degradation are properly assessed and considered in policy-making and investments.

Actions:
i.   phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies at Union and Member State level without delay, and reporting on progress through the National Reform Programmes; increasing the use of market-based instruments, such as Member States' taxation policies, pricing and charging, and expanding markets for environmental goods and services, with due regard to any adverse social impacts, using an action-based approach, supported and monitored by the Commission, inter alia, via the

European Semester;

ii.   facilitating the development of, and access to, innovative financial instruments and funding for eco-innovation;

iii. adequately reflecting environment and climate priorities in policies and funding strategies to support economic, social and territorial cohesion;

iv.   making dedicated efforts to ensure the full and efficient use of available Union funding for environmental action, including by significantly improving its early uptake under the Union's Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 and devoting 20% of the budget to climate change mitigation and adaptation through the mainstreaming of climate action and linking that funding to clear benchmarks, target setting, monitoring and reporting;

v.   developing and applying a system for reporting and tracking environment-related expenditure in the Union budget, in particular expenditure on climate change and biodiversity, by 2014;

vi.   integrating environmental and climate-related considerations into the European Semester process, where this is relevant for individual Member States' prospects for sustainable growth and is appropriate for country-specific recommendations;

vii. developing and applying alternative indicators that complement and go beyond GDP to monitor the sustainability of progress and continuing work to integrate economic indicators with environmental and social indicators, including by means of natural capital accounting;

viii. further developing and encouraging 'payments for ecosystem services' schemes;

ix.   putting in place incentives and methodologies that stimulate companies to measure the environmental costs of their business and profits derived from using environmental services and to disclose environmental information as part of their annual reporting. Encouraging companies to exercise due diligence, including throughout their supply chain.

Objective 7. To improve environmental integration and policy coherence

Sub-objectives

The 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a)   sectoral policies at Union and Member State level are developed and implemented in a way that supports relevant environment and climate-related targets and objectives.

Actions:

i.   integrating environmental and climate-related conditionalities and incentives in policy initiatives, including reviews and reforms of existing policy, as well as new initiatives, at Union and Member State level;

ii.   carrying out ex-ante assessments of the environmental, social and economic impacts of policy initiatives at appropriate Union and Member State level to ensure their coherence and effectiveness;

iii. fully implementing the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive;

iv.   using ex-post evaluation information relating to experience with implementation of the environment acquis in order to improve its consistency and coherence

v.   addressing potential trade-offs in all policies in order to maximise synergies and avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy unintended negative effects on the environment.

Objective 8. To enhance the sustainability of the Union's cities.

Sub-objectives

the 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a)   a majority of cities in the Union are implementing policies for sustainable urban planning and design, including innovative approaches for urban public transport and mobility, sustainable buildings, energy efficiency and urban biodiversity conservation.

Actions:

i.   agreeing on a set of criteria to assess the environmental performance of cities, taking into account economic, social and territorial impacts;

ii.   ensuring that cities have information about, and better access to, financing for measures to improve urban sustainability;

iii. sharing best practice between cities at Union and international level in relation to innovative and sustainable urban development;

iv.   in the context of ongoing Union initiatives and networks, developing and promoting a common understanding of how to contribute to improved urban environments by focusing on the integration of urban planning with objectives related to resource efficiency, an innovative safe and sustainable low-carbon economy, sustainable urban land-use, sustainable urban mobility, urban biodiversity management and conservation, ecosystem resilience, water management, human health, public participation in decision-making and environmental education and awareness.

Objective 9. To increase the Union's effectiveness in addressing international environment and climate-related challenges.

Sub-objectives

the 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020:

a) the outcomes of Rio + 20 are fully integrated into the Union's internal and external policies and the Union is contributing effectively to global efforts to implement agreed commitments, including those under the Rio conventions and to initiatives aimed at promoting the global transition towards an inclusive and green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;

b) the Union is providing effective support to national, regional and international efforts to address environmental and climate-related challenges and to ensure sustainable development;

c) the impact of consumption in the Union on the environment beyond the Union's borders is reduced.

Actions:

i. working as part of a coherent and comprehensive post-2015 approach to the universal challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development, and through an inclusive, collaborative process, towards the adoption of sustainable development goals that:

    a. are coherent with existing internationally agreed goals and targets on, inter alia, biodiversity, climate change, social inclusion and social protection floors;

    b. address, at national and international level, priority areas such as energy, water, food security, oceans and sustainable consumption and production, decent work, good governance and the rule of law;

    c. are universally applicable, covering all three dimensions of sustainable development;

    d. are assessed and accompanied by targets and indicators, while taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development, and

    e. are consistent with, and supportive of, other international commitments, such as those concerning climate change and biodiversity;

ii. working towards a more effective UN structure for sustainable development, in particular its environmental dimension by:

    a. further strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in line with the outcome of Rio + 20, building on the decision by the UN General Assembly to change the designation of the Governing Council of the UNEP to the UN Environment Assembly of the UNEP (93), while continuing to strive for an upgrade of the UNEP's status to that of a specialised Agency;

    b. supporting efforts to enhance synergies between multilateral environmental agreements, in particular in the chemicals and waste cluster and the biodiversity cluster; and

    c. contributing to ensuring a strong and authoritative voice for the environment in the work of the High-Level Political Forum;

iii. strengthening the impact of various sources of funding, including taxation and domestic resource mobilisation, private investment, new partnerships and innovative financing sources, and creating options for using development aid to leverage those other sources of financing as part of a sustainable development financing strategy, as well as in the Union's own policies, including international commitments on climate and biodiversity finance;

iv. engaging with partner countries in a more strategic way, for example by focusing cooperation with:

    a. strategic partners on the promotion of best practice in domestic environment policy and legislation and convergence in multilateral environmental negotiations;

    b. countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy on gradual approximation with key Union environment and climate policy and legislation and on strengthening cooperation to address regional environmental and climate-related challenges;

    c. developing countries to support their efforts to protect the environment, fight climate change and reduce natural disasters, and implement international environmental commitments as a contribution to poverty reduction and sustainable development;

v. engaging in existing and new multilateral environmental and other relevant processes, in a more consistent, proactive and effective way, including through the timely outreach to third countries and other stakeholders, with a view to ensuring that commitments for 2020 are met at Union level and promoted globally, and to agree on international action to be taken beyond 2020, and ratifying and boosting efforts to implement all key multilateral environmental agreements well before 2020. Implementing the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production;

vi.   assessing the environmental impact, in a global context, of Union consumption of food and non-food commodities and, if appropriate, developing policy proposals to address the findings of such assessments, and considering the development of a Union action plan on deforestation and forest degradation;

vii.   promoting the further development and implementation of emissions trading schemes around the world and facilitating the linking of such systems;

viii.   ensuring that economic and social progress is achieved within the carrying capacity of the Earth, by increasing understanding of planetary boundaries, inter alia, in the development of the post-2015 framework in order to secure human well-being and prosperity in the long-term.

ANNEX 5 LIST OF MAIN OUTPUTS

The information provided in this annex includes the main outputs achieved and/or planned from 2014 until February 2019. The list does not pretend to be exhaustive or complete.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 1: TO PROTECT, CONSERVE AND ENHANCE THE UNION'S NATURAL CAPITAL

Biodiversity

Implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives

2014
- The Commission published a new 'Financing Natura 2000 Guidance Handbook' for 2014-2020, and 'Farming in Natura 2000' guidance.
- The Commission launched the European Natura 2000 awards to reward excellence in the management of Natura 2000 sites and conservation achievements.
- The EU Platform on coexistence between people and large carnivores was established in June 2014.
- A review was published on *the provisions of Article 6.1 and their practical implementation in different Member States.*

2015
- The Commission issued the "Natura 2000 and forests" guidelines.
- The Commission issued "The state of nature" report for 2007-2012.

2016
- The Commission published the 'Fitness Check' evaluation[56] of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives (the 'Nature Directives').
- The Commission published the first ever European Red List of Habitats.
- The Commission adopted a guidance document on streamlining environmental assessments conducted under the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive with assessments conducted under Art. 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and other environmental legislation.

2017

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[56] SWD(2016) 472

- The Commission adopted the 'Action Plan for nature, people and the economy'[57] to improve implementation and boost their contribution towards the EU's biodiversity targets.

2018
- The Commission issued the following guidance documents: '*The requirements for hydropower in relation to EU nature Legislation*', '*Energy transmission infrastructure and EU nature legislation*' and '*Establishment of conservation measures under the Common Fisheries Policy for Natura 2000 sites and for Marine Strategy Framework Directive purposes*'.

Implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

2014
- Adoption of Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 on Invasive Alien Species.
- The 12th Conference of the Parties (COP12) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, including agreement on dedicated targets for mobilising resources in support of biodiversity by 2020.

2015
- The mid-term review of the EU biodiversity strategy helped refocus priorities up to 2020.
- An information exchange mechanism EASIN (European Alien Species Information Network) was established to support the implementation of Regulation (EU) 1143/2014.

2016
- The Commission adopted Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141, establishing the first list of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern[58].
- The Commission adopted Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/145, establishing the format of the document serving as evidence for the permit issued by the competent authorities of Member States allowing establishments to carry out certain activities concerning invasive alien species of Union concern.
- Adoption of the EU action plan on wildlife trafficking.
- The 13th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity — CBD COP13 — adopted decisions on anchoring biodiversity in the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

2017
- The Commission adopted Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1263 updating the list of invasive alien species of Union concern.
- The Commission adopted Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1454 specifying the technical format for reporting by the Member States.
- COP12 of the Convention on Migratory Species (Manila, October 2017) adopted 34 proposals to amend the Convention's appendices, four of which were voted upon, for the first time in the Convention's history.

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[57] COM(2017) 198
[58] See: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/list/index_en.htm

2018
- The Commission adopted a communication on an EU Pollinators Initiative[59].
- Commission proposals for the next MFF that integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into a number of instruments, including a proposal for new strategic nature projects under the LIFE programme.
- The Commission published the fifth MAES (Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services) technical report[60] which provides an integrated analytical framework and a set of indicators for mapping and assessing the condition of ecosystems in the EU.
- Green infrastructure: Adoption of a Commission report on the review of progress in implementing the green infrastructure strategy and adoption of a Commission Guidance document on a strategic framework for further supporting the deployment of EU-level green and blue infrastructure.
- Adoption of a Commission Guidance document on integrating ecosystems and their services into planning and decision-making.
- The launch at the COP14 CBD of a post-2020 global biodiversity process and high level ministerial discussions on mainstreaming biodiversity concerns in the sectors of mining, energy, manufacturing, and health.

Fresh, transitional and coastal waters

2015
- The fourth Implementation Report of the Water Framework Directive (WFD): 'The Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive: Actions towards the 'good status' of EU water and to reduce flood risks'[61].

2017
- Commission staff working document 'Agriculture and Sustainable Water management in the EU'[62] setting out the challenges and opportunities for attaining improved implementation, better governance, targeted investments and a stronger knowledge base to achieve EU water sustainability goals.
- Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast)[63].

2018
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse[64].
- Commission Decision (EU) 2018/229 of 12 February 2018 establishing, pursuant to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, the values of

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[59] COM(2018) 395

[60] See: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/pdf/3rdMAESReport_Condition.pdf

[61] COM(2015) 120

[62] SWD(2017) 153

[63] COM(2017) 753

[64] COM(2018) 337

the Member State monitoring system classifications as a result of the intercalibration exercise and repealing Commission Decision 2013/480/EU
- The 5th implementation report on the WFD, COM 2019 (95)

2019
- Communication on a strategic approach to pharmaceuticals in the environment.

Marine waters

2014
- The Commission's report on the first phase of implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)[65], together with the EEA's 'Marine messages', offered the first overview of the state of EU seas.

2015
- Commission report on the progress in establishing marine protected areas under the MSFD[66].
- Report from the European Environment Agency on 'The State of the European Seas'.
- Technical report on *Overview of the potential interactions and impacts of commercial fishing methods on marine habitats and species protected under the EU Habitats Directive.*

2016/2017
- Commission Report on the assessment of monitoring programmes under Article 12 of the MFSD[67].
- Commission Directive[68] replacing Annex III (indicative lists of characteristics, pressures and impacts for the assessment of the environmental status) to the MSFD.
- EU Member States completed the first cycle of implementation of the MSFD[69].
- Technical report on *Socio-economic benefits of the EU marine protected areas.*
- Commission Decision 2017/848/EU requires, among other things, the setting of threshold values that help determine good environmental status for pressures on the marine environment, including marine litter and other forms of pollution.

2018
- Report on the assessment of programmes of measures[70] under Article 16 of the MSFD.
- Adoption of a proposal revising the port reception facilities Directive to tackle sea-based marine litter, with measures to ensure that waste generated on ships or gathered at sea is returned to land and appropriately managed there[71].
- Adoption of the European strategy for plastics in a circular economy[72].

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[65] COM(2014) 97
[66] COM(2015) 481
[67] COM(2017) 3
[68] Directive 2017/845/EU
[69] Directive 2008/56/EC
[70] COM(2018) 562
[71] COM(2018) 33

2019

- Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, aiming to reducing marine litter with measures on single use plastics and fishing gear[73].

Land and Soil

2014

- The Commission withdrew its proposal for a soil framework directive, stating that 'The Commission remains committed to the objective of the protection of soil and will examine options on how to best achieve this. Any further initiative in this respect will however have to be considered by the next college'[74].

2015

- The Commission adopted a waste package as part of the circular economy strategy, establishing binding targets for reuse and recycling of municipal waste, and reducing landfilling which will have a favourable effect on soil quality.

2016

- The Commission made a proposal for a revision of the Fertilisers Regulation, setting limits for the presence of heavy metals and contaminants, notably cadmium, in fertilising products affecting agricultural soils.
- The Commission made a proposal for the integration of the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sectors into the non-ETS mitigation framework.

2017

- The EU adopted a new Regulation on Mercury[75], which provided for an exchange of information with Member States on the identification, inventory and assessment of sites contaminated with mercury or mercury-compounds.

2018

- The report of the Mapping and Assessing of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) soil pilot was published in 2018. As part of the soil biodiversity strategy to 2020, this report studied the ecosystem services so these could be better taken into account in further policy developments.

Forests

2015

- Commission staff working document 'Multi-annual Implementation Plan of the new EU Forest Strategy'[76] .
- Publication of guidance on 'Natura 2000 and forests'[77].

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[72] COM (2018) 28
[73] COM(2018) 340
[74] OJEU C 163/15 28.5.2014
[75] OJ L 137, 24.5.2017
[76] SWD(2015) 164
[77] ISBN 978-92-79-49396-6

- Incorporation of the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) into the EU Copernicus programme under the emergency management services.

2016
- Evaluation[78] of Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market (the EU Timber Regulation)
- The Commission submitted a proposal to prepare for the integration of the LULUCF sectors into the non-ETS mitigation framework.

2018
- Publication of the study on 'implementing sustainable forest management according to the EU biodiversity strategy and the EU bioeconomy strategy[79].
- Review of the EU forest strategy.

Nutrient cycles

2016
- The Commission made a proposal for a Regulation[80] laying down rules on the making available on the market of CE marked fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009
- Directive (EU) 2016/2284 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC. This Directive include national reduction targets for ammonia, and listed options for reducing ammonia taking into account the whole nitrogen cycle.

2017
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/302 (i.e. conclusions on the best available technique (BAT) for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs), which concerns farm processes and activities like nutritional management, animal rearing, and management of manure.

2018
- Nitrates report 2012-2015: 4.5.2018, Report from the Commission on the implementation of Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources based on Member State reports for 2012-2015[81] .
- The Commission adopted a Proposal for a Regulation on minimum requirements for water reuse.

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[78] SWD(2016) 34
[79] ISBN 978-92-79-78025-7
[80] COM(2016) 157
[81] COM(2018) 257; SWD(2018) 246

Communication and awareness raising on environment policy

<u>2014</u>
- The 'Generation Awake!' awareness-raising campaign on resource efficiency, 2014 focus on waste management; winner of a Gold Dolphin at the Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards in the category 'Environmental issues and concerns'.
- EU Green Week 2014 'Circular economy – saving resources, creating jobs'.
- Natura 2000 Award launch, a pan-European Award recognising excellence in the management of Natura 2000 sites and conservation achievements, showcasing the added value of the network for local economies, and increasing public awareness about Europe's valuable natural heritage
- European Green Capital Award Copenhagen

<u>2015</u>
- EU Green Week 2015 'Nature – our health, our wealth'
- Natura 2000 Award.
- European Green Capital Award Bristol; launch of the European Green Leaf Award Mollet del Vallès and Torres Vedras.

<u>2016</u>
- EU Green Week 2016 'Investing for a greener future'
- Natura 2000 Award.
- PR campaign to promote the new circular economy package in eight Member States.
- European Green Capital Award Ljubljana.

<u>2017</u>
- EU Green Week 2017 'Green jobs for a greener future'
- Natura 2000 Day launch (21 May).
- PR campaign on plastic waste and water reuse policies.
- Communication activities around the Clean Air Forum and Environmental Implementation Review, 25th anniversary of the Habitats Directive and of the LIFE programme.
- European Green Capital Award Essen; European Green Leaf Award Galway.

<u>2018</u>
- EU Green Week 2018 'Green cities'.
- Natura 2000 Day.
- Natura 2000 Award.
- Plastics strategy and single use plastics/marine litter awareness raising campaign
- Waste legislative package communication activities.
- European Green Capital Award Nijmegen; European Green Leaf Award Leuven and Växjö.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 2: TO TURN THE UNION INTO A RESOURCE-EFFICIENT, GREEN, AND COMPETITIVE LOW-CARBON ECONOMY

Low-carbon economy (climate change mitigation)

<u>2014</u>

- The EU Heads of State and Government agreed the 2030 policy framework for climate and energy. The framework sets out the EU commitment to a binding target of at least a 40 % domestic reduction in economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990.

<u>2015</u>

- Universal, ambitious comprehensive legally-binding framework agreement adopted in Paris by all 197 UNFCCC Parties that will apply no later than 2020.
- The communication, 'The Paris Protocol - a blueprint for tackling global climate change beyond'[82].
- Agreement on EU position for Paris climate change conference (adopted by Environmental Council on 18 September 2015).
- 2nd EU biennial report on progress towards GHG emission targets and implementation of climate policies and measures (UNFCCC requirement) (adopted by the Commission on 18 October 2015).
- February 2015: the Commission adopted 'A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy'[83]. By supporting the EU's leadership in clean technologies it contributed to the modernisation and competitiveness of the EU economy.
  July 2015: the Commission presented a proposal to reform the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) to make it fit for purpose and to drive investments in the industrial and power sectors after 2020[84]. This is the first legislative proposal to start the implementation of the EU's international commitment under the Paris Agreement on climate change.

<u>2016</u>

- The Road from Paris: assessing the implications of the Paris Agreement (completed).
- Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council - Integration of the LULUCF sector into 2030 climate framework (CWP 2016) (2015/CLIMA/003).
- Agreement on the Regulation on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 for a resilient Energy Union and to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement and amending Regulation 525/2013 on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions and other information relevant to climate change [85].
- Agreement on a Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (recast)[86].

<u>2018</u>

- Adoption of Directive (EU) 2018/410 to enhance cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investments (amendment of EU ETS for the 2021-2030).

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[82] COM(2015) 81
[83] COM(2015) 80
[84] COM(2015) 337
[85] COM(2016) 482
[86] COM(2016) 767

- The Effort Sharing Regulation[87] was adopted in May 2018 and entered into force at the end of 2018.
- Under EU legislation adopted in May 2018, EU Member States have to ensure that greenhouse gas emissions from LULUCF are offset by at least an equivalent removal of CO2 from the atmosphere in 2021 to 2030[88].
- The Commission presented in November 2018 its strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy by 2050. The supporting in-depth analysis studies a variety of cost-efficient pathways towards reaching greenhouse gas emissions that are in line with the goal adopted in the Paris Agreement of keeping the global average temperature rise well below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial level, and towards pursuing efforts to limit it to 1,5 °C.
- The Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action was adopted, putting in place a comprehensive and streamlined framework for planning, reporting and monitoring across all five dimensions of the energy union.
- A Directive amending Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency was adopted, setting a target for the European Union of at least 32.5% by 2030.
- The (recast) Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources was adopted, setting an EU-target of at least 32% by 2030.

Sustainable production and consumption

2014
- Adoption of the communication on resource Efficiency opportunities in the building sector[89].
- Conclusions on best available techniques (BATs) for refining mineral oil and gas. Conclusions on BAT for producing pulp, paper and board.
- Adoption of the green action plan for SMEs providing a framework and including 39 measures that the EU, in partnership with Member States and regions, uses to help SMEs exploit the business opportunities offered by the transition to a green and circular economy.

2015
- Adoption of the EU action plan for the circular economy, composed of 54 planned actions covering key areas (production, consumption, waste management, market for secondary raw materials, innovation & investments, monitoring) and 5 key sectors (plastics, food waste, critical raw materials, construction and demolition, and biomass and bio-based materials).
- Conclusions on BAT for producing wood-based panels.

2016
- Publication of the voluntary industry-wide recycling protocol for construction and demolition waste
- Conclusions on BAT for common waste water and waste gas treatment/ management systems in the chemicals sector. Conclusions on BAT for the non-ferrous metals industries.

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[87] Regulation (EU) 2018/842
[88] Regulation (EU) 2018/841.
[89] COM(2014) 445

- Establishment of the European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre - a virtual centre that provides advice, training, capacity building opportunities, networking opportunities and information materials for EU SMEs and national and regional SME support organisations.

2017
- Adoption of a package of deliverables from the circular economy action plan (CEAP) which includes the CEAP Implementation Report, a communication on waste-to-energy processes and their role in the circular economy, and a proposal to make a targeted amendment to the Directive restricting the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment ('RoHS Directive').
- Adoption of the Final Report on the pre-demolition assessment guidelines for the construction sector (GROW).
- Adoption of the Report to the European Parliament and the Council on the review of the implementation of the eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) Regulation and of the EU Ecolabel Regulation (REFIT)[90].
- Conclusions on BAT for intensive rearing of poultry or pigs. Conclusions on BAT for large combustion plants. Conclusions on BAT for producing large volume organic chemicals.
- Establishment in 2017 of a three-year pilot Observatory on Industrial Emissions that will test methods for improving the innovation incentives provided by BAT Reference documents (known as the BREFs).
- The voluntary industry-wide tool known as Level(s) was made available, which has indicators to assess the sustainability performance of buildings; the test phase for this tool was also launched.

2018
- Adoption of a package of deliverables from the CEAP which includes, a proposal for the revision of the Directive on port reception facilities, ,and the monitoring framework to measure progress towards a circular economy[91]. In addition, two other documents have been presented together with these measures: a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the issue of oxo-degradable plastics and a staff working document on critical raw materials.
- The environmental footprint pilot phase was finalised, leading to the development of 21 product environmental footprint category rules and 2 organisation environemental footprint sectoral rules . The Environemental Footprint transition phase (covering 2018-2021) was launched.
- Conclusion of the support study for the evaluation of the EU environmental technology verification (ETV) pilot programme including an ex-ante assessment of possible options for the future of an EU ETV scheme.
- Adoption of the Communication 'A New Deal for Consumers', whose points related to misleading environmental claims, environmental information for consumers, and premature obsolescence contribute to the circular economy.
- Conclusions on BAT for waste treatment.

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[90] COM(2017) 355

[91] COM(2018) 29

- Adoption of the proposal for a 'Directive on the impact of certain plastic products on the environment'[92].

2019

- Adoption of a Report on implementing the EU Circular Economy Action Plan[93], together with staff working documents on:
  - o an EU product policy framework contributing to the circular economy, including a revision of the environmental footprint methods and lessons learnt from the pilot phase;
  - o An evaluation of the EU Environmental Technology Verification (ETV) pilot programme.

Waste

2014

- Adoption of a legislative proposal on waste to review recycling and other waste-related targets in EU waste legislation[94].
- Amendment of Commission Decision 2000/532/EC on the list of waste and Annex III to Directive 2008/98/EC on hazardous properties of waste by Decision 2014/955/EU and Commission Regulation (EU) No 1357/2014, respectively. All properties except eco-toxicity were updated, thus strengthening the alignment of waste classification with the new legislation on chemicals.
- A Fitness Check Report to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and relevance of five waste stream Directives: Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (94/62/EC), Batteries Directive (2006/66/EC), End of Life Vehicles (ELV) Directive (2000/53/EC), PCB/PCT Directive (96/59/EC), and the Sewage sludge Directive (86/278/EEC).
- Adoption of Regulation (EU) No 660/2014 of 15 May 2014 amending Regulation (EC) No 1013/2014 regarding the strengthening of Member States' inspection systems.
- Report on the availability of mercury-free button cells for hearing aids[95]
- Adoption of Recommendation 2014/70/EU on minimum principles for the exploration and production of hydrocarbons (such as shale gas) using high volume hydraulic fracturing.

2015

- Adoption of the circular economy package: A communication with an action plan and legislative proposals to amend relevant EU waste legislation[96]
- 'Municipal Waste Compliance Promotion Exercise' Phase II took place from 2014 to 2015 through seminars with responsible authorities in eight more Member States with a low/middle performance in waste management.
- Adoption of Directive 720/2015/EU amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste, adding specific measures on using of plastic carrier bags.

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[92] COM (2018) 340
[93] COM(2019) 190
[94] COM (2014) 397
[95] COM (2014) 632
[96] COM (2015) 614

- Adoption of a delegated act adding four hazardous substances (phthalates) to the list of restricted substances under the RoHS Directive 2011/65/EU.

2016
- Adoption of the first EU list of ship recycling facilities complying with environment and safety requirements (the list was amended in 2018).
- Adoption of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1245 setting out a preliminary correlation table between codes of the Combined Nomenclature provided for in Council Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 and entries of waste listed in Annexes III, IV and V to Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on shipments of waste.
- Setting up of an EU Platform for food losses and food waste.
- Implementing Regulation on the implementation of electronic data exchange on waste shipments (2016/ENV/051).
- Report on the implementation of the Extractive Waste Directive (2016/ENV/009).

2017
- Adoption of the Communication on the role of waste to energy in the circular economy[97].
- Update of the Annex III to Directive 2008/98/EC on the hazardous waste property 'ecotoxic' by Council Regulation (EU) 2017/997 to strengthen the alignment of waste classification with the new legislation on chemicals.
- Adoption of Directive 2017/2102 to update the RoHS Directive 2011/65/EU containing further measures facilitating second-hand market operations as well as reuse and repair, thus avoiding an additional generation of hazardous waste and leading to savings of energy and raw materials.
- Adoption of the 8th amendment of Annex II to the ELV Directive further limiting certain exemptions to the substance restrictions under the Directive (EU) 2017/2096.
- Adoption of a 'Construction and Demolition Waste Management Protocol', aimed at providing guidance to public authorities, practitioners and quality certification bodies on how to manage construction and demolition waste.
- Commission implementing Regulation 2017/699 establishing a common methodology for the calculation of the weight of electrical and electronic equipment placed on the national market in each Member State and a common methodology for the calculation of the quantity of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) generated by weight in each Member State. The WEEE generated calculation tools which were developed for each Member State, form an integral part of the methodology.
- The report on the review of the scope of Directive 2012/19/EU on WEEE and on the re-examination of the deadlines for reaching the collection targets and on the possibility of setting individual collection targets for one or more categories of electrical and electronic equipment in Annex III to the Directive.
- The report on the re-examination of the WEEE recovery targets, on the possible setting of separate targets for WEEE to be prepared for re-use and on the re-examination of the method for the calculation of the recovery targets set out in Article 11(6) of Directive 2012/19/EU on WEEE.

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[97] COM (2017) 34

<u>2018</u>
- Adoption of the communication on the implementation of the circular economy package: options to address the interface between chemical, product and waste legislation[98].
- Adoption of revisions of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste, Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste, and Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste.
- Adoption of the guidance on the classification of waste[99].
- Adoption of the 'Report on implementation of waste legislation, including the Early Warning report' discussing the state of implementation of some EU waste directives and setting out a shortlist of Member States at risk of not meeting the 2020 recycling target for municipal waste. Follow-up actions to the 'Early Warning Report'.
- Adoption of the European strategy for plastics in a circular economy[100].
- Follow-up of the compliance promotion exercise for implementing the Directive 2012/19/EU on WEEE. The launch of a study of which main objective was to assess the possibility of adopting an implementing act laying down minimum quality standards for WEEE treatment.
- Adoption of a Commission report on implementing Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 on shipments of waste.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 3: TO SAFEGUARD THE UNION'S CITIZENS FROM ENVIRONMENT-RELATED PRESSURES AND RISKS TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Air quality

<u>2014</u>
- The Clean Air Package, adopted in December 2013, was designed to further reduce emissions to air by 2030, through the proposals for new national targets for reducing emissions revising the previous National Emission Ceilings Directive) and emission reductions from medium combustion plants (MCP Directive). The package also identified emissions from light vehicles (passenger cars and light commercial vehicles) as an area where special attention was needed.
- Two new conclusions on BATs under the Industrial Emissions Directive, for the refining of mineral oil and gas and for producing pulp, paper and board. Work to evaluate and refit the regulation dealing with the register of emissions from industrial facilities (the E-PRTR Regulation) also started.

<u>2015</u>
- Adoption of Commission Directive (EU) 2015/1480 amending several Annexes to Directives 2004/107/EC and 2008/50/EC laying down the rules concerning reference methods, data validation and location of sampling points for the assessment of ambient air quality.

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[98] COM(2018) 32
[99] Commission notice C/2018/1447.
[100] COM(2018) 28

- Continued work on implementing the air quality legislation (this year all derogations/ time extensions allowed under the legislation expired); also first round of PM10 cases (BG and PL) referred to the European Court of Justice.
- Adoption of the Directive on medium combustion plants, which will contribute up to 20% of the proposed 2030 air pollution reduction goals.
- Publication of the BAT conclusions for the production of wood-based panels.
- Adoption of eco-design requirements for boilers and space heaters.
- Adoption of 1st and 2nd regulatory acts on real-driving emission (RDE) tests, a new test to measure cars' emissions before they are placed on the market.

2016
- Adoption of the Directive on reduction of national emissions of certain air pollutants, setting national emission reduction objectives for key pollutants (SO_2, NO_x, NMVOC, NH_3 and $PM_{2.5}$).
- Publication of the BAT conclusions for common waste water and waste gas treatment/ management systems in the chemicals sector
- Publication of the BAT conclusions for non-ferrous metals industries
- Commission proposal on a new type-approval framework for motor vehicles, to strengthen market surveillance tools.
- Adoption of the 3rd regulatory act on RDE testing

2017
- Launch of Clean Air Dialogues (CADs) with Member States, focused on better understanding the models of air policy implementation in the Member States, exchanging of good practices, promoting synergies between different policy areas with an impact on air quality, and raising awareness on funding streams available through EU funds.
- Launch of the Clean Air Forum to broadly engage with stakeholders; the inaugural Clean Air Forum on 16 and 17 November 2017 in Paris focused on three areas: air quality in cities; agriculture and air quality; and clean air business opportunities.
- Launch of the Air Quality Index, together with the European Environment Agency.
- Initiation of a Fitness Check of the Ambient Air Quality Directives (i.e. Directives 2004/107/EC and 2008/50/EC), as per the agreed roadmap. This fitness check will conclude in 2019.
- Publication of the conclusions for BAT for intensive rearing of poultry or pigs, BAT conclusions for large combustion plants, BAT conclusions for the production of large volume organic chemicals.
- Establishment (pilot scale) of an Observatory on industrial emissions innovation.

2018
- Commission Communication 'A Europe that protects: Clean air for all'[101] outlining main policy initiatives under the current Commission in support of clean air and available funding to Member States to help them implement clean air policies.
- Publication of 'The First Clean Air Outlook'[102], a report that updates the impact assessment analysis to track progress towards the objectives of the Directive on the reduction of emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants.

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[101] COM(2018) 330
[102] COM(2018) 446.

- Adoption of the 4th regulatory act on RDE testing, ensuring transparent and independent control of emissions of vehicles during their lifetime.
- Publication of the BAT conclusions for waste treatment.
- Evaluation of the Industrial Emissions Directive (ongoing), under the Better Regulation agenda.

Noise

2015
- Annex II of the Environmental Noise Directive on common methods was adopted, allowing a single EU picture to be portrayed and to enable comparisons between different situations.

2016
- REFIT evaluation of the Environmental Noise Directive[103]

2017
- Implementation Report[104] was adopted showing the implementation difficulties and setting an action plan for the future

2018
- Annex III on health assessment methods is being drafted following the WHO (World Health Organisation) work on noise guidelines

Drinking and bathing waters

2014
- The triannual implementation synthesis report[105] was published, including information provided voluntary on small supplies. In addition fact sheets for small supplies were published for all Member States.
- A Guidance document 'Framework for Action for the management of small drinking water supplies' was published.
- Commission response to the first ever successful European Citizens Initiative 'Right2Water' with 1.8 million signatures.

2015
- Regarding Commission Directive (EU) 2015/1787, the monitoring Annexes to the Directive were amended enabling Member states to apply a risk based approach.

2016
- The Commission completed REFIT evaluation[106] of the EU Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC

2018

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[103] SWD(2016) 454
[104] COM(2017) 151
[105] COM(2014) 363
[106] SWD(2016) 428

- A Commission proposal for a revised Drinking Water Directive including an accompanying Impact Assessment[107].

Chemicals

<u>2015</u>

- The Commission together with EU agencies made the Information Platform for Chemical Monitoring (IPCHEM) public.
- The EU nominated 2 substances under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants for consideration (2013, 2015).

<u>2016</u>

- The Commission published a number of review reports focusing on existing methodologies and knowledge regarding the assessment of combination effects of chemicals.
- The Endocrine Active Substances Information System (EASIS) was established and made publically available.
- The Commission provided the Report on the sustainable use of biocides under Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 concerning the making available on the market and use of biocidal products[108]

<u>2017</u>

- Criteria for identifying endocrine disruptors (EDs) under the Biocidal Product Regulation adopted.
- Several Commission studies identifying gaps in current test guidelines for EDs, initiating work on new tests and test guidelines were published.
- Guidelines for risk assessment of nanomaterials updated by EHCA in 2017.
- The Commission published the Study for the strategy for a non-toxic environment of the 7th Environment Action Programme and the 'Study on the cumulative health and environmental benefits of chemical legislation'.
- Several studies preparing for the Fitness Check of chemicals legislation, excluding REACH, were published.
- A Commission report on progress in implementing Directive 2009/128/EC on the sustainable use of pesticides was published.
- The EU ratified the 'Minamata Convention' on mercury.

<u>2018</u>

- Proposal for a Recast of Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulation 850/2004 adopted in March 2018.
- Communication on a comprehensive European Union framework on endocrine disruptors adopted in November 2018.
- Criteria for identifying EDs under the Plant Protection Products Regulation adopted.

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[107] COM(2017) 753
[108] COM(2016) 151

- The final round of REACH registrations was finalised in May. A total, 21,551 unique chemicals placed on the EU and EES market in quantities over 1 tonne per producer/importer and per year have been registered.
- By June, a total of 174 substances had been identified as substances of very high concern (SVHC) and listed on the REACH Candidate List, 30 of these after 2013.
- Some 35 substances or groups of substances had been restricted under REACH by late 2018. Around 25 individual or groups of SVHCs had been authorised for use.
- A guidance document for implementing the criteria identifying EDs under the Biocidal Products and Plant Protection Products Regulations was published.
- The Commission adopted a Communication on an integrated framework for EDs.
- The Commission adopted a restriction of the use of 32 CMR substances in textiles through REACH Article 68(2) (the 'fast-track' for CMRs in consumer products).
- Adoption of the new provision that ECHA must compile data on the content of SVHCs in articles and make this information available in a database by 2020 to waste treatment operators and consumers on request.
- A communication and a staff working document assessing the interface between chemicals, products and waste legislations, identifying challenges and options to address them[109]
- A communication and SWD on the REACH Refit evaluation[110]
- The EU submitted eight notifications of final regulatory action under the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent, between 2013 and 2018 and submitted more than 33,000 export notifications to third countries between 2013 and 2018.

Climate change adaptation

2014
- Launch of the Mayors Adapt initiative to encourage local action on climate adaptation

2015
- Mayors Adapt initiative merged with the Covenant of Mayors initiative.

2016
- Launch of the Urban Agenda for the EU by means of the Pact of Amsterdam. This agenda is a new multi-level working method promoting cooperation between Member States, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders in order to simulate growth, liveability and innovation European and to identify and successfully tackle social challenges.
- Covenant of Mayors merges with the Compact of Mayors to form the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy.

2017
- Strengthening the EU's ability to prevent, prepare for and respond to natural disasters through the integration of climate change consideration into the European Civil

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[109] COM(2018) 32; SWD(2018) 20
[110] COM(2018) 116; SWD(2018) 58

Protection mechanism and the 2017 Commission proposal for the creation of the 'rescEU' system.

2018
- Adoption of 10 national adaptation strategies by Member States, bringing up the total number to 25 Member States as of October 2018.
- Report on the implementation and evaluation of the EU adaptation strategy.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES 4: BETTER IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION

Compliance assurance

2015-2016
- Continuous cooperation with networks of practitioners (in particular IMPEL – European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of the Environmental Law; BRIG – Better regulation Group of IMPEL; EUFJE – European Federation of Environmental Law Judges; ENPE – European network of Prosecutors). ENV also co-operated with Make it Work, a grouping of Member States led by the Netherlands, the UK and Germany, which showed a particular interest in environmental compliance assurance.

2017
- Development started on an assessment framework to improve the evidence base on compliance assurance approaches in the Member States in the wider context of environmental governance to prepare for the second round of the Environmental Implementation Review (EIR).

2018
- Adoption of Commission Communication on environmental compliance assurance endorsing nine actions.

Supporting Member States in implementation

2016
- Communication on delivering the benefits of EU environmental policies through a regular EIR adopted in May 2016.

2017
- The Commission adopted a new EIR) process with 28 country specific reports with the next set of reports due in spring 2019.

Complaints handling

2018
- The 9-point environmental compliance and governance action plan, adopted by the Commission on 18 January 2018, has 2 points (actions) relevant to this 7th EAP a:

- first, it aims to deliver documentation to Member States on complaint-handling;
- second, it aims to develop the evidence-base on complaint-handling practices in Member States as part of a wider assessment framework on governance.

Access to justice

2017
- Adoption of Commission Notice on access to justice in environmental matters[111].

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 5: BETTER INFORMATION BY IMPROVING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

Environmental knowledge

2014 - present
- Progress made on further development of the biodiversity knowledge base: the Initial Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) and the strengthening of the EU Biodiversity Information System for Europe.
- In total around 120 research projects, reports and articles were identified on climate change adaptation under FP7 and H2020 as well as originating from JRC, EEA, service contracts of the Commission and other EU sources, involving a total budget of EUR 285 million. The most frequently addressed topics were water, nature, and agriculture; four LIFE integrated projects and over 90 LIFE traditional projects have been launched to improve the climate knowledge base.
- EUR 1 868 million as EU funding through the research and innovation programme Horizon 2020 for the Societal Challenge 'Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials'. The activities include fighting and adapting to climate change, protecting the environment, sustainably managing natural resources, such as water, biodiversity and ecosystems; ensuring the sustainable supply of non-energy and non-agricultural raw materials enabling the transition towards a green economy and society through eco-innovation; and developing comprehensive and sustained global environmental observation and information systems.

2015
- Publication of 'The European Environment State and Outlook Report' 2015 by the European Environment Agency.
- Creation of the Environment Knowledge Community (EKC) between DGs (DG Environment, DG Climate Action, DG Research, Science and Innovation, DG Eurostat, DG Joint Research Centre) and the European Environment Agency to improve the co-generation and sharing of environmental knowledge for EU policies. This led to EKC knowledge Innovation projects on planetary boundaries, and the creation of INCA (Integrated system for Natural Capital and ecosystem services Accounting), Citizens and Science and European (Environmental) Data Centres.

2016

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[111] OJC 275, 18 August 2017, p.1.

- Contribution to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) thematic and regional assessments (IPBES 4 2016 thematic assessment on pollination pollinators and food security; methodological assessment on scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem services).

2017
- Science-policy symposium on the environmental and climate aspects of the next EU research and innovation programme.

2018
- Preliminary projections of economic impacts of climate change in sectors of the EU based on bottom-up analysis (PESETA III) developed by the JRC and published in 2017-2018.
- IPBES 6 2018 four regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services (Africa, Americas, Asia & Pacific, Europe and Central Asian regions) and thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration.

2019
- The European Environment State and Outlook Report 2020 by the European Environment Agency.
- Contribution to the first IPBES global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which is foreseen to be adopted in 2019.

Emerging environmental risks

2014
- Report on Risk Perception: A Science for Environment Policies Future Brief to review scientific literature on risk communication and the public perception of risk.

2015
- Survey on the public perception of environmental risks.
- Report on integrated environmental assessment: A Science for Environment Policies Thematic Issue explores the scientific literature on environmental risk assessment, including challenges and opportunities for better integration across sectors and impacts.

2016
- Report on the identification of emerging risks: review of scientific literature was carried out to screen all main approaches for identifying emerging environmental risks, Identifying emerging risks for environmental policy, science for environment policy.

2017
- Agreed methodology for an EU system for identifying emerging environmental issues from new technology developments (FORENV).
- Web monitoring of environmental risks: based on a text mining tool developed by the JRC for media monitoring (EMM), a specific version for monitoring environmental risks through web sources has been developed.
- Report on the insurance of weather and climate-related disaster risk. Providing an inventory and analysis of mechanisms to support damage prevention in the EU.

<u>2018</u>
- Annual running of the FORENV system and annual identification of 10 emerging environmental issues from new technology developments.

Streamline environment data and information

<u>2014</u>
- Monitoring mechanism – Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 – Delegated Regulation (C (2014) 1539) and implementing Regulation (EU) No 749/2014.

<u>2016</u>
- Commission staff working document '"Towards a Fitness Check of EU environmental monitoring and reporting: to ensure effective monitoring, more transparency and focused reporting of EU environment policy'[112]
- Proposal for the repeal of the Standardised reporting Directive[113].
- Implementation Report on the INSPIRE Directive and related REFIT evaluation[114] and staff working document[115].
- Proposal for a Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union[116].

<u>2017</u>
- Commission Report 'Actions to Streamline Environmental Reporting'[117] including the results of the Fitness Check[118].

<u>2018</u>
- Repeal of Standardised Reporting Directive adopted by Council and European Parliament
- Rolling work programme 2018-2020 for environmental reporting streamlining published
- Commission proposal on the Environmental Reporting Alignment Regulation[119]

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 6: MORE AND WISER INVESTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE POLICY

Adequate finance to support environment and climate objectives

<u>2014-2020</u>
- The 2013 CAP Reform made the following funding for environmental action available under the two pillars of the CAP:

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[112] SWD(2016) 188
[113] COM(2016) 789
[114] COM(2016) 478
[115] SWD(2016) 273
[116] COM(2016) 759
[117] COM2017) 312
[118] SWD(2017) 230
[119] COM(2018) 381

- o At least 30% of direct payments were earmarked for agricultural practices that benefit the climate and the environment. This represents approximately EUR 93 billion.
- o Member States are required to spend a minimum of 30 % of the total contribution of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) to each rural development programme on climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as on environmental issues. Such spending is carried out through agri-environment-climate and organic farming payments, payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints, payments for forest climate and environment interventions, payments for Natura 2000 areas and climate and environment-related investment support. This represents approximately EUR 30 billion.
- o A maximum of 75 % of EAFRD contributions is directed towards operations supporting the objectives of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2014-today

- Overall the 118 rural development plans have allocated approximately 44 % of the EARDF to priority 4 of EU's common priorities for rural development (EUR 44 billion) (restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry) and 7.5 % to priority 5 (promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient) (EUR 7.5 billion).

2015

- As a part of the approach to integrate/mainstream climate action across all EU policies and programmes, the Commission proposed and the Council and European Parliament endorsed the objective of allocating at least 20% of the 2014-2020 multi-annual financial framework (MFF) to climate related objectives.

2017

- Mid-term evaluation of the LIFE programme

2018

- The 2017 MFF mid-term review took stock of progress towards the 20 % climate mainstreaming target and the EU budget's contribution to biodiversity. Building on its success, the Commission proposed a new target of 25% contribution to climate objectives for the next MFF 2021-2027, and identified specific expected climate contributions for the main programmes concerned.
- To stimulate integration of climate and environment considerations in the financial markets, the EU adopted the EU sustainable finance action plan, and followed this up with a legislative package.
- The Commission published the legislative proposals for the next CAP (2020-2027). The proposals aim to introduce a new delivery model, based on higher subsidiarity. They also aim to foster a higher degree of ambition for the environment and climate.
- The Commission adopted the LIFE multiannual work programme for 2018-2020 in Feb 2018.
- Communication on the Investment Plan for Europe: stock-taking and next steps.

Addressing environmental externalities

2015
- In 2015, a new financing instrument - the Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF) – was launched to support projects that help to preserve natural capital, including adaptation to climate change.

2016
- The Winter Energy Union Package stepped up the EU's action in removing fossil fuels subsidies and internalising environmental costs in line with the 7th EAP.
- Report on phase 1 of the knowledge innovation project on an integrated system of natural capital and ecosystem services accounting in the EU (KIP-INCA Phase 1 report)
- The REFIT evaluation of the Environmental Liability Directive was adopted[120].

2017
- A pilot project 'Capacity building, programmatic development and communication in the field of environmental taxation and budgetary reform' investigated the use of economic instruments and led to exchanges of experience, knowledge and best practice.

2019
- Finalisation of the ongoing evaluation of the Energy Taxation Directive (ETD), 2003/96/EC. The evaluation is examining, among other things, the impact of the current minimum levels of taxation laid down in the ETD for the different energy products on consumption behaviour (and potentially on the quality of the environment).

Beyond GDP

2014-2016
- Sustainable development indicators to monitor progress on the revised sustainable development strategy were published by Eurostat and communicated in biannual reports.
- Eurostat updates the Resource Efficiency Scoreboard, with a series of reports published by the European Commission in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

2014
- The Council and European Parliament adopted the Regulation on Environmental Economic accounts[121] adding three additional modules on the environmental goods and service sector, environmental protection expenditure and energy flow accounts, thus amending the 2011 Regulation on environmental economic accounts.
- The European Statistical System Committee adopted the European strategy for environmental accounts (ESEA 2014), defining the development of European environmental accounts during 2014-2018.

2015 - present

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[120] SWD(2016) 121
[121] OJ L 158, 27.5.2014, p. 113–124.

- Economic, social and environmental indicators are used in the context of the European Semester (country reports and thematic factsheets).

2017
- Eurostat published the EU SDG indicators used to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals of the global 2030 agenda for sustainable development, and in November the first report on the progress made towards achieving the SDGs was published; the economic, social, environmental and governance indicators were included, and were partially in line with the global SDG indicators adopted by the UN.

2018
- The Commission adopted the monitoring framework on the circular economy, in order to measure progress towards the circular economy in the EU and Member States. The framework included 10 indicators cover economic, social and environmental aspects of circular economy.
- The list of 100 EU indicators for monitoring progress towards the SDGs was revised and published in March, and Eurostat published a second report on monitoring EU progress towards the SDGs.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 7: FULL INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS INTO OTHER POLICIES

Improving integration and coherence

2014 - ongoing
- The Commission adopted around 100 ex-post evaluations a year and around 70 ex-ante impact assessments a year. Each is scrutinised by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board to ensure they include a proportionate assessment of economic, social and environmental impacts.

2014
- The newly amended Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2014/52/EU) entered into force in 2014 to simplify the rules for assessing the potential effects of projects on the environment and improve the level of environmental protection.

2018
- On 1 June 2018, the Commission published the legislative proposals for the next CAP (2020-2027). These proposals aim to introduce a new delivery model, based on higher subsidiarity. They also aim to foster a higher degree of ambition for the environment and climate.

European Semester

- In 2013, the 'Greening the European Semester' expert group was established and since 2017 it has been discussing the Environmental implementation Review (EIR) to promote synergy between the Semester and EIR.

- Ongoing environmental references in the Semester country reports and Country specific recommendations

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 8: TO MAKE THE EU'S CITIES MORE SUSTAINABLE

Sustainable cities

2014

- The Covenant of Mayors (launched in 2008 in Europe with the ambition to gather local governments voluntarily committed to achieving and exceeding the EU climate and energy targets) has grown steadily, with the Commission launching Mayors Adapt (the Covenant of Mayors Initiative on Adaptation to Climate Change)[122] in 2014.

2015

- The Commission launched the new Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, integrating both the Covenant of Mayors and the Mayors Adapt initiatives. The new Covenant therefore covers sustainable energy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as access to energy.

2016

- The EU Urban Agenda, also known as the Pact of Amsterdam, was launched establishing a new platform of policy analysis by cities, Member States and the Commission, covering environmental issues such as air, land use and the circular economy.
- Development of a green city tool that will help cities to assess, benchmark, and improve their environmental performance over time.

2017

- The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and the Compact of Mayors merged to create the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Currently more than 7 000 EU local authorities from the 28 Member States, representing almost 200 million inhabitants, have signed up to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. They have committed to developing, implementing and reporting on sustainable energy and climate change mitigation and/or adaptation action plans.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 9: TO HELP THE UNION ADDRESS INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHALLENGES MORE EFFECTIVELY

Implementation of Rio+20 outcomes

2014

- Commission Communication 'A decent Life for all: from vision to collective action'[123].

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[122] See: http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/about/covenant-initiative/origins-and-development.html
[123] COM(2014) 335

- Council Conclusions 'A transformative post-2015 agenda'.

2015
- Commission Communication 'A Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015'[124].
- Council Conclusions 'A New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015'.
- The two Communications mentioned above and the related Council Conclusions set out clearly the EU's vision and priorities for the path towards an agreement on a post-2015 framework for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. The EU's views on the main inputs (goals, targets and means of implementation) for the framework were agreed upon.
- Throughout 2014 and the first part of 2015, the EU participated in the negotiations for the adoption of the SDGs as part of the UN's post-2015 agenda, first in the Open Working Group, then in intergovernmental negotiations.
- In September 2015, EU Heads of State and Government, together with their counterparts from all 193 UN member countries, unanimously adopted Agenda 2030 with 17 SDGs to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030.

2016
- Commission Communication 'Next steps for sustainable European future. European action for sustainability'[125]
- Publication of the EU action plan against wildlife trafficking[126]. By reducing the volume of illegal wildlife from outside of Europe that is either consumed, or passes through Europe, the action plan will contribute to strengthening governance, rule of law, sustainable livelihoods, and security in the source countries.
- Publication of 'Larger than Elephants. Inputs for an EU strategic approach to wildlife conservation in Africa'[127]. This document provides the strategic framework to guide EU biodiversity investments in Africa. It promotes a universal landscape approach to biodiversity integrating the needs of protected areas, local communities and private sector, and is fully aligned with the 5 pillars of the European Consensus on Development (people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership)

2017
- Council Conclusions 'A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'
- 'European Consensus on Development: Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future'
- These documents in 2016 and 2017 set out the EU internal and external implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2018

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[124] COM(2015) 44

[125] COM(2016) 739

[126] COM(2016) 87

[127] See: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/larger-elephants-inputs-eu-strategic-approach-wildlife-conservation-africa-regional-analysis_en

- Publication of 'Larger than Tigers. Inputs for a strategic approach to biodiversity conservation in Asia' [128] which sets the strategic framework to guide EU biodiversity investments in 25 Asian countries. As with the Africa strategic document it is fully aligned with the 5 pillars of the European Consensus on Development.
- Additionally, a number of policy and legal initiatives and actions referred to elsewhere in the 7th EAP evaluation implement the Rio+20 and 2030 Agenda commitments.

  - 2019 Reflection Paper 'Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030, on the follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change'.

Cooperation with third countries

2014
- The screening of the EU environment rules and laws took place with Serbia.
- Montenegro continued to work on the comprehensive national strategy and action plan, which was to demonstrate how it is going to align with EU law.
- Albania was granted candidate status in June 2014 in recognition of its reform efforts.
- The negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo were finalised.
- 2014 marked the entry into force of the Association Agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, which contain very ambitious environmental chapters requiring approximation with a significant portion of the EU environmental rules and laws.
- The EU also contributed to tackling illegal logging and its associated global trade by implementing the EU Timber Regulation, and based on a Commission proposal the Council decided on the conclusion of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Indonesia on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products to the European Union.

2015
- After a three-year hiatus, bilateral discussions on the environment and climate change were resumed with Turkey. The areas of cross-cutting legislation, water, air quality, nature protection and climate action still had to be addressed.
- All enlargement countries continued working on approximation of environment and climate change legislation in the framework of the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network.
- Negotiations, conclusion and implementation of Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreements;
- Free trade agreement negotiations with Vietnam concluded in December 2015, with substantive provisions on environment.
- Montenegro adopted climate strategy, Kosovo endorsed Low Emissions and Adaptation to climate change Strategy, Serbia prepared legislation on ETS and on monitoring, reporting and verification on shimming emissions, Kosovo on MMR.

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[128] See: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/larger-tigers-inputs-strategic-approach-biodiversity-conservation-asia-regional-reports_en

- For Eastern Partnership countries in Association Agreements with EU (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine): launch of activities for implementing climate-related acquis identified in those agreements – early stage. Domestic climate strategies remain under development.
- For Southern Periphery countries, the outline of national climate strategies was presented in all submitted intended nationally determined contributions. These strategies remain under development.

<u>2016</u>
- Serbia and Montenegro made progress in further aligning policies and legislation with the environment acquis. Both countries have submitted strategies for implementation of EU acquis which the Commission has recommended to the Council as a sufficient basis for the opening of the formal enlargement negotiations of Chapter 27 (Environment).
- Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with Bosnia-Herzegovina came into force in June 2016, SAA with Kosovo signed.
- Albania ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change and drafted strategy on climate change and the Law on Climate Change.
- For Turkey, cross-cutting legislation, water, air quality and nature protection as well as climate action areas still had to be addressed.
- The Association Agreement for Ukraine had still not been ratified but was being provisionally applied;
- Moldova and Georgia were progressing in implementing their Association Agreements.
- New agreements are currently being negotiated with Armenia and with Azerbaijan.
- The EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreements (CETA) was signed along with the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) that upgrades the current cooperation framework with Canada.
- Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) are part of the Association Agreements for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. DCFTAs are currently being negotiated with Morocco and Tunisia;
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on a Strategic Energy Partnership between Ukraine and the EU on water cooperation was adopted, which provides for collaboration in the area of the decarbonisation of the economy.
- An MOU between India and the EU on water cooperation was adopted.
- The EU strategy for the Arctic was issued with prominent emphasis on environmental issues.
- The Climate Change Working Group of the US-EU Energy Council was established in May 2016 and convened in September 2016.
- Recommendation of the Energy Community Ministerial Council on preparing for the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions (applicable to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[129], Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine).
- Ministerial meeting of the Eastern Partnership on environment and climate took place in October 2016

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[129] Now Republic of North Macedonia

2017-2018
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have ratified the Paris Agreement. Serbia has drafted the Climate Law with ETS and MMR provisions.
- Alignment with climate policies and legislation continues for Western Balkan countries and Turkey within the EU-funded Regional Implementation of Paris Agreement Project.
- MoUs signed with China on water co-operation and circular economy.
- The EU – Indonesia Working Group on Environment and Climate Change was established and two meetings took place, in Indonesia and in Brussels.
- First high-level dialogue held with South Africa following the revitalisation of the Terms of Reference.
- ASEAN-EU Plan of Action 2018-2022 was adopted.
- Circular economy missions held in South Africa, Columbia, India, Japan and Indonesia.
- First Trade and Sustainable Development Committee held under the CETA.
- First EU- Kazakhstan Sub-committee on Energy, Transport, Environment and Climate change under the new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement held in Astana, back-to-back with a technical assistance and information exchange (TAIEX) workshop on climate cooperation.
- New agreement was being negotiated with Kyrgyzstan.
- For Turkey, cross-cutting legislation, water, air quality and nature protection areas, as well as climate action areas, still has to be addressed.
- Recommendation of the Energy Community Ministerial Council on the preparation of integrated national energy and climate plans (applicable to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine).
- MOU between Iran and the European Union on cooperation on climate change.
- Ministerial meeting for of the Eastern Partnership on environment and climate took place in October 2018.
- Continued support was offered to tackling illegal logging and associated trade in Africa through FLEGT, and Voluntary Partnership Agreements were further concluded between the European Union, Guyana and Honduras on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products to the European Union.

Updates on cooperation in the international carbon markets cooperation:
- The linking agreement between the EU ETS and the Swiss ETS has been signed and is in the process of being ratified both sides.
- The EU works closely with jurisdictions across the world that are considering, operating and implementing carbon market mechanisms, in particular emissions trading systems.
- The EU is the largest contributor (USD20 million) to the Partnership for Market Readiness, controlled by the World Bank, which supports 19 countries in implementing market instruments and readiness projects around the world.
- The EU has active ongoing bilateral cooperation and exchange with both China and South Korea on implementing of ETS (including the provision of significant technical assistance and support).

- The EU supports the International Climate Action Partnership (ICAP) that encompasses all jurisdictions actively implementing the ETS and fosters exchange and dissemination of technical expertise on ETS amongst practitioners
- The EU is hosting the 'Florence Process on ETS' comprising regular informal meetings of senior administrators from established major emissions trading jurisdictions.

Reducing the external impact of the EU's consumption

2018
- The study on the feasibility of options steps up EU action against deforestation
- Study published on the environmental impact of palm oil consumption and on existing sustainability standards

2019
- Communication on 'Stepping-up EU action against tropical deforestation and forest degradation' will be adopted.

Engagement in environmental and climate change negotiations and ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

2014
Environment negotiations and ratifications of MEAs:
- A clear path towards an agreement on a post 2015 framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development was created and the main inputs (goals, targets and means of implementation) for the framework were agreed. The EU set out its views on the priority themes and prepared views on the means of implementation.
- The EU ratified the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation under the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2014.
- The European Commission and UNEP renewed their MOU to step up their collaboration in common areas of interest, including through dialogues on related policy matters.
- Establishment of a new Cooperation Agreement with UNEP under the EU thematic programme for global public goods and challenges. The agreement received a total EU contribution of EUR 37 million over 2014-2017 to strengthen UNEP work in environmental advocacy and monitoring including more effective implementation of and synergies among MEAS involving chemicals, waste and biodiversity.

2015
Environment negotiations
- Contribution to the Post-2015 period: global partnership, means of implementation, monitoring, review and accountability communication – adoption of 2030 Agenda and SDGs.
- Effective functioning of the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing at the international level.
- Implementation and review of the FLEGT action plan
- Effective implementation of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations: updated implementing regulations and 'suspension' Regulation and guidance documents adopted.

- UNEA 2 in May 2016: the Commission strengthened its framework for policy dialogue with UNEP.
  - Coordination and representation of the EU positions at the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conferences of the Parties, at the Seventh session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury (INC 7) and the Fourth Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management under the UN's Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
- The Commission renewed its programmatic cooperation on improved environmental governance with UNEP and MEAs for 2014-2017;
- Preparations were made for the start of the special programme to support the institutional strengthening at national level for implementing the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata Conventions
- To further the implementation of the MoU signed in June 2014, the European Commission and UNEP agreed to an Annex that listed common policy areas (6) for consolidated or better dialogue and cooperation. They also agreed to establish regular dialogues in each of those policy areas.
- To advance the implementation of the MoU signed in June 2014, the European Commission and UNEP agreed to an Annex that lists common policy areas (6) for consolidated or strengthened dialogue and cooperation. They also agreed to establish regular dialogues in each of those policy areas.

Climate negotiations:
- The EU, leading the 'High-Ambition Coalition', was a major player in the successful negotiations for a new historic legally binding global climate agreement by 196 parties at the UN climate conference in Paris on 12 December 2015 (COP21) to keep global temperature increase well below 2 °C.

2016
Environment multilateral processes and ratification of MEAs:
- The European Commission adopted an EU action plan to tackle wildlife trafficking within the EU and to strengthen the EU's role in the global fight against these illegal activities.
- For the first time, the EU participated in a CITES COP as a party.
- Promotion of the environment in the G7/G20 including the G7 Environment Ministerial meeting: several workshops organised in the context of the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency. Adoption of the Toyama Framework on Materials Cycles by the G7 Environment Ministers.

Climate negotiations
- The signing in April 2016 of the Paris Agreement, the new legally binding global climate change agreement reached at COP 21 in December 2015 by 196 Parties (including the EU and its Member States). This was quickly ratified by the EU on 5 October 2016. This led to the entry into force of the Agreement on 4 November, just days ahead of the Marrakech climate conference.
- During the Marrakech climate conference, the EU expected tangible progress on key elements of the Paris package, including on access to finance for developing countries and on establishing and strengthening the skills and processes needed in developing countries to implement their domestic climate plans.

- On the margins of the Marrakech climate conference, there was a shift from intergovernmental negotiation to the showcasing of best practices and action. DG CLIMA was in the lead for more than 100 events being organised and Commission DGs collaborated successfully. Key outcomes included sustained momentum and global determination, as evidenced by the "Marrakech Action Proclamation", the strong evidence of solidarity and action (e.g. on climate finance, the adaptation fund and capacity building) as well as the steady progress on the Paris rulebook, which was due to be delivered by 2018.
- On 15 October 2016, the EU welcomed the agreement reached in Kigali, Rwanda, on a global phasing out of climate-warming hydrofluorocarbon gases (HFCs). The 197 Parties (196 countries and the EU) to the Montreal Protocol agreed to the amendment to bring HFCs within the scope of this international treaty that has been so successful in phasing out ozone depleting substances that were used in the same sectors.
- The EU proposed concrete ways on how to prepare for the implementation of the CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting Scheme for International Aviation) instrument decided at the level of ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

<u>2017</u>
- EU Ratification of the Minamata Convention, which entered into force on 16 August 2017
- The EU participated effectively in the 3rd UN Environment Assembly which adopted a set of ambitious decisions and pledges to beat pollution.
- The EU Global Public Goods and Challenges invested EUR 692 million for external action on environment protection[130] and for combatting climate change during 2014-2017 (and EUR 635 million to be invested in 2018-2020).
- The EU actively contributed to the adoption of a global action plan for restoration under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

<u>2018</u>
- The Commission adopted a recommendation to the Council to authorise the opening of negotiations for the Global Pact for Environment[131].
- The renewal of the Cooperation Agreement with UNEP under the EU thematic programme for Global Public Goods and Challenges is planned for 2018-2020 with an envisaged EU contribution of EUR 10 million to be increased in 2019 and 2020.
- In 2018, the EU participated for the first time as enhanced observer in the IPBES plenary where there were four regional IPBES assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services and one thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration in 2018.
- The EU participated in the first joint IPCC-IPBES Workshop on Biodiversity and Climate Change: Integrated Science for Coherent Policy, in Paris on 18 October 2018. In the Workshop it was recommended that an expert meeting be set up in 2019, to distil key messages from the three climate reports on 1.5 °C, on land and on oceans, as well as the IPBES global assessment and the land degradation report,

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[130] Including promoting circular/green economies, biodiversity, forests, water and ecosystems management, combatting desertification pollution, promoting environmental governance, and environmental mainstreaming.
[131] COM(2018) 138

relevant to both climate and biodiversity. These messages aim to support the outcomes in the 6th IPCC assessment report.

- The EU actively contributed to the adoption of four substantive guidance documents under the Convention on Biological Diversity on: (i) the integration of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures; (ii) avoidance of unintentional introduction of invasive alien species; (iii) the design and implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction; and (iv) an updated action plan 2018-2030 for the international initiative on conservation and sustainable use of pollinators.