



WECOOP NEWS BULLETIN

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1. INTRODUCTION

European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP)

The EU renewed the project “**European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP)**” in October 2019 to run for three years. The project will continue strengthening the policy dialogue on sustainable development between the CA countries partners, and to facilitate their cooperation with the EU on environment and climate change. Specifically, the project efforts will be focused on improving and rationalising policies and enhancing the capacities of national ministries and government agencies working in the relevant fields.

The WECOOP project aims to enhance environment, climate change and water policies in Central Asia through **approximation to EU standards** and to **promote green investments** in relevant sectors with the aim of contributing to measurable reductions in man-made pollution, including CO₂ emissions.

Priority areas for consultations and cooperation include **environmental governance, circular economy and sustainable consumption and production, climate change adaptation and mitigation and water resources management.**

This WECOOP News Bulletin provides brief information on the recent developments in EU policies and legislation, as well as on new relevant reports and studies published by the European Environment Agency or other specialized agencies.

Detailed information on the WECOOP project is available at the project website <https://wecoop.eu>.

2. EU POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

2.1. NEW EU POLICIES

EU BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR 2030

The European Commission has adopted the new EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and an associated Action Plan (annex) – a comprehensive, ambitious, long-term plan for protecting nature and reversing the degradation of ecosystems. It aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 with benefits for people, the climate and the planet. It is also the proposal for the EU contribution to the upcoming international negotiations on the global post-2020 biodiversity framework.

In the post-COVID context, the Biodiversity Strategy aims to build our societies' resilience to future threats such as climate change impacts, forest fires, food insecurity or disease outbreaks, including by protecting wildlife and fighting illegal wildlife trade. A core part of the European Green Deal, the Biodiversity Strategy will also support a green recovery following the pandemic.

The Strategy contains specific commitments and actions to be delivered by 2030, including:

- Establishing a larger EU-wide network of protected areas on land and at sea, building upon existing Natura 2000 areas, with strict protection for areas of very high biodiversity and climate value.
- An EU Nature Restoration Plan – a series of concrete commitments and actions to restore degraded ecosystems across the EU by 2030, and manage them sustainably, addressing the key drivers of biodiversity loss.
- A set of measures to enable the necessary transformative change: setting in motion a new, strengthened governance framework to ensure better implementation and track progress, improving knowledge, financing and investments and better respecting nature in public and business decision-making.
- Measures to tackle the global biodiversity challenge, demonstrating that the EU is ready to lead by example towards the successful adoption of an ambitious global biodiversity framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Document: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: **EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 Bringing nature back into our lives**; COM/2020/380 final

Link (English): <https://europa.eu/!vw76Rn>

NEW CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

The European Commission has adopted a new Circular Economy Action Plan – one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal, Europe's new agenda for sustainable growth.

The new Action Plan announces initiatives along the entire life cycle of products, targeting for example their design, promoting circular economy processes, fostering sustainable consumption, and aiming to ensure that the resources used are kept in the EU economy for as long as possible. It introduces legislative and non-legislative measures targeting areas where action at the EU level brings real added value.

The new Circular Economy Action presents measures to:

- Make sustainable products the norm in the EU;
- Empower consumers and public buyers;
- Focus on the sectors that use most resources and where the potential for circularity is high such as: electronics and ICT; batteries and vehicles; packaging; plastics; textiles; construction and buildings; food; water and nutrients;
- Ensure less waste;
- Make circularity work for people, regions and cities,
- Lead global efforts on circular economy.

Document: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: **A new Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner and more competitive Europe**; COM/2020/98 final
Link (English): <https://europa.eu/!Tg93Ug>

2.2. NEW EU LEGISLATION IN PROGRESS

EUROPEAN CLIMATE LAW

The legislative proposal was submitted to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions for further consideration under the ordinary legislative procedure.

The Commission's proposal for the first European Climate Law aims to write into law the goal set out in the European Green Deal – for Europe's economy and society to become climate-neutral by 2050. This means achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions for EU countries as a whole, mainly by cutting emissions, investing in green technologies and protecting the natural environment. The law aims to ensure that all EU policies contribute to this goal and that all sectors of the economy and society play their part.



Objectives:

- Set the long-term direction of travel for meeting the 2050 climate-neutrality objective through all policies, in a socially-fair and cost-efficient manner
- Create a system for monitoring progress and take further action if needed
- Provide predictability for investors and other economic actors
- Ensure that the transition to climate neutrality is irreversible

With the European Climate Law, the Commission proposes a legally binding target of **net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050**. The EU Institutions and Member States are bound to take the necessary measures at the EU and national level to meet the target, taking into account the importance of promoting fairness and solidarity among the Member States.

The Climate Law includes **measures to keep track of progress and adjust our actions accordingly**, based on existing systems such as the governance process for Member States' National Energy and Climate Plans, regular reports by the European Environment Agency, and the latest scientific evidence on climate change and its impacts. Progress will be reviewed every five years, in line with the global stocktake exercise under the Paris Agreement.

The Climate Law also addresses the **necessary steps to get to the 2050 target**:

- Based on a comprehensive impact assessment, the Commission will propose a **new EU target for 2030** greenhouse gas emissions reductions. This part of the Law will be amended once the impact assessment is completed.
- By June 2021, the Commission will review, and where necessary propose to revise, all relevant policy instruments to deliver the additional emissions reductions for 2030.
- The Commission proposes the adoption of a **2030-2050 EU-wide trajectory** for greenhouse gas emission reductions, to measure progress and give predictability to public authorities, businesses and citizens.
- By September 2023, and every five years thereafter, the Commission will assess the consistency of EU and national measures with the climate-neutrality objective and the 2030-2050 trajectory.
- The Commission will be empowered to issue Recommendations to Member States whose actions are inconsistent with the climate-neutrality objective, and Member States will be obliged to take due account of these Recommendations or to explain their reasoning if they fail to do so.
- Member States will also be required to develop and implement **adaptation strategies to strengthen resilience** and reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law)

COM/2020/80 final

Link (English): <https://europa.eu/!uX93tX>



2.3. NEW EU LEGISLATION IN FORCE

REGULATION (EU) 2020/741 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL OF 25 MAY 2020 ON MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR WATER REUSE

This Regulation lays down minimum requirements for water quality and monitoring and provisions on risk management, for the safe use of water in the context of integrated water management. The purpose of this Regulation is to guarantee that reclaimed water is safe for agricultural irrigation, thereby ensuring a high level of protection of the environment and of human and animal health, promoting the circular economy, supporting adaptation to climate change, and contributing to the objectives of Directive 2000/60/EC by addressing water scarcity and the resulting pressure on water resources, in a coordinated way throughout the Union, thus also contributing to the efficient functioning of the internal market. This Regulation applies whenever treated urban waste water is reused for agricultural irrigation. Minimum requirements on water quality are laid down (E. coli, BOD5, TSS and turbidity). Link (English): <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/741/oj>

2.4. NATIONAL PLANS OF THE EU MEMBER STATES

IN FOCUS: NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANS

For the period from 2021-2030, each EU country was required to draw up a 10-year integrated national energy & climate plan (NECP) outlining how it intends to meet the different targets for 2030, including energy efficiency.

Link (English): https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/focus-national-energy-and-climate-plans-2020-jun-16_en

NATIONAL AIR POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAMMES

The National Air Pollution Control Programme (NAPCP) (Article 6 of Directive (EU) 2016/2284 – ‘the NEC Directive’) is the main governance instrument by which EU Member States must ensure that the emission reduction commitments for 2020-2029 and 2030 onwards are met. The first NAPCPs were due by 1 April 2019.

Link (English): <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/reduction/NAPCP.htm>

3. REPORTS AND STUDIES

3.1. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on **the progress made on the implementation of Directive (EU) 2016/2284 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants**; COM (2020) 266 final

Link (English): https://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/pdf/reduction_napcp/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7.pdf

Commission staff working document: **Fitness check of the Ambient Air Quality Directives** (Directive 2004/107/EC relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air and Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe); SWD(2019) 427 final

Link (English): https://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/pdf/SWD_2019_427_F1_AAQ%20Fitness%20Check.pdf

3.2. EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EEA)

Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 – even more from less. An overview of the policies, approaches and targets of 32 European countries (EEA Report No 26/2019)

Link (English): <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/even-more-from-less>

Bio-waste in Europe — turning challenges into opportunities (EEA Report No 04/2020)

Link (English): <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/bio-waste-in-europe>

The sustainability transition in Europe in an age of demographic and technological change. An exploration of implications for fiscal and financial strategies (EEA Report No 23/2019)

Link (English): <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/sustainability-transition-in-europe>

Drivers of change of relevance for Europe's environment and sustainability (EEA Report No 25/2019)

Link (English): <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/drivers-of-change>

Assessing air quality through citizen science (EEA Report No 19/2019)

Link (English): <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/assessing-air-quality-through-citizen-science>

3.3. UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

Towards sustainable renewable energy investment and deployment: Trade-offs and opportunities with water resources and the environment (UNECE April 2020)

Link (English): <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=54348>

3.4. ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

What policies for greening the crisis response and economic recovery. Lessons learned from past green stimulus measures and implications for the Covid-19 crisis.

OECD Environment Working Paper No 164

Link (English): <https://doi.org/10.1787/c50f186f-en>

Addressing Industrial Air Pollution in Kazakhstan. Reforming Environmental Payments Policy Guidelines (OECD Green Growth Studies – July 2019)

Link (English): <https://doi.org/10.1787/0e04ea86-en>

Link (Russian): <https://doi.org/10.1787/4a86e63d-ru>

Sustainable Infrastructure for Low-Carbon Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus

Hotspot Analysis and Needs Assessment (Green Finance and Investment Series – December 2019)

Link (English): <https://doi.org/10.1787/d1aa6ae9-en>

Link (Russian): <https://www.oecd.org/publications/edba62eb-ru.htm>

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