General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020: 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'. 7th Environment Action Programme

2012/0337(COD) - 20/11/2013 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a new Union action programme on the environment until 2020.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 ‘Living well, within the limits of our planet’.

CONTENT: the seventh Environment Action Programme replaces the sixth programme, which expired in July 2012. The new programme reflects the EU's commitment to transforming itself into an inclusive green economy that secures growth and development, safeguards human health and well-being and provides decent jobs. It sets out **nine priority objectives for EU environment policy in the period up to 2020:**

- **To protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital**: e.g.: (i) ensure the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services are halted, and at least 15 % of degraded ecosystems have been restored; (ii) reduce the impact of pressures on transitional, coastal and fresh waters (including surface and ground waters) and sea waters; (iii) reduce air pollution and its impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity; (iv) sustainable management of forests and land.

- **To turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy:** e.g. (i) meet the Union’s 2020 climate and energy targets; (ii) reduce by 2050 GHG emissions by 80–95 % compared to 1990 levels; (iii) agreement of a climate and energy framework for 2030; (iv) ensure consumption patterns have reduced the overall environmental impact of production and consumption, in particular in the food, housing and mobility sectors; (v) safe waste management; (vi) reduce water stress.

- **To safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing**: e.g. (i) improve outdoor air quality in the Union; (ii) significantly decrease noise pollution; (iii) high standards for safe drinking and bathing water; (iv) actions to reach a non-toxic environment without harmful pesticides; (v) effectively address safety concerns on nanomaterials.

- **To maximise the benefits of the Union's environment legislation by improving implementation:** e.g. (i) public has access to clear information showing how Union environment law is being implemented; (ii) increase compliance with specific environment legislation.

- **To improve the knowledge and evidence base for environment policy**: e.g. (i) ensure policy-makers have a more informed basis for developing and implementing environment and climate policies; (ii) improve the understanding of emerging environmental and climate risks.

- **To secure investment for environment and climate policy and address environmental externalities:** e.g. achieve environment and climate policy objectives in a cost-effective way and are supported by adequate finance; (ii) increase public and private sector funding for environment and climate-related expenditure.

- **To improve environmental integration and policy coherence**: develop and implement sectoral policies at Union and Member State level in a way that supports relevant environment and climate-related targets and objectives.

- **To enhance the sustainability of the Union's cities**: e.g. (i) agree 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 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.

- **To increase the Union's effectiveness in addressing international environmental and climate challenges**: e.g. (i) ensure the outcomes of Rio + 20 are fully integrated into the Union's internal and external policies; (ii) see that the Union is providing effective support to national, regional and international efforts to address environmental and climate-related challenges; (iii) reduce the impact of consumption in the Union on the environment beyond the Union's borders.

The Commission shall ensure that the implementation of the relevant elements of the 7th EAP is **monitored** in the context of the regular monitoring process of the Europe 2020 Strategy. It shall also carry out an evaluation of the 7th EAP and submit a **report** based on this evaluation in due course before the end of the 7th EAP.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 17/01/2014.