

Union environment action programme (2021-2030)

2020/0300(COD) - 14/10/2020 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a general Union environmental action programme for the period up to 31 December 2030 (the 8th EAP).

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the report on the ‘European Environment - State and Outlook 2020’, presented by the European Environment Agency (EEA) on 4 December 2019, identified the unprecedented scale and urgency of the environmental, climate and sustainability challenges facing Europe today. These challenges require immediate and concerted action and urgent systemic solutions.

The European Commission has responded to these challenges by adopting the ‘[European Green Deal](#)’, which aims to make the EU the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. Following the debate on the communication ‘A clean planet for all’, in March 2020 the EU presented its long-term strategy under the Paris agreement on climate change, committing the EU to becoming a climate-neutral economy by 2050. The Commission has proposed enshrining this target in [EU climate law](#).

In response to the coronavirus crisis, the ‘Next Generation EU recovery plan’ proposed by the European Commission on 27 May 2020 and endorsed by the Extraordinary European Council of July 2020 underlines the importance of the European Green Deal.

As a follow-up to the Seventh Environment Action Programme (7th EAP) which shall expire on 31 December 2020, the Commission is presenting a proposal for an 8th EAP, with a long-term vision and priority environmental objectives to support the EU's common commitment to achieve a green recovery.

CONTENT: the proposal for a decision establishes a general action programme in the field of the environment for the period up to 31 December 2030 to accelerate the Union's transition towards a climate-neutral, clean, resource-efficient and circular economy in a fair and inclusive manner.

The 8th EAP shall support the environment and climate action objectives of the European Green Deal in line with the long-term objective to ‘live well, within the planetary boundaries’ by 2050, which is already established in the 7th EAP. It shall contribute to achieving the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Priority objectives

The proposed 8th EAP sets thematic priority objectives in the areas of climate neutrality, adaptation to climate change, protection and restoration of biodiversity, aiming at zero pollution and reducing the pressures of production and consumption on the environment. It also sets out the conditions for achieving the long-term objectives and priority thematic objectives for all actors involved.

Monitoring framework

One of the key actions of the 8th EAP, announced by the European Green Deal, is a new monitoring framework to measure the progress made by the EU and its Member States in implementing the programme's priority objectives.

The 8th EAP monitoring framework shall provide the environment and climate input to the EU's overall efforts to measure progress towards sustainability and shall inform policy makers and stakeholders if the Union and the Member States are on track to achieving a systemic transformation.

The process to develop an 8th EAP monitoring framework shall provide an opportunity to explore the potential of the ongoing workstream on the planetary boundaries (e.g. freshwater use, land use change, ocean acidification) and on the Union consumption footprint, including deforestation and forest degradation in third countries.

Key indicators

The 8th EAP monitoring framework should comprise a limited number of key indicators for high-level communication, which tell a coherent story about the state of the environment, the main pressures and the effectiveness of our response.

On the basis of a consultation process with the other EU institutions, Member States and stakeholders, the Commission intends to present a set of key indicators for the 8th EAP by the end of 2021.

Budgetary implications

This proposal has been developed in line with the Commission proposal for the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. It introduces the need for additional resources in the European Environment Agency (EEA) and in the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in supporting the new monitoring, measuring and reporting framework of this Programme.

The estimated impact on operational expenditure for the period 2021-2027 is estimated at EUR 23.379 million for the EEA and EUR 2.369 million for ECHA.

It is expected that Heading 3 of the MFF 'Natural Resources and Environment' shall maintain neutrality and shall not be impacted by this proposal. The resources needed for the EEA and ECHA shall be deducted from the LIFE budget according to a split of 2/3 of the costs for DG Environment and 1/3 of the costs of DG Climate Action for the EEA, while the resources needed for ECHA shall be fully covered by DG Environment.