

Union environment action programme (2021-2030)

2020/0300(COD) - 10/03/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 553 votes to 130, with 7 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amends the Commission's proposal as follows:

Overall objectives of the programme

The 8th EAP aims to: (i) accelerate the green transition to a climate-neutral, sustainable, non-toxic, resource-efficient, renewable energy-based, resilient and competitive circular economy in a just, equitable and inclusive way, and (ii) protect, restore and improve the state of the environment by, inter alia, halting and reversing biodiversity loss.

The 8th EAP forms the basis for achieving the **environmental and climate objectives** defined under the UN 2030 Agenda and should be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement, the Rio Conventions and other relevant international agreements. It supports and strengthens an integrated policy and implementation approach, building upon the European Green Deal. It will be based on the **precautionary principle**, the principles of preventive action and of rectification of pollution at source and the polluter pays principle.

Priority objectives

The 8th EAP have the long-term priority objective that by 2050 at the latest, people live well, within the planetary boundaries in a well-being economy where nothing is wasted, growth is regenerative, climate neutrality in the Union has been achieved and inequalities have been significantly reduced.

The 8th EAP has **six interlinked thematic priority objectives** for the period up to 31 December 2030:

(1) swift and predictable reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and, at the same time, enhancement of removals by natural sinks in the Union to attain the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target, in line with the Union's climate and environment objectives, whilst ensuring a just transition that leaves no one behind;

(2) continuous progress in enhancing and mainstreaming **adaptive capacity**, including on the basis of ecosystem approaches, strengthening resilience and adaptation and reducing the vulnerability of the environment, society and all sectors of the economy to climate change, while improving prevention of, and preparedness for, weather- and climate-related disasters;

(3) advancing towards a well-being economy that gives back to the planet more than it takes and accelerating the transition to a **non-toxic circular economy**, where growth is regenerative, resources are used efficiently and sustainably, and the waste hierarchy is applied;

(4) pursuing **zero pollution**, including in relation to harmful chemicals, in order to achieve a toxic free-environment, including for air, water and soil, as well as in relation to light and noise pollution, and

protecting the health and well-being of people, animals and ecosystems from environment-related risks and negative impacts;

(5) protecting, preserving and restoring marine and terrestrial **biodiversity** and the biodiversity of inland waters inside and outside protected areas by, *inter alia*, halting and reversing biodiversity loss and improving the state of ecosystems and their functions and the services they provide, and by improving the state of the environment, in particular air, water and soil, as well as by combating desertification and soil degradation;

(6) promoting **environmental aspects of sustainability** and significantly reducing key environmental and climate pressures related to the Union's production and consumption, in particular in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system.

Enabling conditions

To achieve the priority objectives, the Commission, Member States, regional and local authorities and stakeholders, as appropriate, will, *inter alia*:

- ensure effective, timely and comprehensive implementation of EU environment and climate **legislation** and strategies;

- strengthen the integrated approach to policy making and implementation, including by adopting a '**Think sustainability first**' approach and by integrating and implementing the 'do no harm' principle;

- ensure that measures taken to protect the environment and climate are carried out in a socially fair and inclusive way;

- strengthen environmentally **positive incentives** and phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, in particular fossil fuel subsidies, including (i) through a binding EU framework to monitor Member States' progress in **phasing out fossil fuel subsidies**; (ii) by setting a deadline for phasing out fossil fuel subsidies consistent with the ambition of limiting global warming to 1.5°C;

- mainstream **biodiversity** action in the Union's policies and contributing to the achievement of the overall ambition of providing 7.5 % of annual spending under the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 to biodiversity objectives in 2024 and 10 % of that annual spending in 2026 and in 2027;

- promote the sound management of chemicals at international level and replace substances of concern quickly;

- address land degradation and ensuring the protection and sustainable use of soil, including by way of a dedicated legislative proposal on soil health by 2023;

- recognise the interconnections between human health, animal health and the environment through integration of the **One Health** approach in policy making.

Monitoring framework and governance

The Commission will monitor, evaluate and report annually on the progress made by the Union and the Member States in achieving the objectives. Following a consultation process with all relevant stakeholders, the Commission will present a monitoring framework, based on a limited number of headline indicators, which will include systemic indicators such as the environmental-social and environmental-economic nexus. The assessment should be public, and the measures taken and to be taken should be debated annually in the European institutions.

In the light of the mid-term review of the progress made (by 31 March 2024), the Commission will, if appropriate, present a legislative proposal to add an annex to the 8th EAP for the period after 2025, containing a list of actions to achieve these objectives and a timetable for these respective actions.