

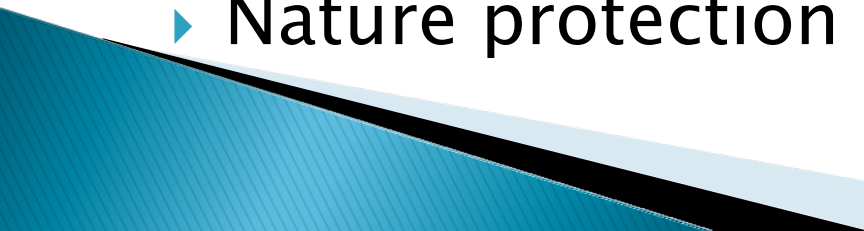
Environment Policy in Europe: New Directions & Challenges

Anne Burrill
EU Visiting Fellow, Jackson School
European Commission – Directorate General for Environment

Origins of EU Environment Policy

- ▶ First Environmental Action Program agreed in 1972 – inspired by:
 - Conference on the Environment in Stockholm
 - “Limits to Growth”
 - US Clean Air Act
- ▶ Aimed for:
 - ▶ the prevention, reduction and containment of environmental damage
 - ▶ the conservation of an ecological equilibrium
 - ▶ the rational use of natural resources
- ▶ Based on treaty provisions related to the common market.

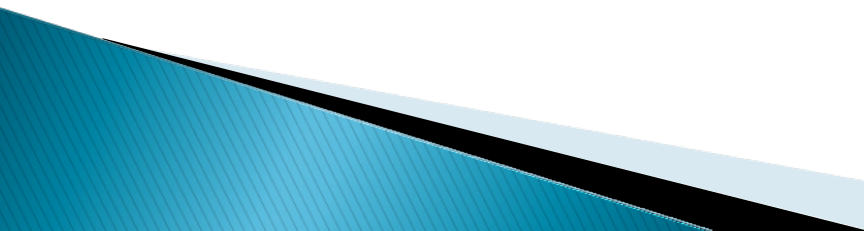
Initial focus – traditional environmental protection

- ▶ Research activities leading to environmental quality norms for water, air, soil etc
 - ▶ Water protection and waste treatment, and air quality
 - ▶ Some reference to agriculture and spatial planning.
 - ▶ Nature protection introduced in 2nd EAP
- 

Evolution of the Policy – from hotspots towards integration

- ▶ **1980s:**
 - emission limit values by source type and medium
 - Particular focus on Air, noise, industrial hazards
 - The Single European Act (1987) introduces three articles on the environment
- ▶ **Early 1990s:**
 - Integrated approach to emissions
 - impact of strategic economic sectors on the environment
 - “sustainable development” (Brundtland report)
 - Global outlook (Rio conference)
- ▶ **1992 – early 2000s:**
 - Less focus on environment, but “sustainability” introduced into the Amsterdam treaty (1997)
 - Cardiff Process -- Environmental policy integration
 - Framework legislation (water, air, IPPC)
 - Waste stream targets
 - Producer responsibility

Water Framework Directive (2000)

- ▶ The aim (Article 4) is long-term sustainable water management based on a high level of protection of the aquatic environment.
 - ▶ All surface and groundwater bodies should reach good status by 2015; no further deterioration of status is allowed (with certain exemptions that allow for less stringent objectives, extension of deadline beyond 2015, or the implementation of new projects, provided a set of conditions are fulfilled)
 - ▶ River basin management plans must be developed, with involvement of all stakeholders – including neighbouring countries
 - ▶ Price charged to water consumers (eg for the abstraction and distribution of fresh water) reflects the true costs.
- 

6th Environmental Action Programme (2002–2012)

4 focal areas:

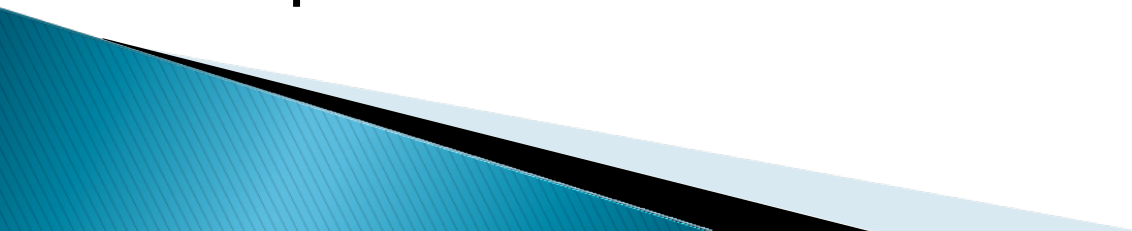
- Climate change
- Nature and biodiversity
- Environment, health
- Natural resources and waste

Seven Thematic Strategies

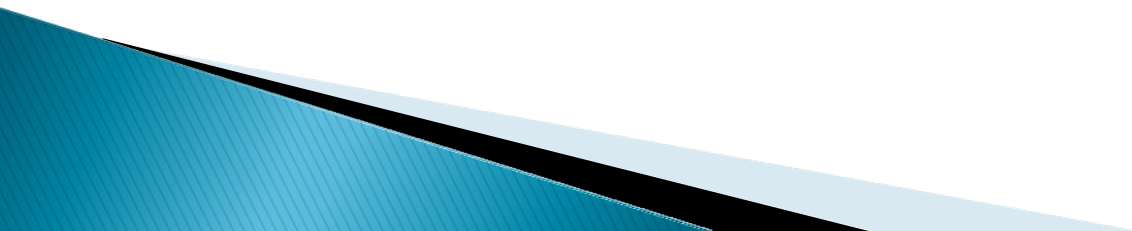
International Component



EU Environment Policy – Underlying Principles

- ▶ Polluter–pays
 - ▶ Precautionary principle
 - ▶ Rectification of pollution at source
 - ▶ Preventive action
 - ▶ Subsidiarity
 - ▶ Proportionality
 - ▶ Member States may have more stringent requirements
- 

A jointly-owned agenda

- ▶ Shared competence with the Member States
 - ▶ EU legislation is source for 80% of national environment policy
 - ▶ Generally popular, even with business
 - ▶ Active involvement of 'stakeholders' (Aarhus convention applied)
- 

Climate change objectives & tools

By 2020:

- Cut GHG emissions by 20% (below 1990 levels)+ offer of 30% if conditions right
- 20% share for renewable energy
- 20% reduction in energy use
- 10% share of renewable fuels in the transport sector

By 2050:

- Cut EU emissions by 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050

Climate and Energy package (2008)

- Revised emission trading scheme
- Directive on renewable energy – national targets
- Decision on effort sharing in non-ETS sectors – national targets
- Legal framework for Carbon Capture and Storage
- Directive on CO2 emissions from cars
- Revised Fuel Quality Directive

Roadmap to low-carbon economy by 2050 (March 2011)

Eurobarometer survey on Climate Change issues (published Oct 2011 -- fieldwork June 2011)

51% of respondents consider climate change one of the world's most serious problems

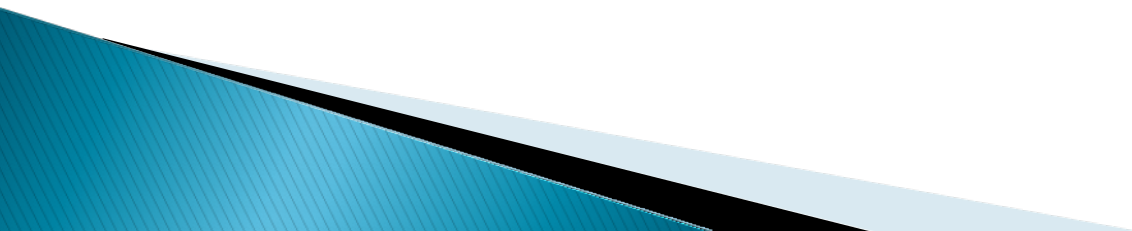
89% rank climate change as "serious" with 68% ranking it as "very serious" (up from 64% in 2009)

20% feel it is THE most serious problem (varies from >30% in LU, DK, MT, SW to 7% in PT)

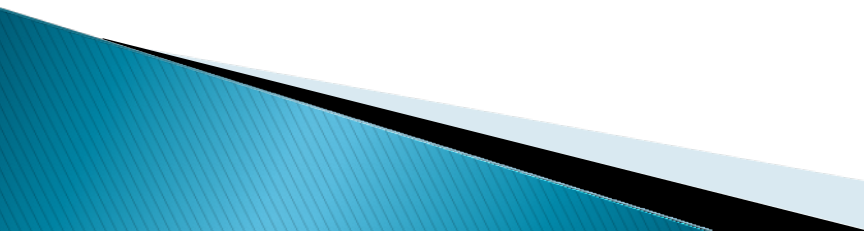
Overall 2nd – after poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water (25% said this was most serious) – more serious than the economic situation (15%) and international terrorism (11%)

78% agree that tackling climate change can also boost the economy and create jobs (at least 2/3 of respondents in each MS agreed)

68% support basing taxation to a greater extent on energy use (a majority in each MS)



Climate Change policy – ups and downs

- ↑ Simple message
 - ↑ Emissions trading – simple mechanism
 - Need for ‘effort sharing’ agreements
 - Drop in price of carbon
 - Hiccup over bio-fuels
 - ↓ Questionable CDM schemes
 - ↓ Energy efficiency complicated – new proposal
 - ↓ Lack of global agreement
- 

Biodiversity Policy

- ▶ 1998: EC Biodiversity Strategy
- ▶ 2001: EU Heads of State or Government agreed in 2001 “to halt the decline of biodiversity [in the EU] by 2010” and to “restore habitats and natural systems”
- ▶ May 2006: EU Action Plan – “Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond – Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being”:
 - four key policy areas and ten priority objectives, and ten supporting measures with Objectives, Targets, Actions at EC and MS level

Nature Legislation – Habitats and Birds directives

- ▶ Require good management of target species and habitats
- ▶ Establish Natura 2000 network →
26.000 protected areas covering an
area of more than 750.000 km² = 18%
of the EU's land area

2010 Assessment – ‘Implementing the EU Biodiversity Action Plan’

- ▶ Mixed report on the list of operational/policy objectives – much of the observed progress relates to existing commitments, especially in implementing environmental legislation.
- ▶ Overall objective seriously missed – European Environment Agency (EEA) finds only 17 % of target habitats and species examined are in 'favourable' condition

Revised Strategy...

The vision

- ▶ *'By 2050 European Union biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides – its natural capital – are protected, valued and appropriately restored for biodiversity's intrinsic value and for their essential contribution to human wellbeing and economic prosperity, and so that catastrophic changes caused by the loss of biodiversity are avoided'.*

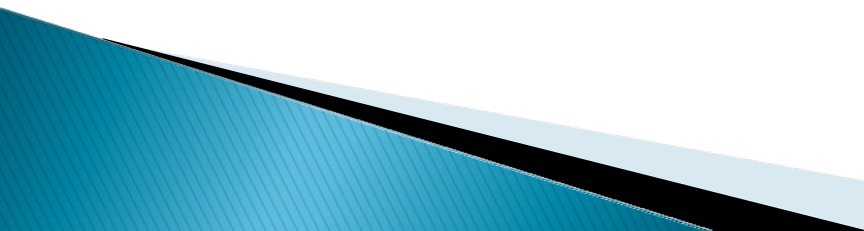
The headline target

- ▶ *'Halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss'.*

6 targets:

- Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity
- Better protection for ecosystems, and more use of green infrastructure
- More sustainable agriculture and forestry
- Better management of fish stocks
- Tighter controls on invasive alien species
- A bigger EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss

Nature and Biodiversity Policy – ups and downs

- ↑ Citizens state support for the policy
 - ↑ Natura 2000 network
 - ↓ No single measure or indicator.
 - ↓ No simple solution, esp. outside of protected areas – link to key sectoral and land use policies (agriculture, fisheries, transport, energy)
 - ↓ Costly public investments needed for management (and/or land acquisition)
 - ↓ Hard to articulate value of nature & biodiversity
 - ↓ Handling impact of Climate Change and Demographic Change
- 

REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances)

- ▶ Registration of all substances manufactured or imported ≥ 1 tonne/yr
- ▶ Evaluation of some substances
- ▶ Authorisation only for substances of very high concern
- ▶ Restrictions – the safety net (Community wide action)
- ▶ European Chemicals Agency (Helsinki) to manage system
- ▶ Focus on priorities:
 - Substances with high volumes and those of greatest concern
 - Registration deadline was 30 November 2010
- ▶ International Impact

Chemicals Policy – Ups & Downs

- ↑ Extensive public consultation
 - Very lengthy policy development phase
 - ↑ Clear process, prioritization
 - ↑ Based on international standards
 - ↓ Solution involves heavy administrative burden
- 

???

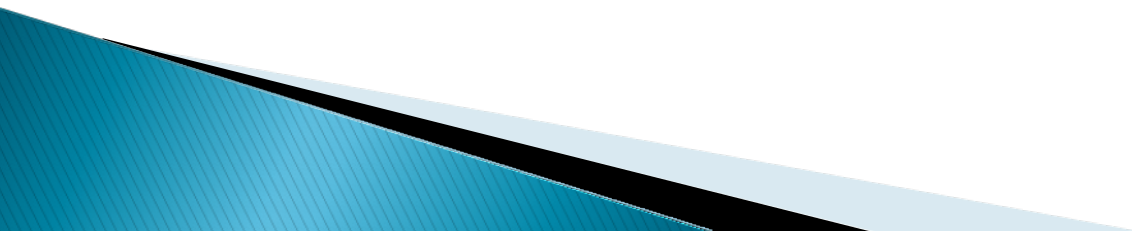
The most important contribution to a better environment in Europe over the past decade!

12 countries moved from a low baseline into compliance with EU standards and policy.

Enlargement Policy



Implementation and enforcement Responsibilities

- ▶ Over 300 major EU directives or regulations
 - ▶ Member States are responsible for implementation and enforcement of legislation inside their countries
 - ▶ Local authorities have important role
 - ▶ Commission (assisted by EU agencies) provides:
 - Guidance / assistance to Member States
 - Handles infringements, taking Member States to the Court of Justice if necessary)
- 

Improving Implementation

- ▶ Monitoring and access to information
- ▶ Getting the legislation right:
 - Commission Proposal
 - developed on basis of Technical Studies and Consultation (experts, public, other EU institutions, local authorities...)
 - Impact Assessment
 - Collegial decision – reflecting inputs from all policy sectors inside the Commission
 - Revision and Adoption By Council – and in most cases the Parliament (taking into account opinions from Committee of the Regions and the Socio-Economic Committee) – reflects political will


Integration Challenge

- ▶ Key to moving forward
- ▶ Accepted in principle
- ▶ All EU policy is subjected to Impact Assessment
- ▶ But, still environment is mostly seen as a “sector”

EU 2020 Strategy

- ▶ Set the course for the EU's economy for the next 10 years and beyond
 - ▶ Aims for « smart, sustainable and inclusive growth »
 - ▶ Environmental considerations integrated into economic policy
- 

EU 2020 Policy – Targets

1. Employment :
75% of the 20–64 year-olds to be employed
 2. R&D / innovation :
3% of the EU's GDP (public and private combined) to be invested in R&D/innovation
 3. Climate change / energy :
greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990
20% of energy from renewables
20% increase in energy efficiency
 4. Education :
Reducing school drop-out rates below 10%
at least 40% of 30–34-year-olds completing third level education
 5. Poverty / social exclusion :
at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion
- 

EU 2020 Policy – Flagship Initiatives

Smart growth:

- Digital agenda for Europe
- Innovation Union
- Youth on the Move

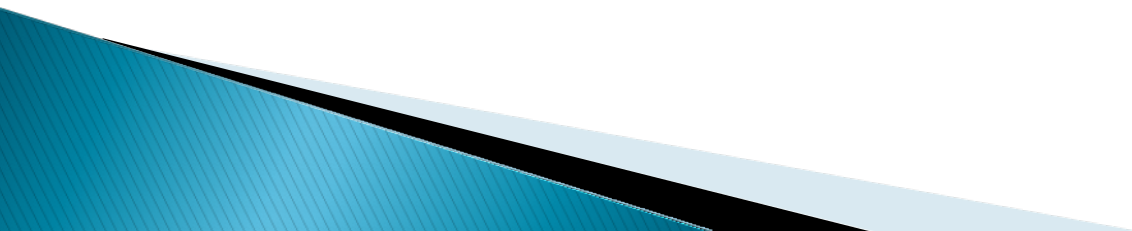
Sustainable growth:

- Resource efficient Europe
- An industrial policy for the globalisation era

Inclusive growth:

- An agenda for new skills and jobs
 - European platform against poverty
- 

Why Resource Efficiency?

- ✓ The era of plentiful and cheap resources is ending
 - ✓ Sustainable management of the environment is essential for long-term competitiveness and growth
 - ▶ Need to transform EU to a resource-efficient economy – we cannot afford to not consider the environment
- 

Resource Efficiency Roadmap

Builds on existing instruments, integrated into a coherent framework within overall economic policy.

Aims to:

- Change behaviours:
 - Producing more with less, eco-efficiency – economic incentives for efficient production and recycling
 - Changing consumption patterns (avoiding rebound)
 - Development of a common methodological approach to measure and compare businesses' environmental footprint
 - Promote innovation
 - Correcting market failures and remove perverse subsidies
-
- ▶ Three key sectors: food/drinks, buildings, transport
 - ▶ Lead indicator = consumption / GDP ratio
 - ▶ Dashboard of indicators by 2013 (and new headline indicator on natural ecological capital and the environmental impacts of resource use)

More about the EU...

www.europa.eu

One and a half million
documents available to the
public

