

Europe After G20

By David Baldock

Rarely do the contours of the policy environment change as quickly as they have since last autumn. The recession itself has immediate impacts, such as lower commodity prices and reduced levels of consumption, investment and trade. A wave of government interventions follow, combining broad brush efforts to soften the downturn with aid targeted not only at banks but also at industries with a large environmental shadow, such as car manufacturers. Next could be a squeeze on public expenditure as many governments face spiralling debt.

If we are waiting for an opportunity to square up to unsustainable trends this is it – on several levels. Now is the time for new visions of progress, lifestyle and meaningful prosperity; for new measures of performance beyond GDP; for a permanent switch to a low carbon and resource-conserving economy; for new thinking in the food supply chain (see also related article); and a smaller European footprint on the planet.

None of this was visible in the communiqué from the G20 summit in London or in the flurry of exaggerated claims about the green element in stimulus packages. In the absence of vision, however, there are some very concrete challenges in Europe. For example, re-focussing some of the stimulus money on energy conservation and longer term investment in renewables and infrastructure – and in screening expenditure plans to weed out environmentally damaging initiatives included on the grounds of being 'shovel ready'. There is considerable value in a European-wide approach to economic restructuring and targeting investment at key sectors rather than a competitive race to prop up car producers. European funds need to be aligned to new priorities, including support for developing countries to tackle climate change. Planning a green recovery rather than business as usual must be central to the political programme of a new generation of MEPs and European Commissioners. If the G20 failed to point the direction, others must do it.



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1. Proactive Planning for wind power and wildlife

On 24 March IEEP and RSPB launched a new report setting out how onshore wind planning in the UK can be improved, taking account of experience in several other European countries. This concludes that the rapid roll-out of new wind energy capacity, now urgent if the UK is to meet its 2020 target for renewable energy, can occur while simultaneously addressing wildlife concerns. However, decisive action by government is needed for this to happen. The report was well received by government, NGOs and industry at an expert workshop on 25 March; many representatives were calling for the government to take forward the debate based on the steps set out in the report.

Mitigating climate change demands large changes in energy policy. As a result of the adoption of the renewables Directive – binding on all EU governments – in December 2008, the UK has accepted challenging targets for the delivery of 15 per cent of energy from renewable sources by 2020. Projections by government departments and others predict that wind power will be central to delivering the necessary step change in renewable energy capacity. The UK has an exceptional renewable wind resource, but is also known for its slow progress in capitalising on this. From an existing base of 2.6GW of onshore wind capacity, an estimated minimum of 14GW of energy needs to be supplied by onshore wind by 2020 (coupled with the expansion of offshore wind, bioenergy and tidal energy use).

The siting and scale of wind farms is critical in determining their nature conservation impacts. Planning policy is therefore an essential tool for ensuring that the rapid deployment of wind energy is achieved whilst simultaneously protecting vulnerable wildlife from inappropriate development. Effective planning systems can facilitate the development of a well conceived and viable wind energy sector. The RSPB commissioned IEEP to analyse the existing approaches adopted to planning for onshore wind in three European countries with extensive onshore wind deployment – Germany, Denmark and Spain – and in different parts of the UK itself. The report draws a series of conclusions on significant steps needed to align planning policy with the ambitions for renewable energy in the UK, particularly in England.

The full report can be downloaded from http://www.ieep.eu/publications/press/positive_planning_for_onshore_wind.pdf.

Contact: Catherine Bowyer

2. Green Paper Marks Launch of CFP Reform

On 21 April, the European Commission will publish its Green Paper on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), officially launching the CFP reform process. The Green Paper is expected to mark a turning point in European fisheries management. To date, there have been two major reviews of the CFP, in 1992 and 2002. Neither has resulted in sustainable European fisheries, despite the adoption of over 330 implementing regulations under the 2002 framework Regulation.

The Green Paper is expected to provide a 'Health Check' of the CFP, focussing not only on conservation and structural policies but also on market policy and the external dimension of the CFP. The Green Paper will also highlight the gaps which need to be addressed.

In early May, IEEP will publish its independent 'Health Check' of the CFP with a focus on conservation and structural policy, particularly in relation to its achievements to meet the environmental objectives of the CFP. In addition to reflecting on progress made since 2002, IEEP will also make recommendations on the reform of the CFP. The report will be available soon on IEEP's website.

Commissioner Borg has outlined a very ambitious plan for this reform, which will conclude in 2012. He is calling for radical action to address the chronic overcapacity of the EU fleet, as well as the need to bring fisheries management closer to the stakeholders. The Commission has stated that 'all options are open' for consideration in this reform, even a re-examination of the controversial principle of relative stability.

In the coming months the political, legislative and environmental agenda driving the reform process will continue to change. IEEP, through our website and the newsletter *EI Anzuelo*, will provide focused updates on the reform process and analytical briefings on key developments.

Contact: Indrani Lutchman

3. Why Spend on Agriculture? – The Public Goods Debate

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) continues to account for the single largest share of the total EU budget, and is perhaps the most controversial item of EU expenditure, judging by responses to the recent consultation on the EU Budget Review. Spearheaded by Member States including the UK and Sweden, significant budgetary cuts in the CAP are anticipated post 2013, with calls to reduce the overall size of the EU Budget or to redirect money towards competing priorities such as climate change or the Lisbon Agenda.

Why should we continue to invest public money in an economic sector such as agriculture? The answer to this question lies in the fact that certain types of agricultural production are associated with the delivery of environmental goods and services, such as farmland biodiversity, semi-natural habitats and cultural landscapes, which are valued highly by the European public. In recent years, however, they have suffered widespread decline, partly as a result of inappropriate farming practices – including intensification and abandonment. According to economic theory, an 'undersupply' of public goods such as farmland biodiversity or clean water, for example, constitutes a case for public and financial intervention at some level. This rationale for public intervention applies in many sectors of public policy, such as the provision of basic health services and law and order; the same basic principles are relevant for agriculture.

Directing 'public money at the provision of public goods' would represent a radical departure from historical spending patterns on agriculture and the redistributive effects are likely to be significant. Considerable empirical challenges remain, however, such as understanding the distribution and trends in the stock and condition of these goods, as well as delivering them in the most cost effective way. This is the subject of a large, pan-European study led by IEEP's Agriculture Team for DG Agriculture, with the final report due at the end of the year.

Contact: Tamsin Cooper

4. Supporting Developing Countries on Climate Change: Is the EU Keeping its Promises?

As the Environment Council, followed by the ECOFIN Council and most recently by EU leaders at their Spring European Council meeting carefully tread around the bramblebush of the 'future financial architecture' of the global climate change regime, and in particular avoid any mention of the scale of resources that the EU would be prepared to provide to support developing countries in the fight against climate change and its adverse effects, it is enlightening to enquire into the EU's earlier commitments to provide such support.

IEEP recently carried out an analysis of the extent to which the EU (and its then 15 Member States) have fulfilled the solemn promises made to developing countries in the so-called 'Bonn Declaration' of 23 July 2001. Eight years ago, at the crucial Conference of the Parties (COP6bis) which broke the deadlock created by the US rejection of the Kyoto Protocol and paved the way for its ratification, the EU-15 together with five other OECD donor countries (Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland) made a 'strong political commitment' to raise US\$410 million a year from 2005 to help developing countries tackle climate change, and to review this pledge in 2008. These parties to the UN climate convention (UNFCCC) agreed to provide additional funds in a number of ways: through contributions to the Global Environment Facility (GEF - the Convention's official multilateral financial mechanism), through other multilateral and bilateral aid channels, and through three new climate change funds established under the Bonn/Marrakech agreements to provide financial assistance to developing countries, in particular to help cover their adaptation needs.

IEEP undertook a detailed analysis of the levels of aid channelled through these different means for each of the EU signatories to the Bonn Declaration (EU-15). Results show that whilst the EU-15 may, overall, have fulfilled their commitments under that declaration, the data published by Member States is far from conclusive and the quality of reporting does not allow full independent verification of the amount of aid provided. Funds made available by the EU-15 through the GEF and dedicated multilateral climate change funds alone (approximately US\$160 million per year) amount to less than half of the funds needed to meet the EU's share of the Bonn commitment (US\$369 million per year). Apparently, funding through bilateral channels accounts for most of the aid provided, but such assistance is a lot harder to monitor and verify at the international level. The lack of clarity and transparency in official reporting to the UNFCCC makes it impossible to affirm that much of the 'additional' aid actually provided since 2001 did not merely consist of 're-branded' aid money.

The IEEP study concludes: '...given the continued importance of the funding issue on the agenda of the ongoing multilateral climate negotiations, it is very surprising that there is not a single official document issued by the EU with reliable and verifiable information on the total level of financial support to developing countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation purposes provided by the Union and its Member States. This lack of transparency is clearly inconsistent with the EU's claim to global leadership in the climate change process.'

The IEEP study can be downloaded at http://www.ieep.eu/publications/pdfs/2009/sds_paper_funding.pdf

Contact: Marc Pallemarts

5. It's time to CARE about climate policy implementation

With adoption of the climate and renewable energy (CARE) package of legislation in December, Europe is poised to implement a series of measures meant to drive greenhouse gas emissions down well below historical trends. But there are often doubts about Member States' achievement of goals set in Brussels, and with so much riding on the outcome, ensuring successful enactment of these measures is more essential than ever.

IEEP is conducting a study for the European Climate Foundation and its grantees to evaluate the state of play in climate and energy policy around the EU, and the prospects for achieving the new policies' goals. In some cases, Member States have anticipated CARE package outcomes and are well on their way to implementing measures that will likely meet or exceed targets. However, several countries show potential difficulties which are various in nature – internal political wrangling slowing the process, target setting unsupported by real policies, and powerful economic forces which were unable to upset EU decision making but can derail it at national level, among other challenges. Overall, it is clear that implementation cannot be taken for granted – a published Directive is by no means the end of the story.

Contact: Jason Anderson

6. Intelligent Energy e-Library Launched

This year's EU Sustainable Energy Week saw the launch of the IEe-library, created by IEEP for the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI).

The fully searchable online library and its four accompanying publications aim to highlight and share good practice, advice and practical instruments throughout Europe and beyond on issues of energy efficiency, renewable energy applications and sustainable mobility and transport. The IEe-library provides a comprehensive inventory of tools and guidebooks developed under projects financed by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme and other EU and non-EU funds.

All tools and guidebooks in the IEe-library are available for free, ready to download and use. The majority are written in English, but a large number are also available in other European languages.

To experience the Intelligent Energy e-library for yourself, visit: <http://www.iee-library.eu/>

Contact: Carolina Valsecchi

IEEP conferences and events

In the coming months IEEP will organise or participate to the following meetings and events. If you would like to find out more, do not hesitate to contact us.

Workshops on changes to cross compliance standards of Good Agriculture and Environmental Condition – London (UK), 23 and 30 April, 6 May 2009

As part of Defra's public consultation on changes to cross compliance standards of Good Agriculture and Environmental Condition, IEEP is running three workshops for key stakeholders to discuss the proposals. The workshops are invite-only but include a range of farming and environmental interests in England.

Contact: [Kaley Hart](#)

Biodiversity Protection – Beyond 2010: Priorities and options for future EU Policy - Athens (Greece), 27-28 April 2009

The European Commission is bringing together all the main actors engaged in the development and implementation of EU biodiversity policy together with international institutions and globally recognised experts at the conference, 'Biodiversity Protection – Beyond 2010'. The aim is to take stock of the status of biodiversity protection, start framing the post-2010 biodiversity vision, and preparing the strategy for 2010+. Patrick ten Brink will present on the "Costs of Protecting Nature", putting the costs in the context of the benefits. For details see http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/policy/index_en.htm

Contact: [Patrick ten Brink](#)

Conference 'Human Rights and Access to Vital Natural Resources' – Bologna (Italy), 8 May 2009

Mark Pallemmaerts will speak on "Natural Resources as Objects of Economic Exploitation and Environmental Protection in International Law" at a conference on human rights and access to vital natural resources organised by the University of Bologna.

Contact: [Marc Pallemmaerts](#)

Workshop on biodiversity scenarios and models – Brussels (Belgium), 13 May 2009

IIEP, in collaboration with Alterra, Ecologic, PBL and UNEP-WCMC, will be running a workshop with invited experts for DG ENV on the use of scenarios and models in projecting global and regional impacts on biodiversity and related ecosystem services. The key aim of the meeting will be to provide recommendations on the appropriate use of scenarios and models in Phase 2 of the study on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB).

Contact: [Graham Tucker](#)

Conference 'How to best Remunerate Mountain Rural People for their Provision of Positive Externalities?' - Vienna (Austria), 19 and 20 May 2009

Tamsin Cooper will give a presentation on the 'Provision of Public Goods through Agriculture' at a conference on 'How to best Remunerate Mountain Rural People for their Provision of Positive Externalities?', organised by the FAO, Euromontana, UNEP Vienna and the Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development

Contact: [Tamsin Cooper](#)

Environmental Law Expert Meeting 'The European position towards Copenhagen: A global outlook' - Maastricht (Netherlands), 20 May 2009

This meeting at the Law Faculty of Maastricht University will bring together a global team of environmental law professors, representing every continent of the world, to debate the EU's position on a new global climate agreement. Marc Pallemmaerts has been invited to participate in the final panel together with Mr. Hugo von Meijenfeldt, Director of International Affairs, Dutch Environmental Ministry and Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, Director of the Policy Unit of the Flemish Environmental Minister.

Contact: [Marc Pallemmaerts](#)

Workshop on ecological corridors – Brussels (Belgium), 9 July 2009

IIEP will run a workshop, in collaboration with Alterra, on the implementation of ecological corridor initiatives in Europe. This will form part of an IIEP-led study for DG Environment on the impacts of land use changes on biodiversity, soils and water. Invited experts will be given the opportunity to review the practical implementation of corridor and ecological networks in their countries and identify factors that led to success and failures.

Contact: [Graham Tucker](#)

Conference on five years of Poland's EU membership for the agricultural sector and the rural areas – Warsaw (Poland), 28-29 April 2009

David Baldock will address the question "Is the long-term increase in global food demand a threat to the sustainable development of European agriculture?" at a conference organised by the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Environment.

Contact: [David Baldock](#)

Conference 'Bringing the Policy Back In: A Substantive Agenda for the New Union' – Birmingham (UK), 14-15 May 2009

David Baldock will take part in a panel debate on "EU Energy Policy and Climate Change" at a conference hosted by the European Research Institute at the University of Birmingham

Contact: [David Baldock](#)

Conference 'Managing Biosafety and Biodiversity in a Global World - EU, US, California and Comparative Perspectives' – Brussels (Belgium), 10 June 2009

David Baldock will be part of a panel debating "Agriculture and the conservation of wildlife biodiversity" and will make a comparative analysis of policies in the USA and the EU. The event has been organised by The Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies (University of Leuven), LICOS (University of Leuven) and UC Berkeley.

Contact: [David Baldock](#)