

IEEP Newsletter

Autumn 2006

Environmental policy in Europe needs fresh impetus to respond to growing public expectations, especially on climate change. The current Commission has nailed its flag to the Lisbon agenda and has often seemed luke warm about environmental priorities and nervous about new regulation. There is now an opportunity to articulate a more positive commitment. We are awaiting a mid-term review of the 'Sixth Environmental Action Programme', a strategic exercise setting out the EU's priority objectives for environmental policy up to 2012. The Commission could take advantage of this review to set the direction for the next six years.

The Commission was due to publish its analysis by July, four years after the start of the Programme. There is plenty to address. A report prepared by IEEP for the European Environmental Bureau in April highlighted some progress since 2002. However, there were several priorities, including biodiversity, environment and health, and natural resources and waste, where it seemed unlikely that the policies in place were sufficient to meet the targets. The Commission needs to make an honest appraisal of what has been achieved and to restate priorities with a new sense of urgency. Some of these can be advanced by relatively soft measures such as inter-governmental cooperation, improved research and further education. But many others need more forceful action and the Commission should not be shy about defending appropriate regulation and considering how the EU budget could contribute more to meeting targets. A forward looking review is now needed before the year ends, to re-invigorate debate within the Council and the European Parliament.

David Baldock
Director

In this issue:

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- 1 Defra strategy review and European policy
- 2 Developing a long-term plan for the Aarhus Convention
- 3 Boosting Innovation for the environment
- 4 Safeguarding biodiversity in European agricultural ecosystems
- 5 Respecting Environmental 'tipping points'
- 6 Furthering the Development of Marine Protected Areas

And also...

New! IEEP conferences and events

IEEP .eu domain

IEEP will be amongst the first independent organisations to use .eu domain. From Friday 10th November, IEEP will be switching its website into www.ieep.eu and all e-mail addresses will also read x@ieep.eu.

Contacting us will be just as easy, if not easier than before. Any e-mails will be automatically redirected to the new addresses and any users of the previous website will be simply redirected to the new site address.

1. Rethinking Defra's approach to Europe

The UK's environment and agriculture department (Defra) is undertaking a strategy review – 'Strategy Refresh' – to reinforce its effectiveness and sharpen its focus on priority issues such as climate change and CAP reform. Given the central importance of EU legislation in environmental and agricultural matters, the EU and International Engagement (EUI-E) unit has invited IEEP to produce a strategic paper on EU policy and its implications for Defra, primarily covering the areas of efficient engagement; new opportunities (including new policy priorities and new ways of working) and alliances with other agencies. A wide range of IEEP staff and some key outside experts are engaged in the project, primarily through a series of brainstorming and interviews. The work will be finalised in November, to fit into Defra's strategy review timetable. The output will be a short paper analysing structural changes and key upcoming developments at EU level, highlighting good practice in other Member States, and identifying what has worked and what has not in Defra's current and past practice.

Contact: [Malcolm Fergusson](#)

2. Developing a long-term plan for the Aarhus Convention

Since its adoption in 1998, the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters has significantly influenced the evolution of EU environmental law as well as the domestic law and practices of many countries outside the EU. The Convention now numbers 39 Parties, including the EU and most of its Member States, and the majority of other States in Europe and Central Asia.

At their second meeting in May 2005, the Parties mandated the development of a strategic plan for the Convention covering a five-year period starting in 2009. This long-term strategic plan (LTSP) will chart out the future direction for the further development and implementation of the Convention, by articulating an overall vision, specifying focal areas and goals, objectives, and indicative types of activity, identifying partners and setting a framework for putting this vision into practice.

The Convention's Bureau has recently appointed an expert group to assist it in preparing a draft LTSP for submission to the third meeting of the Parties, to be held in 2008. IEEP Senior Fellow Marc Pallemerts was invited to chair this expert group, which will hold its first meeting in Oslo on 9-10 October. The group consists of eleven experts from different backgrounds (government, NGOs, academia, etc.), who serve in their personal capacity, without formally representing any country or organization. The group includes experts from Belgium, Georgia, Poland, Ukraine, Italy, Finland, Austria, Latvia, Hungary and the European Commission. It will report to the Bureau in 2007.

Contact: [Marc Pallemerts](#)

3. Boosting Innovation for the environment

Innovation is the current buzzword, the solution that pushes all the buttons. Economic and growth, jobs and environmental protection all in one go.

But encouraging the development and uptake of clean technologies – the core ambition of the EU's environmental technology action plan (ETAP) – is difficult to achieve in practice.

This is partly because innovation itself is a complex process. Ideas turn into prototypes, then demonstration projects, then enter niche markets, before being mainstreamed in the wider market. Even when 'mature', technologies continue to evolve – the internal combustion engine is still developing well over a century after first hitting the road.

Different policy instruments are needed for different technologies and for different stages in their development. R&D is needed throughout, and with an increasing contribution from industry as commercial viability approaches. Green public procurement, the instrument currently much discussed, can contribute, but only after the technologies have demonstrated their capabilities and are marketable. Emissions trading or tradable quotas or certificates create markets that can encourage innovation; taxes and charges can be used to fix markets by getting the prices right; subsidies can help technologies enter markets; information, through labelling, can make the markets work more efficiently by empowering the consumer.

This is a fast moving field. IEEP is making its contribution through three projects - working with DGResearch on Policy Pathways to Clean Technologies¹; with DG Environment on the Dynamics of Innovation²; and with the Danish and Belgian authorities on taking forward ETAP.

Contact: Patrick ten Brink

4. Safeguarding biodiversity in European agricultural ecosystems

The most threatened species and habitats within the EU are protected by the European wide network of nature conservation areas called Natura 2000. However, a vast amount of Europe's biodiversity remains outside protected areas, hosted by diverse agricultural and rural landscapes. This biodiversity gives the landscapes their unique characteristics and it also plays an important role in providing a number of valuable ecosystem services, such as pollination, and pest and erosion control.

During the coming year, IEEP will be continuing its work through two new projects aimed at supporting the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in European agricultural ecosystems. The first is a four-year European research project called 'a New Environmental Accounting Framework Using Externality Data and Input-Output Tools for Policy Analysis' (EXIOPOL). In the context of this project, IEEP will be working with Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (Italy) and University College of London (UK) in identifying and assessing benefits (monetary and non-monetary) related to agricultural biodiversity in the EU. In the second project, IEEP will be collaborating with WWF to design payments schemes for biodiversity conservation in agricultural ecosystems in five EU Accession and Candidate countries (for DG Environment).

Contact: Marianne Kettunen

5. Respecting Environmental 'tipping points'

'There are thresholds which cannot be crossed without endangering the basic integrity of the system. Today we are close to many of these thresholds; we must be ever mindful of endangering the survival of life on earth.' The Brundtland report (1987)

It is often impossible to 'undo' environmental change once it has happened. An extinct species cannot (yet) be brought back; the collapse of fish stocks cannot easily be reversed; a dead river, depleted of oxygen by waste, takes a long time to regenerate; an aquifer once polluted is valueless; and a ruined landscape attracts few tourists. The importance of avoiding such 'tipping points' is now widely acknowledged - witness the change in language in relation to climate change. It is much better to identify and act on such critical trends and thresholds and design policies that respect them.

Regional development is one policy area which offers a lot of scope for action. SWOT analyses – focusing on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing particular regions – can identify critical trends and thresholds and structure and facilitate a response to them. Sustainable development assessments can also integrate the concepts and help make better decisions.

IEEP has been working over the past two years on tools to integrate critical trends and thresholds thinking into regional planning and evaluation. A key project is SRDTools (sustainable regional development tools)³, part funded⁴ by DGResearch, which will culminate in a workshop and the development of a toolkit for practitioners this December.

Contact: Patrick ten Brink

6. Furthering the Development of Marine Protected Areas

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are designated parts of seas and oceans which are managed to give special priority to nature conservation. The concept of MPAs has developed from the history of protected terrestrial sites. However, the issues arising for conservation in the marine environment are far more complex and controversial.

Currently the only legal requirements for the establishment of MPAs at a European level are under the EU's Habitats and Birds Directives, where Member States are required to designate Special Areas of

¹ See Patrick ten Brink, Catherine Bowyer, Malcolm Ferguson and Jason Anderson (2006) *Policy Instruments and Innovation* Work package 3 report. Available from ptenbrink@ieeplondon.org.uk

² See <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enveco/activities.htm>

³ <http://www.srdtools.info/>

⁴ We welcome interest in supporting our work.

Conservation (SACs) for the protection of threatened habitats and species and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the conservation of a specific list of bird species, respectively.

For fisheries, there is no legal requirement for the EU or Member States to develop MPAs, but the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) provides a legal framework through which they could be established. Using MPAs for fish conservation purposes is controversial, with some stakeholders claiming that their benefits outweigh the short-term economic costs, while others casting doubts on the scientific evidence.

In March 2006, IEEP launched a project funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation which aims to support the use of marine protected areas (MPAs) in UK and European waters for fisheries and marine purposes. The aim is to raise stakeholders' awareness and facilitate dialogue between various interest groups to help further the implementation of MPAs. In November, the first stakeholder meeting under this project will be held in London.

Contact: Indrani Lutchman

New! **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.

Environmental Policy: At a Turning Point? - London, 8 November 2006

IEEP Director David Baldock will talk about the future of EU environmental policy and key sectors affected at the annual conference of the Environmental Industries Commission

Contact: **David Baldock**

Workshop on Marine Protected Areas in the EU and UK - London, 10 November 2006

The meeting, organised by IEEP, will bring a range of stakeholders together to discuss the different perspectives on the role of MPAs in fisheries management and conservation

Contact: **Indrani Lutchman**

Impacts of and responses to Cross Compliance - Copenhagen, 13 November 2006

Vicki Swales will present the issue of environmental impacts of cross compliance to an audience made of Commission DGs, Member State Agriculture and Environment Ministries, environmental NGOs and other organisations and national agencies.

Contact: **Vicky Swales**

What changes will be needed to the budget to achieve sustainable development in the EU–

London, 21 November 2006

David Baldock will be one of the speakers at the Green Globe Network's EU Budget Review Seminar, addressing the issue of sustainable development and EU policy for 2008.

Contact: **David Baldock**

Environmental Policy Forum in Brussels - First forum: Brussels, 24 November 2006 – at 12.30

IEEP, in collaboration with the Institute for European Studies of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, will be organising a series of lunchtime events on current issues in EU and international environmental policy. At the first of such Forums Jason Anderson of IEEP will introduce the topic of Carbon Capture and Storage.

The forum will be open to the public, and further information will be soon available on our website.

Contact: **Marc Pallemarts**

EPIGOV Conference on 'Better Integration: Mainstreaming Environmental Concerns in European Governance' - Brussels, 15 February 2007

This conference, organised by IEEP, will be the first of a series of three events on environmental policy integration within the framework of the EU funded research network EPIGOV. The conference will be open to the public and further details will soon be available on our website.

<http://www.ieep.org.uk/project/MiniSites/epigov/index.php>

Contact: **Marc Pallemarts**