



## Commissioner Vella's conclusions

“This week our slogan was take the initiative. Well after the work this week we have taken that initiative and turned it into action. Now let’s continue taking that action. Environmental progress is achieved when we all pull together, and across the EU there are remarkable efforts going on to keep that progress going,”. That was the take-home message for [EU Green Week 2019](#).

Recently the European Commission adopted the second [Environmental Implementation Review](#) – the EIR. It was the outcome of two years’ work, the end result of a cycle of analysis, dialogue and collaboration. A concise, objective look at what is working in environment policy, and what still needs to be done.

It was greatly needed because despite our excellent, extensive legislation, not all of our policies are performing as well as they could. This is due to implementation gaps. These are damaging the environment and are also harming peoples’ health. They stifle sustainable economic development. We know that full implementation of EU environmental legislation could save the EU economy around €55 billion every year.

There could be no better reason for devoting Green Week to implementing our environmental legislation. When we drew up the programme, we wanted to maximise the opportunities for exchange. We wanted everyone to share their views, learn from each other, and have their say on the issues. And that is exactly what happened.

We’ve had contributions from civil society, and from youth. From policy makers, regions, and cities. From lawyers and judges, from civil servants, and from major players in the European marketplace. Some wonderful efforts going on at grassroots level have been showcased and we've seen many things moving in the right direction. It has been clear that improving environmental implementation and governance has a positive effect on society.

We've also seen that the rule of law is alive and well, with democratic engagement paying dividends for citizens and their local environment all across the EU.

We have seen that political support and close collaboration with authorities, stakeholders, NGOs and local communities are central to long-term success and sustainability, as well ensuring wider socio-economic benefits.

We have learned that environmental information should be made available in a clear way. Transparency and dialogue are essential to ensure effective implementation of environmental legislation and lead to understanding and acceptance.

It was confirmed that successful implementation of environmental policy requires integration of environmental concerns in other sectors and better communication between actors.

And we saw that authorities react to legal action and things get done, but it's much better to find solutions with all those involved before that.

Green Week has shown, once more, that more and more people are taking action and adapting their lifestyle, like the students and others taking to the streets of Stockholm, Prague, Brussels, and Milan every Friday. Businesses also increasingly see the benefits of the new green economy.

EU Green Week 2019 has engaged thousands of actors from all over Europe in events and on [social media](#), and brought many insights and inputs for our further work.

Next year, EU Green Week will be devoted to biodiversity – a literally vital and urgent topic. Two weeks ago we had the first IPBES global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services. A frightening report that shows that the global ecological crisis is now on a par with climate change, and that the world needs fast, transformational change.

Next year we will have the Biodiversity COP in China and it will be crucial that the EU continues to take the global lead. The challenges we face today are global, and they demand a global response. Environmental policy is blazing a trail here, making the case for strong multilateralism, with the EU as its guardian. The SDGs and the Paris agreement would not exist without our determination to make them happen. Green Week will help us to feed into our preparations for making an equally strong impact in Beijing.