



European
Commission

The Environmental Implementation Review



UNITED KINGDOM

Europe has ambitious laws and policies to protect air and water, to promote the circular economy, raise recycling rates and safeguard nature. Implementing them is key to achieving our environmental objectives. This is why the European Commission launched the Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), a tool to help countries address systemic obstacles to environmental integration by identifying the causes behind poor implementation. The EIR comprises a regular cycle of analysis, dialogue and peer-to-peer support. This factsheet summarises the results of the second EIR package published in April 2019.

Country profile

The United Kingdom's natural environment is characterised by its biodiversity, geodiversity and landscapes. Its natural environment is under pressure from a range of threats: pressure from intensification of land and sea use and from continuing economic development, such as land take, pollution and water abstraction. Despite a relatively good performance, environmental standards could be improved if the United Kingdom took a more ambitious approach to implementation.

Main progress EIR 2019

- ✚ There has been some progress on nature protection, for example as regard the status of species and habitats, the protection of the harbour porpoise and in phasing out the burning of blanket bogs. The UK has been very successful in being awarded LIFE nature projects, which provide a large part of green infrastructure funding.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

- ✚ The UK is among the best-performing Member States on resource efficiency. Only 4% of British companies have not taken any resource-efficiency measures and only 12% say they do not intend to take any further measures.
- ✚ The Central Scotland Green Network aims, among others, to include an integrated habitat network and improve landscape quality. It runs until 2050 and is by far the largest green infrastructure project in Europe, covering the whole of Scotland's central belt and involving 19 local authorities.
- ✚ The use of alternative fuels in new passenger cars sold in the UK has increased considerably over the past few years. Furthermore, the UK is the first Member State that has been able to reduce the 'diesel differential' (the price of diesel vs. petrol) to zero.

Main challenges EIR 2019



Air quality

On air quality in urban zones, there has been no change to the compliance situation regarding the high number of zones with exceedances above the EU air quality standards for nitrogen dioxide. For 2015, the European Environment Agency estimated that about 9600 premature deaths were attributable to nitrogen dioxide concentrations. However, in 36 of the 37 zones non-compliant with nitrogen dioxide limit values, the latest data show some improvements.



Nature protection

The protection of offshore birds is still a challenge and there is no overall protection strategy for dispersed species to date. The UK should complete its Natura 2000 designation process – in particular in the UK's extensive marine waters – for birds, species and habitats.



Water quality

On water quality, diffuse pollution, notably from nitrates, remains an issue in parts of the UK.

Peer-to-Peer support

The EIR is supported by the TAIEX-EIR Peer-to-Peer (EIR P2P) tool, which finances peer-to-peer learning between environmental authorities in the Member States. The UK participated in EIR P2P workshops on air pollution, exchanging experiences and good practices on reducing emissions from domestic heating.

The full country report on the UK and the other country reports, as well as the Communication 'Environmental Implementation Review 2019: A Europe that protects its citizens and enhances their quality of life' are available here:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/index_en.htm

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