



Environmental Implementation Review: Commission helps Member States to better apply EU environment rules to protect citizens and enhance their quality of life

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An initiative to improve the application of EU policies and rules on the circular economy, nature and biodiversity, air quality, and water quality and management.

Today, the Commission published the second Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), part of its [initiative launched in 2016](#) to improve the implementation of European environmental policy and commonly agreed rules in all EU Member States. Implementing EU environmental policy and law is not only essential for a healthy environment, but also opens up new opportunities for sustainable economic growth, innovation and jobs. Full implementation of EU environmental legislation could save the EU economy around €55 billion every year in health costs and direct costs to the environment.

Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, said: *"The Juncker Commission is committed to building a Europe that protects. Making sure that the air, water and waste management our citizens enjoy are of best quality and our natural capital is protected is our priority. The Environmental Implementation Review is there to help Member States to make that happen by providing them with the information and the tools they need."*

The Review maps out the situation of environmental policies and rules implementation in each EU country and identifies the causes of implementation gaps. It helps to find solutions before problems become urgent and aims to assist national decision-makers by outlining the priorities requiring their attention. All Member States have made use of the EIR P2P Peer-to-Peer programme established in 2017 which facilitates learning between environmental authorities.

The package includes: **28 country reports** showing the state of play in the implementation of EU environmental law, as well as opportunities for improvement in each Member State; and a **Communication** drawing conclusions and defining common trends at EU level, as well as recommendations for improvements to all Member States with key priority actions.

State of play in main policy areas

The Review shows that eighteen Member States continue to struggle with high levels of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions and fifteen countries need to further reduce emissions of particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10). Given the impact of **air** pollution on health, in line with its communication of May 2018 "A Europe that protects: clean air for all", the Commission has engaged in [clean air dialogues](#) with several EU countries, in addition to more targeted enforcement actions.

While overall the policy framework for the circular economy has been strengthened **waste prevention** remains an important challenge for all Member States. On **waste management**, nine countries are on track and five have already reached the recycling targets, but fourteen are at risk of missing the 2020 municipal waste recycling target. Sound and efficient waste management systems are an essential building block of our circular economy.

Where **water** is concerned, much remains to be done to fully achieve the objectives of the water directives, and in particular good status for our water bodies until 2027. Urban wastewater is still not treated properly in two thirds of Member States. Increased investments are essential to meet these objectives and EU funds will continue to back up implementation efforts.

When it comes to the protection of **nature and biodiversity**, the Natura 2000 network has continued to expand on land and at sea. The EU has already surpassed the [target](#) of defining 10% of its coastal and marine areas as Marine Protected Areas by 2020 as set by the Convention on Biological Diversity. Nevertheless, most Member States need to speed up their efforts for the completion and management of the Natura 2000 network.

Regarding **climate change**, Member States have made good progress in implementing EU climate legislation and the 2020 targets are likely to be met. Nevertheless, efforts in each Member State and at EU level need to be intensified to comply with our international commitments under the Paris Agreement and prevent the worst consequences of climate change.

The Environmental Implementation Review put in place a new tool – the [Peer-to-Peer](#) programme - to stimulate environmental authorities from different Member States to learn from each other's experiences across borders. Since its launch, all Member States were involved in at least one event covering circular economy, air quality, timber regulation, nature and biodiversity, and water quality topics.

The Review also assesses some enabling factors that could drastically improve implementation, such as environmental governance. The Commission calls upon Member States to improve the integration of environmental objectives with other policy goals, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration, and to be more transparent with environmentally relevant information. There is also scope to further engage regional and local authorities and other stakeholders in tackling the main implementation challenges.

Background

The first Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) package was [adopted in February 2017](#). The Environmental Implementation Review works along the Commission's Better Regulation policy, focusing on improving implementation of existing legislation and policies. Since its adoption, many Member States have organised national Environmental Implementation Review dialogues on the priority themes identified in their reports. In many cases, regional and local authorities and key stakeholders have been involved. When commonly agreed rules are not properly implemented, the Commission can take legal action. In order to avoid this route, the Commission works with Member States to enable them to better apply environmental policies and rules, through the process of the Environmental Implementation Review

For More Information

[Communication](#) and [Annex](#)

[28 Country reports and Factsheets](#)

[Policy background Staff Working Document](#)

[Environmental Implementation Review website](#)

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Press contacts:

[Enrico BRIVIO](#) (+32 2 295 61 72)

[Stephan MEDER](#) (+32 2 291 39 17)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)