



EEAC SPRING

# NEWSLETTER

April 23 2024, EEAC Annual Conference, Brussel



## A message from the Chair

Arnau Queralt-Bassa

Dear colleagues,

As the first few months of 2025 have flown by and spring has arrived, we want to use the opportunity to look back at the Network activities since the start of 2025. We hope you and your members will read this and visualise it as the result of our collective effort and contributions of all members of the EEAC.

This newsletter has been prepared by the EEAC secretariat and opens with an overview of recent EEAC activities. It highlights key events and engagements from January 2025 till April 2025, showcasing the breadth of EEAC's involvement across Europe. On the last pages, you can find some of the most recent publications of our councils and upcoming working group activities.

[Follow our linkedIn for upcoming activities](#)





## 1<sup>st</sup> January A new board member

The start of 2025 marked the joining of Johanna Kentala-Lehtonen to the EEAC board. Alongside Julia Hertin, Johanna is now a Vice Chair to the board.

Outside of the EEAC, she is the Secretary General of the Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development at the Finnish Prime Minister's Office. She has been in the environmental space for over 15 years and brings both valuable experience and fresh ideas to the board.

[Read more on our website](#)



**Johanna Kentala-  
Lehtonen**

## 15<sup>th</sup> January – Member Roundtable

January also saw the (first) annual EEAC roundtable meeting. This meeting was an chance for the councils to update each other on their 2024 activities and 2025 plans. Not only was this a opportunity for councils to connect, but to help ensure that the EEAC can organise events for 2025 that suit both councils' activities and interests. This online meeting was organised after much enthusiasm was expressed for more council updates during the October Assembly 2024.



October 8 2024, EEAC Annual Assembly, Ghent

## 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January RETOOL Event London



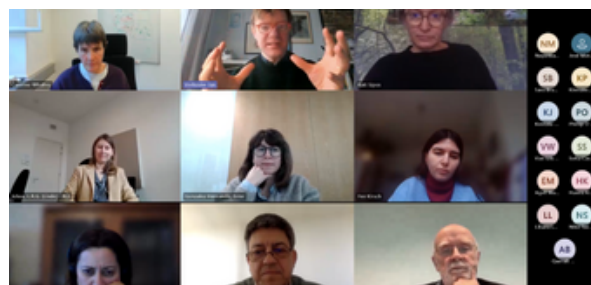
At the end of January both Fee Kirsch (EEAC secretariat) and Menno Ottens (WKR) went to the London School of Economics to represent the EEAC for [RETOOL's Stakeholder Workshop](#). This workshop brought together experts to explore the role of courts and independent advisory bodies in EU climate governance.

Fee Kirsch was one of the keynote speakers for this event, exploring the impact of climate advisory bodies on shaping climate policy. She spoke about the key areas of impact, common challenges for ensuring advice is followed, and expanded on the work of the EEAC and our member councils.



## 30<sup>th</sup> January Water Webinar and Exchange Session

The EEAC Ecosystem Services working group held a webinar exploring the global and EU-wide state of water. Speakers Hans-Otto Pörtner (Council member WBGU), and Caroline Whalley (EEA) presented and discussed two key reports: ["Water in a heated world"](#) and ["Europe's state of water 2024"](#). The Commission's new focus on water resilience and the Water Framework Directive was also deliberated. After these fruitful keynotes, an internal discussion was held to understand the work of EEAC members on water policy, and other working group plans for 2025.



## 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> February Working Groups finalise year plans

In mid-February, both the Health and the Climate and Energy working groups finalised their year plans which were published in the 2025 Activities Overview document.

## Trip to Brussels

### 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February – Strategic Board Meeting

The board and the secretariat of the Network had the joy of starting off the new year with the traditional annual in-person strategic board meeting, this time in Brussels. At the offices of the Catalan Delegation, the board members outlined the EEAC's direction for 2025, considering the key takeaways from the October Assembly and the APS, and they determined goals for the long-term development of the EEAC.



### 26<sup>th</sup> February Meeting with the Cabinet of Teresa Ribera

Alongside these intense yet positive board meetings, the trip to Brussels also offered a special opportunity to represent the EEAC in the European Commission. On the same day the Clean Industrial Deal was released, the board and secretariat met with the Cabinet of Executive Vice President Teresa Ribera. Constructive discussions regarding not only the priorities of the Commission, but also its relation to our advisory council work were held.





### *Towards a Water Resilience Strategy for the European Union*

*High-level stakeholder consultation*

Brussels, Thursday 6 March 2025, 09.00 – 18.00

EC Charlemagne building – Gasp Room

AGENDA



## 6<sup>th</sup> March – EU Water Resilience

Arnau Queralt-Bassa (CADS) and Wim Van Gils (Minaraad) represented the EEAC while attending the [EU Commission's Stakeholder consultation](#) 'Towards a Water Resilience Strategy for the EU.' This event was part of the consultation process to develop the European Water Resilience Strategy.

## 11<sup>th</sup> March – Nature Restoration Law Session

Mid-march saw an engaging session where our council members shared their experiences with the national consultation processes for the National Restoration Plans (NRPs). The participants got to hear the challenges and best practices experienced by the Minaraad, SRU, The Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development and CNADS. This Ecosystem Services working group exchange session ended with an open discussion and Q&A with the speakers and an outlook at the related June 4<sup>th</sup> in-person meeting.

## 19<sup>th</sup> March – When Nature can do the Job

Board member Jan Verheeke was invited to represent the EEAC and be a keynote speaker at the [Wilde-Project Nature Restoration conference](#) in Brussels. The conference brought together leading European experts to discuss where and when nature could best help in creating ecosystems that not only support biodiversity and store carbon but enhance livelihoods. Jan's keynote was on Nature restoration as a governance challenge. Insights he gained from this high level event will be used during the upcoming EEAC Nature Restoration Law event on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

## 26<sup>th</sup> March RNE raw material roundtable

The German Council for Sustainable Development, together with the FES EU Office and IG Metal hosted a roundtable titled 'Raw material security for the socio-ecological transformation in Europe and worldwide.' Fee Kirsch and Jan Verheeke attended representing the EEAC.

### The new RNE Secretary General

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the RNE was delighted to announce that Dr. Jürgen Janssen is the new Secretary General of the German Council for Sustainable Development. Dr. Janssen takes over from the successful 5-years of Dr. Marc-Oliver Pahl.

### The new OKT Secretary General

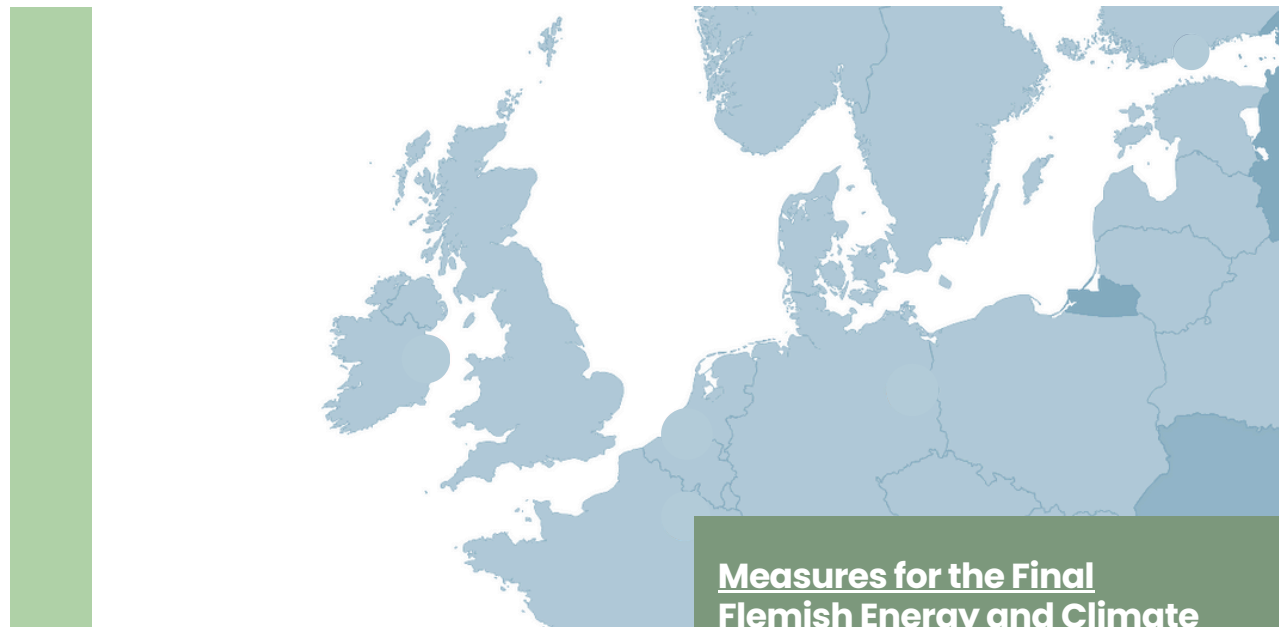
The Hungarian Environmental Protection Council is also happy to welcome a new Secretary General, Mr. István Csepregi, an environmental lawyer. He takes over from esteemed colleagues Erzebet Gergely and the interim Secretary General Dr. Miklós Bulla.

## 29<sup>th</sup> April – 'Beyond the 2030 Agenda'

At the end of April, the Sustainable Development Working Group convened to discuss the post-2030 agenda. The EEAC welcomed over 70 attendees, including members of the ESDN and the EESC to listen to the insights of our expert speakers, Körösi Csaba, Dr. Marianne Beisheim, and Miriam Rosa González. [Check out our website for the key takeaways!](#)



# RECENT COUNCIL UPDATES



Outside of EEAC work, it is also important to highlight some successful and engaging activities of our members. Although all work of our councils is important, for the purpose of keeping the newsletter concise, the secretariat has highlighted a selection of the recent council publications.

## **Regional Climate Bonus in Germany**

*German Sustainable Development Council (RNE), 14-03-2025*

This study examines the feasibility and distributional effects of introducing a regionally differentiated climate bonus ("Klimageld") in Germany. Drawing on Austria's model, which adjusts payments based on public transport access, it explores whether a similar system could work in the German context. It considers administrative challenges and equity impacts, and outlines alternative measures to better support vulnerable households. The study does not offer a definitive recommendation but contributes to the ongoing policy debate. (Currently only available in German).

## **Measures for the Final Flemish Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 (VEKP)**

***Minaraad, 20-03-2025***

The updated Flemish Energy and Climate Plan (VEKP 2021-2030) aims for a 40% to 47% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (compared to 2005). The Minaraad has provided advice on concrete measures to help close the gap to these targets. Focused on impactful measures, the Council considered both climate and socio-economic effects, with most recommendations emerging from new perspectives during the advisory process. (Dutch version only)

## **Strategy Statement for 2025-2028**

***The Irish National Economic and Social Council, 27-03-2025***

Informed by feedback from their corporate affairs team and analyst team, the Irish National Economic and Social Council released their mission, vision and strategic outcomes that will guide their work for the next four years.



## **A colossal missed opportunity: Ireland's climate action and the potential costs of missing target**

*The Irish Climate Change Advisory  
Council, 3-4-2025*

The Irish Climate Change Advisory Council and the Irish Fiscal Council released a report setting out the potential costs for Ireland if agreed EU targets are missed. The report suggests that Ireland must upgrade its energy grid, speed up the roll out of electric vehicles, and support changes in farming practices. They estimate that the investment in this would be less than half of the upper cost estimated if Ireland misses its climate targets.

## **Background report: Responsible use of temporary carbon dioxide removal**

*The Netherlands Scientific Climate Council,  
10-04-2025*

The Netherlands Scientific Climate Council (WKR) was asked when and under what conditions temporary carbon dioxide removal (CDR) can be used responsibly to meet the climate goals of the Paris Agreement. The core question addressed is when the use of temporary CDR is justified. The WKR's answer to this question is presented in its background report, 'Responsible use of temporary carbon dioxide removal'.

## **Three Positive Images of Futures**

*Finnish Expert Panel on Sustainable  
Development, 15-04-2025*

The FEPSD created three positive future imaginaries. These positive and realistic visions for a sustainable future are the "True-cost economy", "Planetary rules" and "Sustainability awareness revolution". The FEPSD now invites citizens to participate in imagining a sustainable future.

## **Upcoming EEAC Activities**

**June 4, 2025**

In-person meeting: Nature Restoration Law: Getting things done - Working Group Ecosystem Services.

**September 29, 30 & October 1 2025**

Annual EEAC Assembly: From Green to Clean

The annual EEAC assembly, this year held in Brussels, will focus on the Commissions push towards competitiveness and simplification and what this means for advisory councils. Specific topics of discussion will be on energy and the circular economy, agriculture and water, and health and well-being.



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