EEAC

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EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

# Newsletter

## Summer/Autumn 2026

Activities of the EEAC Network from June to October 2026



A WORD FROM THE BOARD

## A busy season for the Network

From June to October, the Network came together for a dozen webinars, exchanges and conferences – from public trust in climate policy and health in all policies to EU climate spending, carbon pricing and the use of AI in advisory work.

The season culminated in our Annual Assembly in Berlin, where councils reflected on their advisory role. Read on for the highlights, new publications from our member councils and the sessions coming up before the end of the year.

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# 01 Network activities

June – August

**FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR ACCEPTANCE**
Prof. Dr. Cornelia Betsch, University of Erfurt

1. **Effective** clearly helps reach the goal
2. **Fair** costs and benefits shared fairly
3. **Personal benefit** visible gains for households
4. **Public good** jobs, health, resilience
5. **Simple** low practical barriers

**15 JUNE** **WG SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

## Webinar: From backlash to buy-in

Chaired by Jürgen Janssen and Katriina Siivonen, the webinar drew 65 participants. Prof. Dr. Cornelia Betsch (University of Erfurt) and David Melches (More in Common Germany) showed how distrust feeds a "cooperation dilemma" – and how trusted voices such as firefighters and farmers can help rebuild trust.

**Key message: policies must be effective, fair, simple and deliver benefits people can feel.**

**16 JUNE** **WG HEALTH**

## Webinar: A Europe that cares

Moderated by Arnau Queralt Bassa and Valentin-Veron Toma, with keynotes from Caroline Costongs (EuroHealthNet) and Dr. Matthias Wismar (European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies). Rising health inequalities are strongly linked to socioeconomic factors, and should be treated as a strategic priority in EU policymaking.

**Key message: health should be considered in all policies, with closer cross-sectoral work.**

**6 JULY** **WG CLIMATE & ENERGY** **WG ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**

## MFF 2028–2034: Designing effective EU climate spending

Kate Grīnfogele (EEAC Secretariat) introduced the MFF proposal, before Jeanet Benschop and Rob Williams (Trinomics) presented their study on the MFF's spending architecture, targets and tracking. Xavier Sol (Transport & Environment) then updated participants on the negotiations.

**Key message: keeping the green transition a priority at EU level.**

**9 JULY** **NETWORK EXCHANGE**

## How do councils use social media?

Organised by the SRU, the session heard from Anneke Verschoor and Tuğçe Tuğrul on the Rli's LinkedIn-focused approach and its plans to share more about its working processes from 2027, followed by a roundtable.

**Key message: LinkedIn is the councils' most used and successful platform.**

**25 AUGUST** **WG CLIMATE & ENERGY**

## Informal council exchange session

Members identified common areas of interest and shared updates on their current and planned work, with a shared interest in exploring futuring, particularly among NESC, CADS and FEPSD.

**Futuring emerged as a common interest across councils.**

# 01 Network activities

September

HLPF 2026 · SDGS IN FOCUS

6 7 9 11 17

Water · Energy · Industry, innovation & infrastructure · Cities · Partnerships

**15%** of targets have regressed below 2015 levels

Half of targets show insufficient progress

15 SEPTEMBER · WG SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## Webinar: HLPF debrief

Miriam Rosa Gonzalez presented this year's HLPF review and Arnau Queralt-Bassa reflected on a "beyond 2030" agenda. Focusing on SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17, the session found implementation still far off track: half of the targets show insufficient progress and 15% have regressed below 2015 levels.

**Key message: civil society participation is shrinking, leaving key voices underrepresented.**

24 SEPTEMBER · WG CLIMATE & ENERGY

## Webinar: Social Climate Policy for Mitigation and Adaptation

Zofia Mańka (EEAC Secretariat) introduced the Social Climate Fund and Social Climate Plans: so far, the plans of Sweden, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta and Greece have been approved. The webinar then explored how the Fund and social infrastructure can make climate action fairer for households and communities.

**Key message: the Fund should drive lasting change, with councils tracking who benefits.**

28 SEPTEMBER · WG HEALTH

## Planning session

The working group came together to explore options and pathways for a long-term research agenda on placing health at the centre of climate adaptation, organised by season:

- **Winter** · Energy, housing and health
- **Spring** · Nature, biodiversity and health
- **Summer** · Heat and health
- **Fall** · Extreme weather, flooding and health

**Next steps: a 2027 work plan on health and adaptation solutions.**

29 SEPTEMBER · WG CLIMATE & ENERGY

## Plenary: EU Emissions Trading – Reviewing ETS1 and Introducing ETS2

In a joint session with the ICCN, Dr. Emma Leenders, Floris Taminiau and Sara Murawski (WKR) presented the Commission's proposal to revise ETS1 and the introduction of ETS2, with Folmer de Haan (Rli) moderating.

**Key message: the ETS risks being weakened, and the window to act is shrinking.**

# 01 Network activities

October




6 OCTOBER · BERLIN · UBA · SRU · EEAC NETWORK

## Conference on Planetary Boundaries and Sufficiency

European experts, policymakers and civil society came together to discuss issues on planetary boundaries, sufficiency, social justice and inclusive welfare. The conference featured three keynote speakers:

> **Johan Rockström** (PIK) – Facing the facts: The Planetary Boundaries Framework
>
> **Dirk Messner** (UBA) – What do we have to talk about – and how?
>
> **Wolfgang Lucht** (SRU) – Sufficiency and the unfinished project of Ecological Democracy

EEAC SESSION · Moderated by Johanna Kentala-Lehtonen

### Policies: Tackling problematic production and consumption patterns in EU Member States and regions

Three speakers explored how to move towards a society that prioritises well-being within social and ecological limits: Alicia Valero Delgado (Universidad de Zaragoza) on the material limits of the transition and the "spiral economy", Lassi Linnanen (Kestävyyspaneeli) on sufficiency solutions that avoid both deficiency and excess, and Niamh Garvey (NESC) on co-creating the transition with citizens.

**Key message from the discussion on social acceptance: sufficiency is still largely absent from public debate, even though everyday consumption in Europe is already excessive.**



7–8 OCTOBER · BERLIN · EEAC NETWORK

## EEAC Annual Assembly

This year's Assembly brought the councils together to reflect on how they are adapting their advisory work to changing political priorities, both domestically and at EU level, through a councils' roundtable, a science-policy session and Working Group sessions. It opened with two keynotes:

> KEYNOTE 1 · **Louis Meuleman**, European Environment Agency Scientific Committee
>
> KEYNOTE 2 · **Luisa Marelli**, European Commission Joint Research Centre

**Key message: in times of polycrisis, building alliances, communicating clearly, and framing the clean transition as a driver of competitiveness and resilience are key priorities.**

# 01 Network activities

October

14 OCTOBER

NETWORK EXCHANGE

## Exchange on best practices with AI

Douwe Wielenga (RIi) introduced the council's experience with using AI, followed by an open discussion on how and when councils use AI and the challenges, risks and opportunities they face.

**Key message: councils should learn and experiment with AI, while safeguarding confidentiality and being transparent about AI-assisted work.**




SECRETARIAT NEWS 26 AUGUST

## Welcome to our new interns

Iva Simeonova and Oriane Burke joined the Secretariat to support our research and communications work across the Network. Iva is a second-year Master's student in Governance of Sustainability at Leiden University; Oriane is completing her Master's in Environmental Policy at Sciences Po.



Iva Simeonova and Oriane Burke

# 02 Councils' publications

**FRDO-CFDD**
09.06

### Opinion on the macrobudgetary impacts of climate change

Climate change can lower GDP and worsen debt trajectories, and the costs of inaction are still underestimated; the council calls for swift transposition of Directive (EU) 2024/1265 and a new national adaptation strategy.

Read more →

**Minaraad**
11.06

### Opinion on the draft Flemish Nature Restoration Plan

Issued with SALV, SERV and SARO, the opinion calls for a stronger evidence base, clearer follow-up, more stakeholder involvement and faster implementation.

Read more →

**NESC**
16.06

### Social Cohesion: Report of the Young Adult Workshop

Outcomes of a participatory workshop with 18–25-year-olds on social cohesion, showing the value of involving young people directly in policy discussions.

Read more →

**CCAC**
16.06

### Annual Review 2026: Transport

Transport remains a key challenge for Ireland's climate transition: the review calls for expanded public transport, stronger EV charging and a more resilient system.

Read more →

**SRU**
18.06

### Environmental law between aspiration and reality

Germany's environmental laws are often implemented late or incompletely; the SRU proposes clearer responsibilities, digitalisation, stronger incentives and systematic evaluation.

Read more →

**CNADS**
30.07

### Opinion on the Sectoral Programme for Renewable Energy Acceleration Areas

Supports faster renewables in line with Portugal's climate goals, while protecting biodiversity and landscapes through transparent, evidence-based planning and participation.

Read more →

**ALSO PUBLISHED**

**SRU · 23.06**
Comments on the planned implementation of the EU Air Quality Directive

**Minaraad · 17.06**
An appropriate heating and cooling transition framework in Flanders

**WBGU · 26.06**
Chapter 1 – The environment shapes security

# 03 Secretariat briefings

The Secretariat's briefings keep advisory councils informed of the latest developments in sustainable development and the environment in Europe and internationally.

JUNE 2026 AGRICULTURE

## CAP 2028–2034: A comparative analysis of the proposed and current CAP frameworks

By Zofia Mańka

Compares the proposed CAP 2028–2034 with the current framework: one fund within National and Regional Partnership Plans, at least €300 billion for income and crisis support, and more flexibility for Member States.

Read the briefing →

JULY 2026 EU BUDGET

## The Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034

By Kate Grīnfogele

Reviews the proposed €1.98 trillion MFF for 2028–2034 with a focus on climate and the environment: its new structure, a 35% climate and environment spending target and "do no significant harm", and concerns over LIFE funding and the lack of a separate biodiversity target.

Read the briefing →

AUGUST 2026 BIODIVERSITY

## The EU Roadmap to Nature Credits

By Zofia Mańka and Oriane Burke

Unpacks the Commission's Roadmap towards Nature Credits: how certification and crediting aim to mobilise private finance for nature, and the challenges of measuring biodiversity, additionality and governance.

Read the briefing →

AUGUST 2026 CLIMATE & SOCIAL

## The Social Climate Fund & Social Climate Plans

By Zofia Mańka

Breaks down the Social Climate Fund, at least €86.7 billion for 2026–2032 to cushion ETS2, and the national Social Climate Plans, with Lithuania as a case study and lessons on consultation for councils.

Read the briefing →

SEPTEMBER 2026 BIOECONOMY

## The EU Bioeconomy Strategy and the multi-level policy landscape

By Oriane Burke

Examines the Commission's 2025 bioeconomy framework and its links with the Nature Restoration Regulation, the Common Agricultural Policy and the Circular Economy Action Plan.

Read the briefing →

SEPTEMBER 2026 ENERGY

## The EU Electrification Plan

By Iva Simeonova

Explains the Electrification Action Plan's aim to raise electricity's share of final energy use to 46% by 2040, and four key barriers: the price gap with gas, upfront costs, infrastructure and skills.

Read the briefing →

# 04 Upcoming events



NEW SERIES

## Beyond the 2030 Agenda: first session

**29 October · WG Sustainable Development**

Kicking off the new series, this session draws on the discussions from the HLPF debrief and on CADS's experience advising the Catalan government to explore what comes next for sustainable development policy as the 2030 deadline approaches.

**25 NOV**

### Annual Plenary Session 2026

**EEAC Network · Online via Microsoft Teams · 10:45–12:15**

The Network's yearly plenary brings member councils together online to take stock of the year and agree on the way forward.

**27 NOV**

### COP31 Debrief Session

**WG Climate & Energy**

Council staff and members who attended COP31 in Antalya will share their key takeaways, followed by an open exchange with colleagues across the Network.

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