What's New?

➤ President von der Leyen announced at the 9th World Water Forum that **Team Europe launched a new flagship initiative on transboundary water management in Africa** –making over 400 million euros available for cross-border water projects in Africa. She added that through the EU's new Global Gateway Investment Package, the "global arm of the European Green Deal", Team Europe will raise up to 300 billion euros towards 2027 to support large-scale projects in Africa and around the world.

> The **Dakar declaration** was adopted on 25 March at the 9th World Water Forum, as "A 'Blue Deal' for water security and sanitation for peace and development". It calls upon the international community to:
> o Guarantee the right to water and sanitation for all, esp. through legislative frameworks;
> o Ensure availability of the resources and resilience via sustainable and integrated management plans, by raising awareness on more sustainable and responsible production and consumption as well as by protecting wetlands, promoting conservation of traditional water systems, recycling and reuse of treated wastewater;
> o Ensure adequate funding, incl. via innovative financing mechanisms and private sector investment, and by effectively implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development;
> o Ensure inclusive water governance, incl. by promoting greater coherence with other policies (agriculture, rural development, health, biodiversity, energy and industry, etc.);
> o Enhance cooperation, esp. in the management of transboundary basins.

➤ In its **Versailles declaration** of 10 and 11 March 2022, the European Council invited the Commission to propose a **RePowerEU** plan by the end of May to reduce energy dependencies of the EU. It also announced that the EU would secure supply in critical raw materials by means of strategic partnerships, and promoting a circular economy and resource efficiency. It also called upon the Commission to present options to address rising food prices and the issue of global food security as soon as possible.

➤ The Commission announced on 23 March that it is stepping up its support to the **transformation of food systems**, by actively engaging in eight global Coalitions for Action, as a follow-up to the UN Food System Summit held in 2021. These coalitions will assist partner countries in their efforts to transform food systems. This is part of a new Communication on Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems (see below).

➤ In the context of the aggravation of the food security and nutrition due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU is reinforcing its political and financial commitment to partner countries in Africa. A total of €554 million in 2022 will be targeted at **increasing food security in Sahel and Lake Chad**, where millions of people already suffer an acute situation and whose situation could worsen.

➢ Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen signed an EU contribution agreement with Côte d'Ivoire on 30 March, to support **sustainable cocoa production**, employment, **low-carbon transition** as well as peace and security, for a total of €58 million.

➢ At the first **European Humanitarian Forum** held on 21-23 March 2022, a call for action was launched to work together as a Team Europe to address the humanitarian global food security crisis.

➢ To respond to soaring food prices and shortages in wheat resulting from the war in Ukraine, France launched on 5 April the FARM initiative (**Food & Agriculture Resilience Mission**), which would include a global food distribution mechanism for poorer nations. France aims to secure international agreement on its plan before the end of its six-month presidency.

FAO's Food Price Index hit its highest level ever in March, with the index for **cereal prices up 17.1%** from just a month earlier. 11 NGOs have alerted that **the ongoing food crisis has left 27 million people in West Africa in a state of hunger**, a number that could increase by 11 million over the next few months. Between 2007 and 2022, the number of people in need of food assistance in the West African region, including Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, increased from 7 to 27 million. This figure could rise to 38 million by June.

➢ UN Member States endorsed a historic resolution at the UN Environment Assembly on 2 March in Nairobi to **End Plastic Pollution** and forge an international legally binding agreement by 2024. The resolution addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design and disposal.

➢ After a 4th round of negotiations since 2018, UN member states **failed to agree on a treaty to protect the high seas from exploitation** –the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) ocean treaty. Its aim would be to create a legal framework for establishing vast marine protected areas to prevent loss of wildlife, oversee industrial fishing, and share out the genetic resources of the sea.

➢ **Our Ocean Conference** took place on 13-14 April in the island nation of Palau. Members of the Safe Seaweed Coalition requested a formal mandate to incorporate seaweed into its work.

➢ An **ice shelf** about the size of Rome **collapsed** in East Antarctica within days of record high temperatures, according to satellite data. Concordia station hit a record temperature of -11.8C on 18 March, more than 40°C warmer than seasonal norms.

➢ Atmospheric levels of **methane increased by a record amount** for the second year in a row in 2021, according to US government data. The concentration of methane in the Earth's atmosphere jumped by 17 parts per billion (ppb) in 2021.

➢ WHO warned that **99% of the world's population is breathing polluted air**, with higher levels of particulate matter in low and middle-income countries. As fossil fuels are responsible for most of the harmful emissions linked to acute and chronic sickness, WHO called for tangible steps to curb their use.

EU Policy Developments

NEW

➢ The Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive on **corporate sustainability due diligence**, on 23 February, to foster sustainable and responsible corporate behaviour. The new rules will ensure that businesses address adverse impacts of their actions, including in their value chains outside Europe. In developing countries, it will entail better protection of human rights and the environment, increased stakeholder awareness on sustainability issues, sustainable investment, improved sustainability-related practices, increased take-up of international standards and improved living conditions for people.

A new Communication on **Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems** was adopted on 23 March, stating that:

- Over the period 2021-2027, the EU will work on developing the sustainability of food systems with about 70 partner countries.
- Humanitarian assistance should be stepped up addressing food-deficit countries as well as countries affected by conflict in North Africa and the Middle East, in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- The EU will continue to support countries in the transformation towards resilient and sustainable agricultural and aquatic food systems.
- As a follow-up to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, the Commission will engage in eight coalitions that all aim at food system transformation, resilience and sustainable productivity growth[1].
- Through Horizon Europe, the EU will further invest in research and innovation to substitute the use of synthetic fertilisers, increase nitrogen efficiency, the sustainable use of biomass and the production of bio-based manure alternatives, while supporting the production and use of renewable energy.
- The EU will promote sustainable food production systems e.g. via mixed-farming, agro-ecology, organic farming and increasing crops able to fix nitrogen such as leguminous.
- It will boost the production of plant protein production to reduce dependence on feed imports and transform the EU food system, incl. with a shift towards more plant-based diets.

➢ A **Circular economy** package was adopted on 30 March, comprising:

- The Sustainable products policy initiative, which revises the Ecodesign Directive and proposes additional legislative measures with the aim to make products placed on the EU market more sustainable, i.e. more durable, reusable, repairable, recyclable, and energy-efficient.
- A Strategy on sustainable textiles, aiming to promote durable and recyclable/recycled textile products, free of hazardous substances, produced in respect of social rights and the environment, as well as to discourage "fast fashion".
- A Review of the Construction Product Regulation; to enhance the sustainability of these products, and protect health, safety and the environment.
- A proposal for empowering consumers in the green transition which will require producers to provide information on the durability and reparability of their products, as well as ban misleading information which would prevent consumers to make sustainable choices (e.g. not knowing about early obsolescence).

➢ A Revision of the **Industrial Emissions Directive** was adopted on 4 April:

- It covers over 30,000 large industrial plants and around 20,000 large poultry and pig farms in the EU –which are responsible for the emission of around half of all sulphur oxides and heavy metals into the air, around 40% of greenhouse gases and around 30% of nitrogen oxides.
- The control of air, soil and water/ groundwater pollution from these farms would ensure that livestock farming has much greater control over methane and ammonia emissions, with a coverage increase from 3% to 43% for methane emissions, and from 18% to 60% for ammonia.
- It also targets extractive industry installations (mines) for metals, rare earth metals and industrial mineral (not covering coal), as well as 'giga-factories' for electro-mobility batteries.
- A much greater access to information will be given to the public, especially via the revised Industrial Emissions Portal regulation.

COMING SOON

➢ The **Nature protection package**, expected on 23 March, has been postponed. It will include:
- A revision of EU rules on the Sustainable use of pesticides, as a follow up of the Farm to Fork Strategy
- Nature restoration targets (Protecting biodiversity), focused on the EU

➢ New strategy on international energy engagement: an international partnerships and energy package, through which the EU will reshape its energy diplomacy for global access to sustainable, affordable and secure energy supplies under changing circumstances.

➢ **Zero pollution** package, incl.:
  o A revision of the Regulation on classification, labelling and packaging (Q2)
  o Revised lists of surface and groundwater pollutants for integrated water management (Q2)
  o A revision of EU ambient air quality legislation (Q3)

➢ **Climate** measures package, incl.:
  o A review of EU rules on fluorinated greenhouse gases (Q2)
  o EU framework for harmonised measurement of transport and logistics emissions (Q4)
  o A review of the CO2 emission standards for heavy-duty vehicles (Q4)
  o Carbon removal certification (Q4)

➢ **Plastics** package, incl.:
  o Policy framework for bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics (Q2)
  o Restriction on microplastics (Q4)
  o Measures to reduce the release of microplastics in the environment (Q4)

➢ EU Action Plan on **Wildlife** trafficking (ISC in July)

New Reports

➢ WWF's report published in March "Bridging the Gap: Translating political commitments into an ambitious **Global Biodiversity Framework**" found that, despite world leaders publicly committing to secure an ambitious and transformative global biodiversity agreement capable of reversing biodiversity loss by 2030, they have not yet collectively delivered on these promises in the negotiation room. More specific areas to be strengthened include: securing a milestone/outcome to halt human induced extinction of species from 2022; including a milestone to halve the footprint of production and consumption by 2030; securing references to nature-based solutions; committing to reform financial systems, including through ending all harmful incentives and aligning public and private financial flows to be nature positive; including recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

➢ A report on "**Integrating African Climate Priorities into the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**", published on 18 March by the South African Institute of International Affairs, shows how addressing the twin challenge of climate change and biodiversity loss requires greater synergy and integration across these two sectors, and for them to be treated as two components of the same challenge. They share a common driver – human activity, and when not integrated, supposed solutions can easily result in 'mal-adaptations', with climate solutions undermining biodiversity goals and resulting in nature-negative outcomes, and thus climate-negative outcomes. Such an approach includes Nature-based Solutions as well as participatory inclusion of all stakeholders.

➢ "**Water Security in Africa: A Preliminary Assessment**", a report issued by UNU-INWEH in March, summarises the results of a preliminary assessment of water security in 54 countries in Africa. It reveals that the state of water-related data on just about any water issue in Africa remains 'very poor' despite all efforts undertaken to date.

➢ "**Seeing the Invisible : A Strategic Report on Groundwater Quality**" issued by the World Bank in March, describes why, and how, groundwater quality is vital to human health, agriculture, industry and the environment.

The latest **IPCC report "[Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change](#)"** provides an updated global assessment of global emissions and examines main sectors of emission and their mitigation potential:

o Global greenhouse gas emissions have increased since 2010 across all major sectors. Developed country emissions barely changed, while those from the rest of the world grew, with an increasing share from urban areas and increases from rising activity levels in industry, energy supply, transport, agriculture and buildings.

o Global GHG emissions in 2030 associated with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) announced prior to COP26 would make it **likely that warming will exceed 1.5°C during the 21st century** and policies implemented by the end of 2020 are projected to result in higher global emissions than those implied by NDCs.

o Limiting warming to below 2°C requires **emissions to peak before 2025** and **be reduced by 43% by 2030**. Meeting the Paris Agreement objective implies urgent and ambitious action towards 'net zero'.

o Due to its much shorter lifetime, **methane** has a disproportionate impact on near-term temperature, and is estimated to account for almost a third of the warming observed to date. Methane is thus particularly important in determining whether or when 1.5C is reached.

o Reducing GHG emissions across the **energy sector** requires major transitions, incl. a substantial reduction in overall fossil fuel use, the deployment of low-emission energy sources, energy efficiency and conservation. Policy packages tailored to national contexts and technological characteristics have been effective in supporting low-emission innovation and technology diffusion, e.g. photovoltaic or wind energy.

o Progressing towards net zero GHG emissions from **industry** would be feasible through the adoption of new production processes using low and zero GHG electricity, hydrogen, fuels, carbon management, and with coordinated action throughout value chains.

o **Cities** can achieve net-zero emissions through the systemic transition of infrastructure and urban form through low-emission development pathways, but only if emissions are reduced within and outside of their administrative boundaries through supply chains.

o In the **transport** sector, electric vehicles powered by low emissions electricity offer the largest decarbonisation potential for land-based transport, on a life cycle basis. Changes in urban form, in combination with programmes and transport infrastructure that encourage changes in consumer behaviour (e.g. transport pricing, bike pathways) could reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries and slow growth in emissions in developing countries.

o **Digital** technologies can also contribute to mitigation of climate change and the achievement of several SDGs, e.g. sensors, Internet of Things, robotics, artificial intelligence, low-emission technologies –although they involve trade-offs such as electronic waste or increase in demand.

o Mitigation in the **Agriculture, Forest and Other Land Use** (AFOLU) sector can deliver large-scale GHG emission reductions, esp. through reduced deforestation in tropical regions as well as conservation, improved management and restoration of forests and other ecosystems. Sustainable crop and livestock management, carbon sequestration in agriculture, shifting to balanced, sustainable healthy diets (esp. plant-based), reducing food loss and waste are other key factors, which will also enhance agricultural resilience and food security. It is important to assist countries/regions through an integrated approach involving indigenous peoples, local farmers and communities.

o By 2020, over 20% of global GHG emissions were covered by **carbon taxes or emissions trading systems**, although coverage and prices have been insufficient to achieve deep reductions. In many countries, policies have enhanced energy efficiency, reduced rates of deforestation and accelerated technology deployment, leading to avoided and in some cases reduced or removed emissions.

o There is sufficient global capital to close **investment gaps** but there are barriers to redirect it to climate action, incl. inadequate assessment of climate-related risks and investment opportunities, mismatch between available capital and investment needs, country indebtedness levels, economic vulnerability, limited institutional capacities as well as unattractive risk-return profile. Scaled-up public grants for mitigation and adaptation funding for vulnerable regions, esp. in Sub-Saharan Africa, would be cost-effective and have high social returns, incl. access to basic energy.

o Climate change mitigation action designed and conducted **in the context of sustainable development**, equity, and poverty eradication will be **more acceptable, durable and effective**.

In response to the report, rural development agency IFAD is arguing that agriculture can be part of the solution to climate change, with Associate Vice President Jyotsna Puri saying that "we need to significantly increase investments in nature-based solutions and promote sustainable agriculture techniques, while conserving and restoring forests, mangroves and peatlands, which have a strong mitigation potential."

➢ A new study published in *Nature Climate Change* on 7 March shows "Pronounced loss of Amazon rainforest resilience since the early 2000s", based on satellite data. The **Amazon is approaching a tipping point**, after which the rainforest would be lost with profound implications for the global climate and biodiversity, as it stores huge amounts of carbon.

➢ A study published in *Scientific reports* by the Institute of Marine Research from Norway, has found that **microplastic particles have spread from European rivers** into the Arctic Ocean, the Nordic Seas and Baffin Bay. It emphasises that the distribution of sampled synthetic particles covering a wide time frame of anthropogenic influence suggests a system in full saturation. This may have large consequences to natural ecosystem health, highlighting an ever-increasing need for better waste management.

➢ An assessment published by UNCTAD on 16 March, "The impact on trade and development of the war in Ukraine", shows that as many as **25 African countries, including many LDCs, import more than one third of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine**, and 15 of them, over half. The longer-term effects of rising food prices are hard to predict, historical data points to the potential for political instability.

➢ The Global Alliance for the Future of Food issued in March a report on "Untapped Opportunities for Climate Action: **An Assessment of Food Systems in Nationally Determined Contributions** (NDCs)" covering 14 countries. Unsustainable food systems result in food insecurity and dependency on imports, while accounting for around one-third of GHG emissions. Yet they are absent from most Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

➢ A new report was released on 24 March on "**Agricultural and food system resilience**: Increasing capacity and advising policy" by the Global Challenges Research Fund - Agricultural and Food System Resilience showing that even a small increase in average temperatures could trigger severe food system shocks, e.g. Malawi's corn yields could fall by one fifth by 2050 and demand for water irrigation in South Africa could rise by 84%. Climate-smart policies in sub-Saharan Africa could avert shocks and increase yields.

➢ "Ocean-based climate action" published in April by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the European Academy of Sciences presents various solutions to reduce the causes and consequences of climate change, globally and locally, esp. by promoting the restoration and conservation of coastal vegetation or by enhancing Open Ocean Productivity and alkalinisation, as well as by supporting biological and ecological adaptation, and by enhancing societal adaptation.

➢ EU GCCA+ Review of Climate Issue N°9 "**Turning the economy blue**" presents blue economy perspectives in vulnerable countries, nature-based solutions for coasts and oceans, a few country case studies as well as the EU GCCA+ barometer of blue economy actions.

Calendar

Upcoming

➢ **28 April**: UN High Level Meeting – Review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, New York
➢ **2 May**: FAO XV World Forestry Congress in South Korea
➢ **9 May**: UN Forum on Forests – 17th session - New York

- ➢ **9-20 May**: [COP15 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification](#) (UNCCD) in Abidjan
- ➢ **22 May**: [International day for biological diversity](#)
- ➢ **2-3 June**: international meeting ["Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity"](#), convened by the UN General Assembly and to be hosted by Sweden, with the support of Kenya.
- ➢ **5 June**: [World Environment Day](#)
- ➢ **6-9 June**: Second International [High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development](#)", 2018-2028
- ➢ **8 June**: [World Oceans Day](#)
- ➢ **21-22 June**: [European Development Days](#) (EDD) under the theme 'Global Gateway: building sustainable partnerships for a connected world'.
- ➢ **18-23 July**: [Inaugural IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress](#)
- ➢ **7-9 September:** [World BioEconomy Forum 2022](#), with talks on climate and climate mitigation
- ➢ **Q3:** second part of the [UN Biodiversity Conference](#) (COP 15), Kunming, China (postponed from April-May)

Past

- ➢ **28 February- 2 March:** [UNEA 5](#) - Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals
- ➢ **28 February**: [Middle East and North Africa Regional Climate Week](#)
- ➢ **3 March:** [World Wildlife Day](#)
- ➢ **3-4 March:** [UNEP@50](#)
- ➢ **14-15 March:** [Energy transitions 2022 by Chatham House](#)
- ➢ **15 March:** [Strengthening the business case for industrial decarbonisation](#), EP
- ➢ **21-26 March**: [9th World Water Forum](#) in Dakar, Senegal; DG INTPA held a side-event on Water security; Dakar declaration: right to WASH,water cooperation, inclusive governance
- ➢ **21 March**: [International Day of Forests](#)
- ➢ **22 March**: [World Water Day](#)
- ➢ **21-26 March**: [World Water Forum](#), Dakar
- ➢ **4 April:** Politico event on '[Making greener products the norm in the EU?](#)'
- ➢ **6 April:** Politico event on "[how can carbon farming contribute to Europe's climate goals](#)?"
- ➢ **21 April**: EP Intergroup event on "[Driving greener food & drink choices: Unlocking the potential of the European Commission's proposal on substantiating green claims](#)"
- ➢ **22 April**: [Earth Day](#)
- ➢ **25-28 April**: [UN Financing for Development Forum](#), incl. the launch of the Investing in Sustainable Development Report

Training and e-learning

📖 Trainings, webinars, e-learning

- Webinar on ["**Sustainable Forest Management** (SFM) in EU international partnerships"](#)

- EU Webinar **Series on Nutrition**:
  - o The 1st one was "[Setting the Scene: The current global nutrition situation and the response of the European Commission](#)" (recording available at the bottom of the page)
  - o The 2nd one concerned the "[Nutrition Policy Marker – how to use it to identify and report nutrition investments](#)" (recording available at the bottom of the page)

- The [E-course on Circular Economy](#), aiming to strengthen your understanding of circularity and of policy measures that accelerate the CE transition, is divided into 5 modules:
  - o Module 1: Going circular what it means and why it matters
  - o Module 2: The EU ambition: leading a global transition to the circular economy

- o   Module 3: Circular economy transition opportunities
- o   Module 4: The circular economy in practice
- o   Module 5: Measuring progress towards a circular economy

- If you did not have the opportunity to follow them in November and December, presentations made at the webinars on "**Greening EU Cooperation**" are still available for the following topics:
  - o   [Webinar N° 1: Integrated Landscape management can make a difference to a green and just transition](#)
  - o   [Webinar N° 2: Green & Sustainable cities](#)
  - o   [Webinar N° 3: Updates on Green Deal policy developments](#)
  - o   [Webinar N° 4: Greening budget and greening public finance management](#)
  - o   [Webinar N° 5: Tracking climate and biodiversity funding – how to use Rio markers?](#)

- The [Sustainable Wildlife Management Knowledge Hub](#) offers methodological tools, technical briefs, analysis, etc. related to this international initiative that aims to improve wildlife conservation and food security. Topics cover legal framework, sustainable hunting and fishing, alternative proteins, consumption, social safeguards and One Health.

- CITES [MIKE E-learning platform](#): you can find there training courses and guides on the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants programme.

- "[Empowering countries to monitor food security](#)": the recording of this webinar is available online, incl. a Ppt presentation by the FAO on improving food security measurement methods and empowering countries in data collection, analysis and use.

🌀 Tools available

- [Sentinel online](#) (developed by the European Space Agency) provides images and information on key topics: Sentinel-1: a radar view of the world; Sentinel-2: high resolution optical land monitoring; Sentinel-3: global measurements of oceans and land; Sentinel-5P: unprecedented information on global air quality, incl. methane emissions hotspots.

- [EC-UNEP Interactive Country Fiches](#) provide a system of interactive and updatable environmental profiles for the analysis of environmental situations and performances of countries around the world. Covering eight environmental pillars, this online tool aims to provide information on key national policies and actions, and offers a single-entry point to over a hundred of up-to-date datasets.

- The [Africa Knowledge Platform](#) is a gateway to data and information on Africa's social, economic, territorial and environmental development, developed by the JRC.

- The [integrated Future Estimator for Emissions and Diets (iFEED)](#), developed by the GCRF Africa project, is a first-of-its-kind tool that shows how climate change and government policy will affect crop yields, land and water use, while presenting climate extremes modelling as well as trade and nutrition analysis.

Green (Deal) tip #9 – Save water and the oceans!

On March 22, we celebrated [World Water Day](#). It is an occasion to learn more about [SDG 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all](#), as well as raise awareness on threats to this precious resource and to the oceans. Here are a few concrete tips to save water and protect the oceans on a daily basis:

- Shift to a more plant-based diet: reducing your meat and dairy consumption is, at individual level, the No 1 difference you can make to protect not only the climate and rainforests, food security, but also

water resources[1]. Did you know that 1 kg of beef requires 15,000 litres of water –the equivalent of water used during a year for a 4' daily shower?

- Take advantage of new technology and consider replacing your old appliances with more efficient ones like water-efficient shower heads, taps, toilets, washing machines and dishwashers.
- Opt for tap water instead of bottled. You can use water filters or install systems to reduce the hardness of water for your whole home or just on certain taps.
- If you have a garden, choose plants fitting your local climate conditions. Collect rainwater and water your plants early in the morning or in the evening to avoid evaporation.
- Try to avoid single-use plastics (incl. disposable masks), which often end up in seas and oceans.
- Support organisations dedicated to removing marine litter such as Ocean Cleanup, a non-profit organisation developing and scaling technologies to rid the oceans of plastic, or 4Ocean, a public benefit corporation that cleans plastics out the oceans and coastlines, and recycles them into bracelets to finance their work.

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[1] See a summary of a study published in Science on the subject.