



What's New?

The **UN General Assembly** adopted on 28 July a [historic resolution](#) declaring that **access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment** is a **universal human right**. The text was voted by 161 countries.

- It notes that the right to a healthy environment is related to existing international law;
- It affirms that its promotion requires the full implementation of multilateral environmental agreements;
- It recognises that environmental damage due to climate change, unsustainable management and use of natural resources, air, land and water pollution, unsound management of chemicals and waste, biodiversity loss, interfere with the enjoyment of this right.

- At the [opening of Africa Climate Week in Libreville](#) on 28 August to prepare for the COP27 UN climate conference in Egypt in November, [African countries called out climate injustice](#). Egyptian Foreign Minister said that, despite contributing less than four percent of global emissions, Africa is one of the most devastated by the impacts of climate change and is obliged to spend about 2 to 3% of its GDP per year to adapt to these impacts, with limited financial means and scant levels of support.
- [No agreement was reached to protect marine biodiversity in international waters](#), in a fifth round of discussions which ended on 27 August, and were meant to establish a **UN Ocean Treaty**. Another round of negotiations is expected to be launched by the end of the year.
- **Massive floods** in Pakistan have killed over a thousand people, while damaging more than one million homes. The [International Federation of the Red Cross said](#) that South Asia is grappling with unprecedented rainfall this monsoon season, causing flash floods and landslides wreaking havoc in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. In Sudan, the worst flooding in a decade also caused thousands of people to lose their homes.
- Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia have experienced the **worst drought in over 40 years**, after successive failed rainy seasons. It led to a [severe food security issue in the region](#), with 22 million people at risk of starvation, as well as to the forced displacement of more than 1 million persons. UNICEF has warned that children in the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions could die in devastating numbers unless urgent support is provided.
- The number of people facing [acute food insecurity worldwide has more than doubled](#) to 345 million since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict and climate change, according to the World Food Programme (WFP). Food prices have surged by about 20% this year.
- The FAO has proposed a [Food Import Financing Facility](#) to help the 62 hardest-hit nations ensure their populations can access food. It was presented to G-20 finance ministers and International Monetary Fund officials in July, but the proposal has not been taken up yet.

- On 3 August, UN Secretary-General António Guterres [urged governments](#) to **tax oil companies for profiting off the energy crisis** caused by the war in Ukraine.
- [Nutrition advocates are looking up to the 27th UN Climate Change Conference \(COP 27\)](#) in November, under the banner of a joint [Memorandum of Understanding](#) signed last June by the WWF and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. While agriculture is responsible for about 1/3 of greenhouse gas emissions, this initiative focuses on increasing access to sustainable diets that are healthy both for the planet and for people.
- The [FAO has warned that 90% of Earth's topsoil will be at risk by 2050](#). On 27 July, it called for more action by countries and partners who signed up to the [Global Soil Partnership](#) over the last decade.
- On 3 August, **India's** Parliament passed the **Energy Conservation Bill 2022** defining a national carbon policy. India, one of the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters, is aiming to reach net zero emissions by 2070 and has started to update its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to include a **50% target for renewables in the power mix by 2030**. Industry is also getting on board as Indian Oil Corp, the country's top refiner, has set a [2046 net zero carbon emissions goal](#).
- **Australia's** Lower House of Parliament passed a **climate bill** on 4 August, that will commit the government to **cutting carbon emissions by at least 43% from 2005 levels by 2030**.
- On the other hand, the **US Supreme Court** released a [ruling](#) on 30 June **limiting the Environmental Protection Agency's power to regulate emissions** from fossil fuel-fired power plants, in a major environmental case with far-reaching impacts. This has been classified a "devastating" outcome by environmental lawyers, climate scientists and activists alike.

EU Policy Developments

NEW

- On 20 July, the Commission adopted a [Communication on "Save gas for a safe winter"](#), as well as a [Proposal for a Council Regulation on coordinated demand reduction measures for gas](#). This package aims to tackle further potential disruptions in gas supplies from Russia in a coordinated manner at EU level, including a target for all Member States to reduce gas demand by 15% between 1 August 2022 and 31 March 2023. It also contains a European Gas Demand Reduction Plan which sets out measures, principles and criteria for coordinated demand reduction.
- The EP adopted on 29 July a [Resolution on the proposal for a regulation on commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation](#). Its amendments extend the scope of the regulation to other commodities such as rubber, maize, other meat in addition to beef (pigmeat, sheep and goats, poultry, as well as processed beef), sugar cane and charcoal, while mentioning the compliance with international standards on customary tenure rights and indigenous people, and last but not least, bringing the cut-off date one year forward, to 31 December 2019.
- On 13 July, MEPs adopted the [revision of 2 Directives on energy](#):
 - the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), notably with the aim to raise the share of renewables in the EU's final energy consumption to 45% by 2030 – a target also backed by the European Commission under its RepowerEU package;
 - the revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED), with new targets raised to 40% in final energy consumption and 42.5% in primary energy consumption.
- The European Parliament rejected on 6 July a motion to oppose the inclusion of nuclear and gas as environmentally sustainable economic activities in the EU Taxonomy. The [Climate Complementary Delegated Act](#) was published in the Official Journal on 15 July 2022 and it will apply from 1 January 2023.

- On 29 June, the Commission adopted a [Communication on its “2022 Strategic Foresight Report Twinning the green and digital transitions in the new geopolitical context”](#). It sets out a forward-looking strategic reflection on the interactions between these “twin” transitions, esp. by mobilising digital technologies to strengthen energy security, enable greener transport, galvanise the industry’s climate-neutrality, green buildings, as well as enable smart and greener farming.

COMING
SOON

- [Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on nature restoration](#), the proposal of which was submitted by the Commission end of June to the Council and Parliament, was just submitted to a last public consultation. This initiative is one of the key measures announced in the EU’s 2030 Biodiversity Strategy. It will propose legally binding nature restoration targets of terrestrial, coastal and freshwater ecosystems, marine ecosystems and urban ecosystems, as well as of pollinator populations, agricultural ecosystems and forest ecosystems in the EU.
- **Council Conclusions on Climate and Finance:** expected to be adopted on 7 October 2022.
- **Council Conclusions on Biodiversity** were [discussed in July](#) during an informal ENVI meeting and will be adopted at the October Environment Council meeting. They should ensure a strong and ambitious position for the EU at the UN Biodiversity Conference to be held in Montreal in December, also in view of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) expected to be adopted during the conference.
- **Zero pollution package**, incl.:
 - A revision of the Regulation on classification, labelling and packaging (Q3)
 - Revised lists of surface and groundwater pollutants for integrated water management (Q3)
 - A revision of EU ambient air quality legislation (Q3)
- **Plastics package**, incl.:
 - Policy framework for bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics (Q3)
 - Restriction on microplastics (Q4)
 - Measures to reduce the release of microplastics in the environment (Q4)
- **Circular Economy Package II**, incl.:
 - Review of the Packaging and packaging waste directive (Q3);
 - Proposal for a Regulation on substantiating environmental claims using the Product/ Organisation Environmental Footprint methods (Q3)
 - Review of the Urban Wastewater Treatment directive (Q3)
- **Climate measures package**, incl.:
 - EU framework for harmonised measurement of transport and logistics emissions (Q4)
 - A review of the CO2 emission standards for heavy-duty vehicles (Q4)
 - Carbon removal certification (Q4)

New Reports and publications

- JRC study [“Towards a green & digital future”](#) examines how the **green and digital transitions** can be successful simultaneously. While these ‘twin’ transitions can reinforce each other in many areas, they are not automatically aligned, for instance digital technologies have substantial environmental footprints that go against the targets of the green transition. The study addresses this challenge by focusing on five of the most GHG emitting sectors: agriculture, buildings and construction, energy, energy-intensive industries, and transport and mobility.

- In a study published on 25 August in *Science Daily*, Harvard scientists stress the fact that “[‘Dangerous’ and ‘extremely dangerous’ heat stress \[is\] to become more common by 2100](#)” as a result of combinations of heat and humidity, even if countries manage to meet the Paris Agreement goal of keeping global warming to 2°C.
- An issue paper released in August on “[‘Harnessing Nationally Determined Contributions to tackle loss and damage in Least Developed Countries’](#)” highlights that low-income countries are more likely to suffer from loss and damage caused by climate change. In this risk analysis examining 173 nations, the International Institute for Environment and Development shows that this can help LDCs make a case for additional climate finance, technology and capacity-building support needed by them to tackle loss and damage.
- **Methane is four times more sensitive to global warming** than previously thought, as revealed by a [new study](#) published in July in the journal *Nature Communication*. Rising temperatures contribute to produce more methane by speeding up microbe activity in wetlands for example, while slowing down the removal of methane from the atmosphere, and they cause increasing numbers of wildfires that reduce the availability of hydroxyl radicals that can deteriorate methane in the upper atmosphere.
- A study on “[‘Greenland ice sheet climate disequilibrium and committed sea-level rise’](#)” was published in the journal *Nature Climate Change* on 29 August. It reveals that global heating to date will cause an absolute minimum **sea-level rise** of 27cm from Greenland melting ice cap alone, which is likely to more than double within this century [according to professors who led the research](#). However, scientists stress that a collapse of the colossal East Antarctic ice sheet, which would lead to a 52-metre rise in sea levels if it all melted, could be averted if rapid climate action is taken.
- A new research published in *Nature Climate Change* on 15 August shows how “[‘Climate change threatens terrestrial water storage over the Tibetan Plateau’](#)”. This comprehensive study projects **near-total loss of freshwater storage in parts of Asia scenario by mid-century** under mid-range carbon emissions, as a result of combined effects of climate drivers, leading to glacier retreat and subsurface water loss. The Tibetan Plateau supplies freshwater for nearly 2 billion people living downstream.
- In an [article](#) released in August as a follow-up to the publication of his book *Regenesi*s, George Monbiot provides a stunning analysis of the **impact of pasture-fed meat and milk production on land use, wild species loss or destruction and carbon emissions**. While arable crops, a big part of which are fed to farm animals, occupy 12% of the planet’s land surface, far more land (about 26%) is used for grazing. Yet, across this vast area, pasture-fed animals produce only 1% of the world’s protein.
- While data sets on food security are often not sex disaggregated, a study released on 4 August by CARE, “[‘Food Security and Gender Equality: A synergistic understudied symphony’](#)”, found that **150 million more women than men were food insecure in 2021**. Despite women and girls being in charge of 90% of food providing and preparation, they eat last and less than men and boys, often skipping meals altogether in food insecure countries.
- In Brazil, **Amazon deforestation went up 20% last year**, with the equivalent of losing trees at a rate of 18 per second according to a the [annual report on deforestation in Brazil](#), released by Mapbiomass. This organisation also [monitored fires](#) and found a **7% increase of fires in the Amazon region** in the first 7 months of this year.
- **Legalising mining on indigenous land** and other protected areas in **Brazil’s Amazon rainforest** would lead to thousands of square kilometres in **new deforestation**, according to a [study](#) published on 28 July in the journal *Nature Sustainability*.
- A new [research paper published in Nature](#) on 10 August analyses the health of trees in north and South America: global heating, along with changes in soils, wind and available nutrients, is rapidly **changing the composition of forests**, making them far less resilient and prone to diseases, with trees advancing into previously barren tundra in the north while dying off further south. Many areas of forest are now becoming more susceptible to ferocious wildfires.

- **Climate finance** provided and mobilised by developed countries for climate action in developing countries reached USD 83.3 billion in 2020, according to [new OECD analysis](#) released on 29 July. This is a further 4% increase from 2019 and followed a 1% increase from 2018 to 2019. However, it **still falls short of the goal** for developed countries to provide and mobilise USD 100 billion a year for developing countries by 2020, especially as this increase was almost cancelled out by that year's global inflation of 3.2%.
- A [study](#) published in *Climatic Change* on 12 July on **national attributions of climate damages** is the first one to assess the economic impacts that individual countries have caused to other countries through their contributions to global warming. Its analysis found that climate-warming activity from five countries – the US, China, Russia, India, Brazil and Indonesia, caused USD 6 trillion in global losses to other countries in lost global income since 1990. The US on their own inflicted more than \$1.9tn in damage to other countries from the effects of its GHG emissions.
- The [Net Zero Stocktake](#) released end of June assesses the **status and trends of net zero targets** set across countries, sub-national governments and companies, based on the '4P' criteria methodology (net zero Pledge, published Plan, action to Proceed, Publishing progress reports). Among its interesting findings: of the 128 countries with a net zero target, 104 commit to achieving net zero target between 2041 and 2050 only, as well as most cities assessed; less than 50% of national and sub-national GHG targets explicitly include both CO2 and other GHGs such as methane, which is problematic given the high warming potential of this gas.

Calendar



Upcoming

- **7-9 September:** [World BioEconomy Forum 2022](#), with talks on climate and climate mitigation
- **5-7 October:** [9th OECD Forum on Green Finance and Investment](#), virtual conference
- **6-18 November:** [UN climate change conference 2022 \(COP 27\)](#) in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt
- **5-17 December:** [15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties \(COP 15\) to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#) in Montreal, Canada
- **February 2023:** Climate and environment week organised by DG INTPA with EU Delegations



Past

- **21-22 June:** [European Development Days](#): recording of the sessions is available on the main site and [proceedings are available here](#)
- **27 June-1 July:** [UN Ocean Conference](#) in Lisbon
- **5 July:** UNEP Youth and Education Alliance - [YEA! Global Summit](#)
- **5-18 July:** UN [High-level political forum on sustainable development 2022](#)
- **18-23 July:** [Inaugural IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress](#)
- **24-25 August:** [1st International Conference on Food Waste to Food Sustainability](#), held in Hong-Kong

Training and e-learning

Trainings, webinars, e-learning

-  'European Green Deal - Greening EU cooperation' webinar series N°6:

- [Webinar N°1: Water and Climate Change Adaptation](#) (13 September)
- [Webinar N°2: Forest-based value chains and wood](#) (20 September)
- [Webinar N°3: Nationally Determined Contributions & their Monitoring, reporting and verification \(MRV\) system – from the Paris Agreement on Climate](#) (27 September)
- [Webinaire N°4 : Contributions Déterminées Nationales & leur système de mesure, rapportage et vérification \(MRV\), issues de l'Accord de Paris sur le Climat](#) (27 septembre)
- [Webinar N°5: Transboundary water management](#) (4 October)
- [Webinar N°6: Valuing ecosystem services and the use of nature-based solutions - Embedding Biodiversity in the EU's external cooperation](#) (12 October)

Tools available

- 🌿 The [Net Zero Tracker](#) provides updated data on climate performance of top 100 largest US companies. It also provides explanations on what “net zero” means concretely for companies, incl. in terms of value chains emissions.
- 🌿 [UNDDR Global climate indicators, risks and the Sustainable Development Goals, visually mapped](#): this contributing paper is a very practical tool to visualise the impacts and connexions that the 7 state-of-the-climate indicators (atmospheric CO₂, ocean acidification, global mean surface temperature, ocean heat content, sea ice extent, glacier mass balance, sea level rise) have on, and with, the SDGs.

Green tip #12 – Less waste!

If you're going back to work filled with energy and good resolutions, take this opportunity to reduce your waste and energy footprint. Here are a few areas where you can make a difference:

- **Avoid plastic waste:**
 - Bring **your own mug** to the cafeteria
 - Use **reusable shopping bags** (incl. for veggies and fruit) and even **reusable bottles** if you can buy liquid laundry product or other washing products from dispensers (more and more organic shops and even supermarkets have them).
 - Try **'solid' shampoo** in bars, just as good as the ones in a plastic bottle!
- **Avoid paper waste:**
 - **Print only necessary** documents, on **both sides** of the sheet.
 - **Reuse printed pages** if printed only on one side.
- **Avoid electronic/digital waste, while saving resources and energy:**
 - **Keep your smartphone and electronic devices** as long as you can (in addition to the electronic waste produced, many metals need to be extracted to produce them, also involving pollution and non-decent work in developing countries).
 - **Save battery life:** minimise notifications, disable location services, remove unused apps, download only necessary ones, dim the screen, use airplane mode whenever possible.
 - **Send less e-mails;**
 - **Use audio** rather than video in meetings.

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