



## What's New?

The **UN 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27)** was held in Sharm el-Sheikh from 7 to 20 November.

- A breakthrough agreement was reached on the last day of the conference, to provide “**loss and damage**” funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters.
  - Governments also agreed to establish a ‘transitional committee’ to make recommendations on how to operationalize both the new funding arrangements and the fund at COP28 next year. The first meeting of the transitional committee is expected to take place before the end of March 2023.
  - Parties also agreed on the institutional arrangements to operationalize the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage, to catalyse technical assistance to developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.
- The [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) *inter alia*:
  - Recognizes that limiting global warming to 1.5 °C requires rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions of 43 per cent by 2030 relative to the 2019 level;
  - Calls upon Parties to accelerate the development of technologies and adoption of policies to transition towards low-emission energy systems, incl. by accelerating efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.
  - Emphasizes the importance of protecting biodiversity and conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, incl. through forests and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as GHG sinks and reservoirs.
- A more [critical analysis of the results](#) by Chatham House highlights that:
  - Many countries said they felt pressured to [give up on tougher commitments for limiting global warming to 1.5°C](#) in order for the landmark deal on the loss and damage fund to go through.
  - Stronger than usual oil and gas industry presence led to a higher number of meetings focused on decarbonisation of the sector. Major producer countries such as Canada and Saudi Arabia were keen to emphasize technologies to ‘clean up’ rather than phase down their fuels as the future.
  - Despite the efforts of many other countries, the final decision text failed to mention the phasing out of fossil fuels, only mentioning “efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies”.
  - Forests, peatlands, and nature-based solutions did not receive the attention they deserve in guaranteeing climate security.
  - Agriculture and food security were discussed with a focus on technology innovations, while missing out an in-depth reflection on food systems considering their huge impact on climate change.

On the side-lines of the Conference:

- [The EU and the African Union announced](#) a new **Team Europe Initiative on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Africa** as part of the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package. This TEI will bring together existing and new climate change adaptation programmes of over EUR 1 billion, including EUR 60 million for loss and damage from the overall EU contribution.

- [President von der Leyen signed five Memoranda of Understanding for a Forest Partnership](#) with Guyana, Mongolia, the Republic of Congo, Uganda and Zambia, at a special event held on 8 November.
- Australia, Japan and Norway announced a doubling of their contribution to adaptation finance.
- The [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a USD 1.4 billion pledge](#) to spur innovation for smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with a focus on climate-smart agriculture projects in livestock farming, use of digital technologies and support for women farmers.

The [UN Biodiversity Conference](#) (COP15) was held in Montreal from 7 to 19 December.

- The historic **Global Biodiversity Framework** was adopted by 195 countries and the EU. Together with the Paris Agreement on climate, it paves the way towards a climate-neutral, nature-positive and resilient world by 2050. The agreement is a solid framework with clear, measurable goals and targets, with complete monitoring, reporting and review arrangements to track progress complemented by a robust resource mobilisation package.
  - The Kunming-Montreal biodiversity agreement includes key global targets to:
    - **Restore 30% degraded ecosystems** globally (on land and sea) by 2030
    - **Conserve and manage 30%** areas (terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine) by 2030
    - **Stop the extinction** of known species, and by 2050 reduce tenfold the extinction risk and rate of all species
    - Reduce **risk from pesticides by at least 50%** by 2030
    - Reduce **nutrients lost to the environment by at least 50%** by 2030
    - **Reduce global footprint of consumption by 2030**, including through significantly reducing overconsumption and waste generation and halving food waste
    - **Sustainably manage** areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry and substantially increase **agroecology and other biodiversity-friendly practices**
    - Tackle climate change through **nature-based solutions**
    - Reduce the rate of introduction and establishment of **invasive alien species** by at least 50% by 2030
  - The parties will aim to mobilise at least **USD 200 billion per year** by 2030, from all sources, domestic, international – both public and private – while aiming to identify **subsidies harmful to biodiversity** by 2025 and **eliminate at least USD 500 billion** of harmful subsidies per year by 2030.
  - A new **Global Biodiversity Trust Fund** is established under the Global Environment Facility (GEF)
  - International financial support to developing countries will increase to **USD 20 billion per year by 2025**, and **USD 30 billion per year by 2030** – i.e. more than tripling international biodiversity finance.
  - Large and transnational **companies and financial institutions will be required to regularly monitor, assess and disclose risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity**; and provide **information to consumers** to promote sustainable consumption.
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- On the side-lines of the Conference:
    - The EU [joined](#) key initiatives to help partner countries strengthen capacities and knowledge to deliver the Global Biodiversity Framework. These include the high ambition **Accelerator Partnership** to support the future implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework, and the **Global Knowledge Support Service for Biodiversity**, to help countries monitor progress in fulfilling biodiversity objectives.
    - The EU [signed](#) with Guyana an agreement on sustainable trade of **legal timber**.
  - At the [G20 Bali summit](#) on 15-16 November, leaders:
    - Reaffirmed their commitment to implement the Glasgow Climate Pact and the relevant outcomes of COPs and CMAs, including the call to revisit and strengthen the 2030 targets in their NDCs, as necessary to align with the Paris Agreement.
    - Committed to strengthen actions to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and call on CBD Parties to adopt an ambitious, balanced, practical, effective, robust and transformative post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at COP-15 in Montreal.

- Committed to reduce environmental impacts by changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns, as well as enhance environmentally sound waste management including by preventing illegal cross-border traffic of waste and promote circular economy.
  - Acknowledged that ecosystems, including forests, seagrasses, coral reefs, wetland ecosystems in all their diversity, including peatlands and mangrove, support climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.
  - Recalled and further urged developed countries to fulfil their commitments to deliver on the goal of jointly mobilizing USD100 billion per year urgently.
- [Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Indonesia signed](#) on 14 November a **joint statement aimed at forest preservation**, pledging to negotiate “a new sustainable funding mechanism” to assist low- and middle-income countries in preserving biodiversity – referred by some as the ‘OPEC of forests’ – challenging traditional forms of top-down international aid.
  - The global **fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing** reached a new milestone on 7 November as 100 countries committed to the **first binding international agreement** designed to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, the [FAO’s Agreement on Port State Measures](#).
  - The [Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution](#), including in the marine environment, will meet in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 28 November to 2 December 2022. This will be supported by the work of the [High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution](#) launched in August 2022 by the governments of Norway and Rwanda, with the support of 18 other countries.
  - The [Group of Seven leading industrial nations and their partners will provide](#) at least **USD 20 billion to help Indonesia phase out coal** and cap power sector emissions at 290 million tons by 2030.
  - [Climate Finance Plus was announced on 9 November](#), as a new U.S. initiative aiming to use up to **USD 80 million in grant funding to bring in USD 1 billion in private-sector investment** to ramp up **climate financing in emerging markets**. USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation will work with countries to scale up green financing in low- and lower-middle-income countries.

## EU Policy Developments

NEW

- The Council approved on 24 October [Conclusions for UN Biodiversity Summit in Montreal](#) (COP15). They will serve as the EU’s general negotiating position, also in view of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) expected to be adopted during the conference, setting out goals to guide global actions to protect and restore nature into the next decade. The conclusions stress *inter alia* the need to:
  - effectively conserve at least 30% of global land and at least 30% of oceans, and to bring under restoration 3 billion hectares of degraded land and freshwater ecosystems and 3 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems;
  - eliminate all illegal, unsustainable or unsafe harvest, trade and use of wild species;
  - harness the full potential of nature-based solutions, and reducing levels and risks of pollution from all sources;
  - address land- and sea-use change negatively affecting biodiversity in all ecosystems;
  - mainstream biodiversity objectives across all levels of government and all sectors by 2030, esp. in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, finance, tourism, health, manufacturing, infrastructure, energy and mining;
  - eliminate unsustainable consumption, trade and production patterns, supporting a shift to circular economy;
  - minimize the negative impacts of fishing and aquaculture activities on the marine environment through effective conservation and sustainable management measures, ensuring full sustainability of food production from the sea and aquaculture, as well as urgently conserve and restore marine ecosystems;
  - address climate action and biodiversity protection hand in hand;
  - urgently promote and implement the One Health approach;

- The Commission adopted on 8 November a [Communication on the Revision of the EU action plan against wildlife trafficking](#)<sup>1</sup>, as announced in the [Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#). The revised plan intends *inter alia* to address the root causes of this traffic, strengthen legal and policy frameworks, as well as global partnership of source, consumer and transit countries against wildlife trafficking.
- [Council Conclusions on Disaster Risk Reduction](#) were adopted on 28 November. The Council more particularly calls on the Commission to acknowledge contributions of, and complementarity among DRR, climate change mitigation and adaptation to averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage, as well as to enhance cooperation through a Team Europe approach in the areas of DRR and the fight against climate change, considering the TEI on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Africa as an example.
- The Commission adopted on 26 October the **Zero pollution package**, providing for stricter rules on ambient air, surface and groundwater pollutants, as well as treatment of urban wastewater:
  - [Proposal for a revision of the Ambient Air Quality Directives](#)
  - [Proposal for a revised Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive](#)
  - [Proposal for a revision of the List of Groundwater and Surface Water Pollutants](#)
- The Commission adopted on 9 November a [Communication Ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers](#).
- **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive** , providing for nearly 50,000 EU companies to comply with detailed EU sustainability reporting standards – compared to the 11,000 companies currently subject to existing requirements. Those companies will have to report on how sustainability issues affects their business and the impact of their activities on people and the environment.
- **Deforestation Regulation:** on 6 December, European Commission, Council and Parliament, after a so-called Trilogue, agreed on an innovative Regulation which aims to curb the EU’s contribution to trade-related global deforestation by keeping products linked to illegal production and deforestation off the EU market.

## New Reports and publications

- The [UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2022](#) was released at the end of October with the explicit title: “**The Closing Window – Climate crisis calls for rapid transformation of societies**”. It shows that:
  - Updated national pledges since COP26 make a negligible difference to predicted 2030 emissions: policies currently in place point to a 2.8°C temperature rise by the end of the century. Implementation of the current pledges will only reduce this to a 2.4-2.6°C temperature rise by the end of the century.
  - Only an urgent system-wide transformation can deliver the enormous cuts needed to limit greenhouse gas emissions by 2030: 45% compared with current policies projections towards 1.5°C and 30% for 2°C.
  - The top 7 emitters (China, the EU27, India, Indonesia, Brazil, the Russian Federation and the United States of America) plus international transport accounted for 55% of global GHG emissions in 2020. Collectively, G20 members are responsible for 75% of global GHG emissions.
  - G20 members are far behind in delivering on their mitigation commitments for 2030, causing an implementation gap – while the NDCs are highly insufficient globally.
  - Wide-ranging, large-scale, rapid and systemic transformation is now essential to achieve the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement, esp. by avoiding new fossil fuel intensive infrastructure, applying zero-emissions

<sup>1</sup> Illegal wildlife trade is a driver of biodiversity loss, can vastly weaken wild populations of flora and fauna, and in some cases drive them to extinction. This new plan is all the more important as the EU is a hub for global wildlife trafficking – estimated at a minimum value of €4.7 million in 2019, with an average of over 6,000 annual seizures involving CITES-listed wildlife, ranging from medicinal, corals, reptiles, birds, plants, and mammals.

technologies and promoting behavioural change.

- The food system accounts for one third of all emissions and must make a large reduction, esp. by changing diets towards more plant-based food, reducing deforestation as well as conversion of coastal wetlands, peatlands and grassland, improving soil carbon and manure management as well as feed composition, and decarbonising supply chains.
- Realigning the financial system is crucial, incl. by increasing the efficiency of financial markets, carbon pricing, mobilising central banks and setting up cross-border finance initiatives.

- [UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report 2022](#) also stresses what is at stake: **“Too Little, Too Slow – Climate adaptation failure puts world at risk”**. It highlights that, while 84% of Parties to the UNFCCC have established adaptation plans, strategies, laws and policies, finance flows to developing countries are 5-10 times below estimated needs and the gap is widening. Good adaptation practice requires:
  - Genuine inclusion of stakeholders as well as local communities, indigenous peoples, women and other marginalized groups into decision-making and co-development of adaptation planning and implementation, as well as investment in local capabilities and integration of local knowledge;
  - Transparency, accountability and predictability of support as well as flexible programming;
  - Tackling inequalities and structural drivers of vulnerability.
- The [2022 Forest Declaration Assessment](#) warns that the **global deforestation pledge will be missed** without urgent action. This assessment – consisting of 4 reports (Overarching forest goals, Sustainable production and development, Finance for forests, and Forest governance), highlights *inter alia* that:
  - To be on course to halt deforestation by 2030, a 10% annual reduction is needed – whereas deforestation rates declined only by 6.3% in 2021 compared to the 2018-20 baseline, and by only 3.1% in the humid tropics.
  - Governments, companies, and civil society must collaborate to accelerate forest action, supported by transparency and accountability;
  - Funding for forests will need to dramatically increase – by up to 200 times – to meet 2030 goals, with a special focus on indigenous peoples and local communities, as the most effective guardians of their forest territories;
- A new [ground-breaking research paper by Chatham House](#) highlights how **food is a critical area in which climate change mitigation and biodiversity policies intersect**, as food systems contribute 1/3 of global anthropogenic GHG emissions, and agricultural land-use change is the leading cause of biodiversity loss. Conclusions and recommendations of the research include:
  - A huge and immediate shift is needed to address the burden of animal agriculture as reducing this offers the most substantial potential contribution to climate change mitigation and biodiversity goals.
  - Pursuing food policy across production and consumption that is consistent with climate change mitigation and biodiversity targets. This policy mix should cover areas including agricultural subsidies, land-use tenure, food and environmental taxation, regulation and incentives aimed at food consumers.
  - Ensuring alignment of biodiversity and climate change mitigation targets with 1.5°C and the Global Biodiversity Framework, mostly from countries with a large legacy of emissions and biodiversity loss, incl. through large-scale restoration of ecosystems.
  - Addressing impacts through trade relationships, incl. a deforestation phase-out with full terms and references.
- The [Nutrition for Resilience White Paper #1](#) published in November on **“Micronutrient Resilience and Climate Change”** emphasises that climate emergencies are nutrition emergencies.
  - The impacts of climate change reduce the yields of staples like wheat, rice, maize, barley, and soybeans, those of nutrient-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, legumes, and nuts, as well as ocean and inland fishery catches.
  - For a number of crops, these impacts also reduce the micronutrient content, particularly of zinc, iron, and vitamin A – putting at risk an additional 175 million people to be zinc deficient and more than 1 billion women and children to lose much of their dietary iron intake.
- The [Climate TRACE project](#) was launched on 9 November. This non-profit coalition of more than 100 groups tracked more than 70,000 of the highest-emitting sources around the world, including major sectors such as oil and gas – using data from 300 satellites. Its platform shows that many countries and companies have been under-reporting their greenhouse gas emissions to the U.N.

- The World Meteorological Organization’s [“Provisional State of the Global Climate 2022”](#) shows that:
  - In 2021, concentrations of the **3 main GHG, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, continued to reach record highs**. The **annual increase in methane concentration was the highest on record**, which is especially significant as methane is more than 25 times more potent than CO2 at trapping heat in the atmosphere.
  - Global mean temperature in 2022 is currently estimated to be  $1.15 \pm 0.13$  °C above the pre-industrial average, likely making the past 8 years (2015-2022) the warmest on record.
  - Sea level continued to rise in 2022, reaching record high levels and speeding up. This is further accelerated by the melting of ice sheets and glaciers all around the world.
  - In East Africa, rainfall has been below average for 4 consecutive wet seasons – the longest sequence in 40 years, while in Pakistan, record breaking rain in July and August led to extensive flooding.
- The [State of the Cryosphere Report 2022](#) “Growing Losses, Global Impacts”, released in November, warns that, due to a combination of melting polar ice sheets, vanishing glaciers and thawing permafrost, **ice sheet melt from both Greenland and Antarctica may result in greater and more rapid sea-level rise than previously estimated**:
  - The Arctic is warming 4 times faster than the rest of the world since 1979, rather than 2–3 times faster as previously estimated, while heatwaves in Antarctica continue to break records, putting ice shelves at greater risk of collapse.
  - Greenland ice loss is committed to around 30cm of sea-level rise already at today’s temperature increase of 1.1°C, while sections of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet may collapse even without further emissions, causing more than 4 meters of additional sea-level rise by 2100.
- A [report issued by the Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance](#) on 8 November provides a framework for **“Finance for climate action: scaling up investment for climate and development”**. It states that:
  - High-income countries, investors and development banks need to mobilize USD 1 trillion a year in climate financing by 2030 to help emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs) other than China, matched by another USD 1 trillion in public and private funds from those economies.
  - This will require a debt and financing strategy that tackles festering debt difficulties, especially those of poor and vulnerable countries.
  - Key investment priorities must encompass transformation of the energy system, respond to the growing vulnerability of developing countries to climate change, and restore the damage to natural capital and biodiversity.
- A [recent study](#) from the Center for Effective Philanthropy explains that the reason why climate change **mitigation funding continues to hover below 2%** of all global giving is partly **because it has been “siloed”** in the minds of most grant-makers.
- A [report](#) released by UK relief agency Christian Aid on 9 November highlights the major **economic impacts of climate change on 50 of the 54 countries across Africa**, covering over 99% of the continent’s economy, with an average hit to GDP per capita of 14% up to 2050, growing to 34% by the end of the century, under a 1.5°C scenario – while this would go up to 20% by 2050 and a huge 64% on average by 2100 under a 2.7°C global warming. The report recommends that Parties to Conventions:
  - Close emissions reduction gaps to stay within the Paris commitment of 1.5°C.
  - Redouble efforts for climate finance to countries most vulnerable to climate change, to withstand existing and future climate shocks and risks, incl. fragile and conflict affected countries, not least the Sahel region.
  - Close the adaptation funding gap and address the finance gap to address Loss and Damage.
- A new [study published by World Weather Attribution](#) on 16 November reveals **“Climate change exacerbated heavy rainfall leading to large scale flooding in highly vulnerable communities in West Africa”**.
- A new research paper on [‘Circular Economy as a Climate Strategy’](#), by the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy, outlines current understanding of how a circular economy can help avert the climate crisis. It outlines 9 calls-to-action decision makers and researchers can take, among which: shift consumption patterns, stimulate product circularity from the design phase and across clean energy

value chains, incentivise cross-border GHG emission reductions and connect circular economy metrics with climate change impacts.

- Behind the curtains of **climate diplomacy**, a [documentary published by the Guardian](#) features award-winning environment editor Fiona Harvey, as she reflects on 30 years of COPs and meets the politicians, activists and scientists, asking who is responsible for saving the planet.

## Calendar



### Upcoming

- **21 March:** [International Day of Forests](#)
- **22 March:** [World Water Day](#)
- **22-24 March:** [UN Water Conference](#) in New-York
- **March 2023:** Climate and environment week organised by DG INTPA with EU Delegations
- **22 April:** [Earth Day](#)



### Past

- **6-18 November:** [UN climate change conference 2022 \(COP 27\)](#) in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt
- **29 November:** [FAO Water Dialogue in Rome](#)
- **28 November-2 December:** [Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution](#), Uruguay
- **6-8 December:** [World Circular Economy Forum](#) in Kigali
- **7-19 December:** [15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties \(COP 15\) to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#) in Montreal, Canada

## Training and e-learning

### Trainings, webinars, e-learning

- 🌱 [The role of Agroecology in achieving the Green Deal's transformational objectives](#): this training proposes videos showing what is agroecology and how it can be used to achieve climate, environment and biodiversity commitments of the Green Deal while also meeting the Farm to Fork Strategy's objectives.

Still available if you've missed them:

- 🌱 'European Green Deal - Greening EU cooperation' webinar series N°6:
  - [Webinar N°1: Water and Climate Change Adaptation](#)
  - [Webinar N°2: Forest-based value chains and wood](#)
  - [Webinar N°3: Nationally Determined Contributions & their Monitoring, reporting and verification \(MRV\) system – from the Paris Agreement on Climate](#)
  - [Webinaire N°4 : Contributions Déterminées Nationales & leur système de mesure, rapportage et vérification \(MRV\), issues de l'Accord de Paris sur le Climat Webinar N°5: Transboundary water management](#)
  - [Webinar N°6: Valuing ecosystem services and the use of nature-based solutions - Embedding Biodiversity in the EU's external cooperation](#)
- 🌱 [Greening EU Cooperation](#) – the other 5 series of webinars
- 🌱 The [E-course on Circular Economy](#) (5 modules)

## Tools available

- 🌱 The [Team Europe Partnerships Portal](#) (TEPP) intends to create a bridge between all Team Europe actors as part of the Global Gateway strategy, incl. via a multi-stakeholder approach. This Portal is complemented by the [Team Europe Initiative \(TEI\) and Joint Programming \(JP\) tracker](#).
- 🌱 The [Climate Trace platform](#) provides independent GHG emissions tracking, with interactive maps, downloadable data and a tool to rank and compare emissions from different sources and countries.
- 🌱 The [URSA 4 Rangers alliance](#) – supporting rangers through advocacy, capacity building and competency framework, proposes videos to explain the role and importance of rangers.

## Green tip #14 – Have a green Christmas!

Here are a few tips to have a more sustainable Christmas:

- **Invent a new Christmas tree!** Instead of buying a cut or live tree, decorate an indoor plant you already have or create your own Christmas tree by using wooden planks, garlands on a wall.
- **Choose greener presents:** instead of material ones, you can choose cultural presents (e.g. tickets to an exhibition or a concert), wellbeing activity presents such as yoga sessions, [green cooking classes](#) and even an online [healthy cooking course for kids](#), and why not sustainable sewing classes (e.g. in Brussels at [R-use Fabrik](#)), or a donation to a non-profit organisation.
- **'Do It Yourself':** friends and family will love your homemade Christmas cookies and truffles! Place them in glass jars for a beautiful presentation, and make them even 'greener' by opting for plant-based recipes.
- Prepare a **greener Christmas dinner or lunch**, with less meat and dairy products as they contribute to global warming. You can find plenty of sustainable, delicious [Christmas recipes online](#).

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