



What's New?

- The first [UN Water Conference](#) in five decades took place on 22-24 March in New York, culminating in the adoption of a [Water Action Agenda](#) of 700 commitments.
 - The Agenda sets out a series of action-oriented game changing commitments, from making smarter food choices to re-evaluating water as a powerful economic driver. The EU made [33 voluntary commitments](#), incl. supporting improved access to water and sanitation for 70 million people worldwide and mobilise the private sector with innovative financing under the EFSD+, contributing to the Global Gateway on transboundary water management actions, improving the integration of water into the EU's external action and finance in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as through the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
 - According to the General Assembly President, the \$300 billion in pledges made to buoy the transformative Water Action Agenda will have the potential of unlocking at least \$1 trillion of socioeconomic and eco-system gains.
 - The [Team Europe Initiative on Transboundary Water Management in Africa](#) was launched on 23 March, on the margins of the Conference. This initiative falls within the scope of the Global Gateway and African Union-European Union Investment Package.
 - The EU and China co-chaired the Dialogue on "Water for Sustainable Development" and delivered a joint statement on their conclusions, highlighting the importance of circularity, resource efficiency and water reuse, sustainable finance, nature-based solutions and redirection of harmful subsidies.
 - The Secretary General called States to join the UN Water Convention on transboundary cooperation. He confirmed that progress on SDG6 on water will be reviewed at the upcoming High Level Political Forum and that results of the conference and of this review will be consolidated at the SDG Summit. He also confirmed that the establishment of a UN Water Envoy will be discussed as follow-up to the Conference, a long-standing EU priority backed by more than 150 countries.
- More than 1,000 human-caused **methane super-emitter events** were [detected in 2022](#), according to the Kayrros Methane Watch database. Future methane emissions from fossil fuel sites are also forecast to be huge, threatening the entire global "carbon budget" limit required to keep heating below 1.5C and risk triggering climate tipping points. More than half of these fields are already in production, including the three biggest "methane bombs", which are all in North America.
- The International Institute for Environment and Development and the International Centre for Climate Change and Development have [launched a global initiative to address loss and damage from human-induced climate change](#) – the **Alliance for Locally-Led Approaches for Transformative Action on Loss and Damage**, aimed at supporting vulnerable developing countries to build knowledge and capacity to address impacts of climate change and the consequent losses and damages.

- The 28th Ibero-American Summit was held in Dominican Republic on 22-25 March. It approved the [Ibero-American Cooperation Action Plan 2023-26](#), the Environmental Charter (“Green Pact”), the Charter of Principles and Rights in Digital Environments and the Food Security Strategy.
- The [UK announced its revamped net zero strategy on 30 March](#), while the government admits its policies will achieve only 92% of cuts and UK think tanks think this figure is still optimistic.
- The Australian Parliament passed on 27 March the [Safeguard Mechanism Amendment Bill 2023](#), which aims at ensuring that **Australia’s 215 largest emitters play their part in meeting national climate targets** of 43% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050. The country also ambitions to host COP 31 UN Climate Conference with Pacific island nations in 2026.

EU Policy Developments

- The Commission presented on 14 March the [reform of the electricity market design](#), as part of the same European framework to reduce the EU’s reliance on highly-concentrated imports.
- The European Parliament voted on 14 March in favour of the [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#), which aims to achieve a fully climate-neutral building stock by 2050.
- The Commission proposed the [Net-Zero Industry Act](#) on 16 March to scale up manufacturing of clean technologies in the EU, with the aim that the Union’s overall strategic net-zero technologies manufacturing capacity approaches or reaches at least 40% by 2030. President von der Leyen announced this initiative as a part of the [Green Deal Industrial Plan](#). The Commission also proposed a comprehensive set of measures to ensure that the EU has a secure, diverse, affordable and sustainable supply of key raw materials, through the [European Critical Raw Materials Act](#) – contributing to zero-emission industries, digital industries, aerospace and defence industries.
- The Communication on the [European Hydrogen Bank](#) was adopted on 16 March, with the aim to unlock private investments in hydrogen value chains, both domestically and in third countries. It will establish an initial market for renewable hydrogen and it will launch an auction under the Innovation Fund to support the production of renewable hydrogen for European consumers.
- The Commission adopted a proposal for a directive on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims – the [‘green claims directive’](#), on 22 March 2023. The proposed directive would establish minimum requirements on the substantiation and communication of voluntary environmental claims and environmental labelling in business-to-consumer commercial practices
- On 23 March, the European Parliament and Council agreed on [FuelEU Maritime](#) – a regulation ensuring that the greenhouse gas intensity of fuels used by the shipping sector gradually decrease over time, by 2% in 2025 to as much as 80% by 2050. The deal complements the provisional agreement reached on 18 December 2022 to include shipping emissions in the EU Emissions Trading System.
- An agreement was reached on 30 March between the European Parliament and the Council to [reinforce the EU Renewable Energy Directive](#), supporting the “Fit for 55” legislation to deliver the European Green Deal and the REPowerEU objectives. The agreement raises EU binding renewable target for 2030 to a minimum of 42.5%, up from the current 32% target, while aiming to reach 45% of renewables by 2030.

COMING
SOON

- [Microplastics pollution – measures to reduce its impact on the environment](#)
- [CountEmissions EU](#) – EU framework for harmonised measurement of transport and logistics emissions
- [Legislative framework for sustainable food systems](#) (FSFS) – one of the flagship initiatives of the Farm to Fork Strategy. The sustainability labelling framework will be part of the FSFS.

New Reports and publications

- The [IPCC 6th assessment report](#) released on 20 March, summarises the state of knowledge on climate change impacts and risks, mitigation and adaptation, incl. many synthetic graphs, and sections on short-term and longer-term responses. The report confirms that:
- GHG emissions have continued to increase due to unsustainable energy use, land use and land-use change, lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production across regions, countries and individuals.
 - A substantial 'emissions gap' exists between global GHG emissions in 2030 associated with the implementation of NDCs announced prior to COP26 and those associated with modelled mitigation pathways that limit warming to 1.5°C. Policies implemented by the end of 2020 are projected to result in higher global GHG emissions in 2030 than emissions implied by NDCs, indicating an 'implementation gap'.
 - Increasing weather and climate extreme events have exposed millions of people to acute food insecurity and reduced water security, with the largest adverse impacts in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, LDCs, Small Islands and the Arctic, and globally for Indigenous Peoples, small-scale food producers and low-income households. Between 2010 and 2020, human mortality from floods, droughts and storms was 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions, compared to regions with very low vulnerability.
 - Compound heatwaves and droughts are projected to become more frequent across multiple locations, as well as extreme sea level events, tropical cyclones, extratropical storms and increases in aridity and fire weather.
 - Hundreds of local losses of species have been driven by increases in the magnitude of heat extremes, with mass mortality events recorded on land and in the ocean. Impacts on some ecosystems are approaching irreversibility due to hydrological changes from glaciers retreat or changes in Arctic ecosystems driven by permafrost thaw. Some tropical, coastal, polar and mountain ecosystems have reached hard adaptation limit.
 - Climate change has affected food security and water security, hindering efforts to meet SDGs. Ocean warming and acidification have adversely affected fisheries and shellfish aquaculture in some oceanic regions. Soft limits to adaptation are currently being experienced by small-scale farmers and households along some low-lying coastal areas resulting from financial, governance, institutional and policy constraints.
 - In all regions, increases in extreme heat events have resulted in human mortality and morbidity, through climate-related food-borne, water-borne and vector-borne diseases.
 - Despite progress, adaptation gaps exist across sectors and regions, and will continue to grow under current levels of implementation, especially for lower income groups. Key barriers to adaptation are limited resources, lack of private sector and citizen engagement, insufficient mobilisation of finance (incl. research), low climate literacy, lack of political commitment, limited research or low uptake of adaptation science, and low sense of urgency.
 - Adaptation finance has come predominantly from public sources, has been very insufficient and constrains implementation of adaptation options, especially in developing countries, while financing has been overwhelmingly directed to mitigation. Adverse climate impacts can reduce the availability of financial resources by incurring losses and damages and through impeding national economic growth, thereby further increasing financial constraints for adaptation, particularly for developing countries and LDCs.
 - The adoption of low-emission technologies lags in most developing countries, particularly LDCs, due in part to limited finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity. Public and private finance flows for fossil fuels are still greater than those for climate adaptation and mitigation.

For the future, the report predicts that:

- With further warming, climate change risks will become increasingly complex and more difficult to manage. Multiple climatic and non-climatic risk drivers will interact, resulting in risks cascading across sectors and regions. Climate-driven food insecurity and supply instability are projected to increase with increasing global warming, interacting with non-climatic risk drivers such as competition for land, pandemics and conflict.
- Vulnerability of ecosystems will be strongly influenced by past, present and future patterns of unsustainable consumption and production, increasing demographic pressures, and unsustainable use and management of land, ocean, and water – with long-term impacts on people, especially Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- Adaptation options feasible and effective today will become constrained and less effective with increasing global warming. Losses and damages will increase and more human and natural systems will reach adaptation limits.

The report also presents in more details what reducing emissions and ensuring a liveable and sustainable future entails in terms of energy, industry and transport, cities, land and ocean incl. biodiversity resilience, food and water, health, as well as in terms of governance, finance and technology.

- Launched ahead of the UN 2023 Water Conference, the new edition of the [World Water Development Report 2023](#) found that 2 billion people do not have safe drinking water and 3.6 billion lack access to safely managed sanitation. Global urban population facing water scarcity is projected to potentially double from 930 million in 2016 to between 1.7 and 2.4 billion people in 2050, while extreme and prolonged droughts will have dire consequences for plant and animal species – with a global crisis looming. The report also highlights collaborative ways actors can work together for instance by sharing data and co-financing projects in areas such as flood and pollution control or wetland protection – managing water as a common good and not a commodity.
- Also issued in the context of the UN Water Conference, the report [“Turning the Tide – A Call to Collective Action”](#) by the Global Commission on the Economics of Water highlights that a sustainable and just water future requires transforming the economics and restructuring the governance of water. It presents a seven-point call to collective action, incl.: manage the global water cycle as a global common good, cease under-pricing water, phase out some USD 700 billion of subsidies in agriculture and water each year generating excessive water consumption and environment-damaging practices, establish Just Water Partnerships, reshape multilateral governance of water.
- In a [study](#) released on 8 March in *Plos One Journal*, scientists found that over 170 trillion pieces of plastic are estimated to be floating in the world's oceans, forming a “plastic smog” on the ocean surface layer. Without substantial widespread policy changes, the rate at which plastics enter aquatic environments will increase approximately 2.6-fold from 2016 to 2040 – requiring urgent international policy intervention to minimize ecological, social and economic harm.
- A [study](#) published by Israel’s Weizmann Institute of Science in March found that the total weight of Earth’s wild land mammals – from elephants to bison and from deer to tigers – is less than 10% of the combined tonnage of men, women and children living on the planet. Wild mammals have a combined weight of around 22 million tonnes, compared to the 630 million tonnes of all cattle, sheep and other livestock – i.e. 30 times more than wild animals.

Calendar



Upcoming

- **7 April:** [World Health Day](#)
- **22 April:** [Earth Day](#)
- **1-12 May:** [Conferences of the Parties on hazardous waste, hazardous chemicals and persistent organic pollutants](#): 16th meeting of the COP to the Basel Convention (BC COP-16), 11th meeting of the COP to the Rotterdam Convention (RC COP-11) and 11th meeting of the COP to the Stockholm Convention (SC COP-11), in Geneva
- **13 May:** [World Migratory Bird Day](#)
- **18-19 May:** [High-Level Meeting of the UNGA on the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), in New-York
- **20 May:** [World Bee Day](#)
- **22 May:** [International day for Biological Diversity](#)
- **29 May-2 June:** [Second session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment](#), in Paris
- **5 June:** [World Environment Day](#)
- **8 June:** [World Oceans Day](#)
- **24-26 July:** UN Food System [“2023 Stocktaking Moment”](#)

- **16-20 October:** [2023 Nutrition for Resilience Global Conference](#) “Ensuring Micronutrient Security in an Era of Complex Global Challenges”, to be held in a hybrid format in The Hague, Netherlands and online



Past

- **1-2 March:** [One forest Summit](#) in Libreville, Gabon
- **3 March:** [World Wildlife Day](#)
- **15 March:** [3rd Global Soil Biodiversity Conference](#) in Dublin
- **21 March:** [International Day of Forests](#)
- **22 March:** [World Water Day](#)
- **22-24 March:** [UN Water Conference](#) in New-York
- **27-31 March:** Climate and Environment Week organised by DG INTPA and NEAR (recordings soon available [here](#))
- **30 March:** [International Day of Zero Waste](#)

Training and e-learning

Trainings, webinars, e-learning

2023 INTPA-NEAR Environment and Climate Week – Newsletter Paragraph

The 2023 INTPA-NEAR Environment and Climate Change Week took place from the 27th to the 31st of March, bringing 150 EU Delegation colleagues from around the world together with colleagues from HQ. The week was an opportunity to focus on implementation of EU programmes tackling the green transition under NDICI-Global Europe and IPAIII and discuss outcomes of the latest COPs on climate change and biodiversity. Sessions were organised on a broad range of themes such as green finance, climate adaptation and mitigation, circular economy, biodiversity and water.

Throughout presentations from high-level experts, group workshops and networking events, the audience was invited to broaden their understanding of relevant themes and discuss best practices to implement relevant environmental and climate action.

Over the course of this event, innovative policies, initiatives, and ideas were presented and exchanged, showcasing how collaboration and knowledge exchange are crucial for the effective and efficient execution of our environment and climate portfolio under NDICI-Global Europe and IPAIII.

Presentations are available [here](#).

- 🌱 If you work on activities directly or indirectly related to water, check out the following Quick Tips:
 - [Integrating the Environment and Climate Change in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene \(WASH\)](#)
 - [Integrating the Environment and Climate Change in Water Resources Management](#)
- 🌱 The Regreening Africa programme held a [summit](#) in which stakeholders looked back, reflected on the achievements, absorbed the lessons and charted a way forward for Regreening Africa.

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

- [UN INFO](#) presents in one portal all information and data on UN programming, implementation and reporting overall and per country.
- The [NASA Harvest Portal](#) develops tools that make satellite data accessible and useful for farmers and policymakers and offers a Data Catalogue which provides searchable access to datasets and services.

Green tip #16 – Plant or adopt a tree!

With Spring coming and days getting longer, you probably feel like gardening or taking a walk in a park or forest. Connecting with nature benefits your health and happiness, and you can also give back to nature by:

- 🌿 Planting a tree in your garden, and be part of the [WWF campaign](#) to plant 1 trillion trees by 2050! By choosing fruit trees or other pollinator-friendly bushes and flowers, you will also attract bees and other pollinating insects and protect local biodiversity.
- 🌿 Greening your house façade or your street, including by planting bushes and flowers at the bottom of 'public' trees: check Brussels' [greening programme](#), which also exists in other cities or local neighbourhood level (lots of possibilities online and by talking to your neighbours!).
- 🌿 Adopting a tree online or helping reforestation: several non-profit organisations propose you to donate money to plant a tree, such as [Treedom](#) (you can choose tree you want to help plant in such or such country), [Coeur de Forêt](#). You can also contribute to reforestation in Belgium via [Trees for Future](#).

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