



## What's New?

The **UN 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28)** was held in Dubai (UAE) from 30 November to 13 December.

The EU managed, largely, to achieve its two main political objectives for COP28: 1) concluding a successful “Global Stocktake” (GST) that describes an agreed global decarbonisation pathway for the coming decades, and 2) operationalizing and raising the initial capitalization of a Fund to address climate related “loss and damage” in particularly vulnerable developing countries.

- Parties adopted the [UAE consensus](#) which recognises the need for deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in GHG emissions in line with 1.5°C pathways. It calls on parties for:
  - tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. – to 11,000 gigawatts. The commitment, [recommended in July by the International Energy Agency](#), has been backed by more than countries.
  - transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly, and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science;
  - accelerating efforts globally towards net zero emission energy systems, utilizing zero- and low-carbon fuels well before or by around mid-century, and accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies, including, *inter alia*, renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies such as carbon capture and utilization and storage, particularly in hard-to-abate sectors, and low-carbon hydrogen production;
  - accelerating and substantially reducing non-carbon-dioxide emissions globally, including in particular methane emissions by 2030;
  - phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that do not address energy poverty or just transitions.
- Parties also adopted the framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation and launched the implementation of the work programme on just transition pathways.
- Food systems and agriculture were addressed:
  - 134 world leaders signed up to the [COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action](#) – the first of its kind. The critical role of food systems in achieving global climate goals was acknowledged and countries agreed to include food system actions into national adaptation plans, nationally determined contributions and long-term strategies, as [urged](#) by experts from WWF, the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, the Food Systems Partnership, and the Food and Land Use Coalition ahead of the COP.
  - Following its announcement, Brazil, Cambodia, Norway, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda launched a new [Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation](#), with a focus on delivering universal access to affordable, nutritious and sustainable diets, pledging to transform their national food systems.
- COP28 and COP15 Presidencies, UAE and China launched a [Joint Statement on Climate, Nature and People](#), underscoring the urgency of putting nature and biodiversity loss at the heart of climate action. 18 countries endorsed the statement, including Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, UK and US.
- On the side-lines of the conference, the EU launched the global [Team Europe Initiative on Deforestation-free Value Chains](#) with governments of Germany, the Netherlands, and France, as well as the [Country Package for Forest, Nature and Climate for the Republic of Congo](#) and for [PNG](#) together with France.

- On a more critical tone:
  - COP28 failed to agree a robust “Mitigation Work Programme” that would keep the pressure on Parties in this “critical decade” to deliver on their existing NDCs and to agree on international carbon credit standards.
  - 2,500 oil lobby representatives were present at the conference – which would have made them the 3<sup>rd</sup> delegation if they were a country, before China and after the UAE and Brazil.

**COP29 will be held by Azerbaijan, 11-24 November 2024.**

- The **successor of the Cotonou Agreement was signed** in Apia, Samoa, on 15 November. The [https://europa.eu/newsroom/ecpc-failover/pdf/ip-23-5723\\_en.pdf](https://europa.eu/newsroom/ecpc-failover/pdf/ip-23-5723_en.pdf) African, Caribbean and Pacific States and will serve as an overarching legal framework for their relations for the next 20 years.
- The [35<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer](#) (MOP 35) was held on 25-27 October. In a historic decision, parties adopted the largest ever replenishment of the Multilateral Fund (MLF) for the implementation of the Protocol, close to USD 1 billion. It will assist developing countries, with a strong focus on **shifting away from harmful greenhouses gases and substances with high global warming potential (GWP)**.
- The [third session](#) of the **Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC-3)** took place in Nairobi (Kenya) from 13 to 19 November 2023. Members [discussed](#) the Chair’s Zero Draft.
- The [resumed Second Part of the 15th Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties](#) (CBD COP15) and 25th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 25) were held on 15-20 October in Nairobi.
- At the [5th Meeting](#) of the Conference of the Parties (COP5) to the **Minamata Convention on Mercury**, held in Geneva from 30 October to 3 November, Parties took crucial steps toward eliminating mercury pollution, including by adopting decisions on new dates to phase out mercury-added products including cosmetics and a threshold for mercury waste, which will help countries avoid becoming dumping grounds for mercury-contaminated wastes, as well as by strengthening ties with Indigenous Peoples.
- The Standing Committee of the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#) [adopted recommendations](#) on consideration of possible future **interaction between CITES and the new agreement on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)** under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- The [German government pledged to invest EUR 4 billion euros in the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative](#) until 2030. Chancellor Olaf Scholz affirmed that a significant share of Europe’s largest economy’s green hydrogen needs will be sourced from the continent and that African countries should benefit more from their wealth of raw materials.
- According to Brazil's top climate diplomat Andre Correa do Lago, **Brazil plans to propose a “huge” fund to support tropical forest conservation** at the upcoming COP 28 climate summit in Dubai. Brazil presented the idea of a tropical forest conservation fund on 20 November at a meeting with ministers from seven other Amazon rainforest countries.
- Japan, the World Bank, and other partners [launched](#) a new project to **diversify renewable energy supply chains**. The partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement (RISE) will financially and technologically assist emerging countries, which now primarily produce the raw materials used in these supply chains, to build up their capacity to process those materials and assemble the final products such as solar panels.

- [According to WHO experts](#), all healthcare facilities in poorer countries could be electrified using solar energy within five years for less than USD 5 billion, putting an end to the risk of life from power outages<sup>1</sup>. This “low-hanging fruit” will be proposed at COP28 this month.
- In an editorial issued by more than 200 health journals included the *BMJ* and the *Lancet*, scientists from across the world [called](#) for the UN, world leaders, and health authorities to **address climate change and biodiversity loss as one global health emergency**. They specifically urged the World Health Organisation to declare the climate and nature crisis a singular crisis to be tackled together to avoid catastrophe.
- Large parts of **Latin America** are already experiencing a **severe heat wave** whereas it is not summer yet in the southern hemisphere. Brazil is suffering extreme weather conditions: persistent drought and an unprecedented heat wave for this time of year, severe floods caused by heavy rainfall in the south.
- The [Caribbean island of Dominica announced](#) on 13 November that it would create the **world’s first marine protected area for the endangered sperm whale**, with 800km<sup>2</sup> of waters to become a reserve.

## EU Policy Developments

NEW

- The European Parliament adopted on 21 November its [resolution on the UN Climate Change Conference COP28](#), which will review progress on the implementation of the Paris Agreement (first [Global Stocktake](#)).
  - MEPs call for an end of all direct and indirect fossil fuel subsidies, at national, EU and global levels, as soon as possible and by 2025 the latest, together with a tangible phasing out of fossil fuels.
  - They support a global target to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030.
  - They emphasise the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring biodiversity.
  - They request a significant reduction of the climate impact and emissions from methane.
- The Commission adopted on 24 October three **Communications in the area of the Green Deal and of sustainable energy**:
  - [Report on EU policy initiatives for the promotion of investments in clean technologies](#) (Preliminary assessment of measures taken by the EU to stimulate investment into clean technologies and the impact of the US Inflation Reduction Act on investment): it analyses what the EU has done in the context of the Single Market, research and innovation, trade agreements, etc. It also initiates an assessment of the impact of the IRA on the EU economy and on the development of the EU's clean technology industrial base.
  - [Delivering on the EU offshore renewable energy ambitions](#) follows up on the [EU Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy](#) adopted three years ago, with the goal to achieve the recently agreed EU target of at least 42.5% renewable energy by 2030, with an ambition to reach 45%, which will require a massive increase in wind installed capacity.
  - The [European Wind Power Action Plan](#), announced by President von der Leyen in her 2023 State of the Union speech, sets out immediate actions to be taken to accelerate wind power deployment, while ensuring that the clean energy transition goes hand-in-hand with industrial competitiveness.
- The Council adopted on 9 October the **two final pillars of the ‘Fit for 55’ legislative package** for delivering the EU’s 2030 climate targets: the [ReFuelEU Aviation Regulation](#) meant to reduce the carbon footprint of the aviation sector and the [revised Renewables Energy Directive](#), which aims to raise the share of renewable energy in the EU’s overall energy consumption to 42.5% by 2030 with an additional 2.5% indicative top-up to allow the target of 45% to be achieved.
- The Commission [launched](#) on 23 November the **first European Hydrogen Bank auction**, with subsidies worth EUR 800 million for renewable hydrogen production. Announced by President von der Leyen the [European Hydrogen Bank](#) was created to support the EU's domestic hydrogen production and imports

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<sup>1</sup> Based on WHO report “[Energising Health: Accelerating Electricity Access in Healthcare Facilities](#)” published in January 2023.

of renewable hydrogen from international partners. It aims to unlock private investment in the EU and in third countries by addressing the initial investment challenges and needs.

- The Commission [adopted](#) on 22 November a proposal for a **Regulation on a Forest Monitoring Framework**, to make forests more resistant to the cross-border threats of pests, droughts and wildfires that are exacerbated by climate change, enable new business models such as carbon farming, and support compliance with agreed EU legislation.
- The [European Parliament voted](#) on 22 November to **reject the proposal for a Regulation on the sustainable use of plant protection products** (pesticides) following a series of amendments which scrapped its core elements, including the procedure for setting national reduction targets and monitoring their implementation and restrictions on the use of pesticides in sensitive areas.
- The European Parliament [adopted](#) on 5 October a **new voluntary standard for the use of a “European Green Bond” label** – the first of its kind in the world, for issuers who wish to use the designation ‘European green bond’ or ‘EuGB’ for the marketing of their bond. The standard, aligned with the [EU’s taxonomy framework](#) will enable investors to direct their money more confidently towards more sustainable technologies and businesses.
- The European Commission [adopted](#) on 16 October a [Proposal for a Regulation on preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution](#), aiming to ensure that all operators in the EU take the necessary precautionary measures. This is expected to reduce pellet release by up to 74%, leading to cleaner ecosystems, contributing to plastic-free rivers and ocean, and reducing potential risks to human health. The Commission proposal will be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council.

#### **Provisional/ongoing procedure:**

- Negotiators from the European Parliament and Council reached a [provisional political agreement](#) on the [EU nature restoration law](#), setting a target for the EU to restore at least 20% of the EU’s land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.
- The Parliament and the Council reached a [provisional political agreement](#) on 13 November on the [Critical Raw Materials Act](#) proposed by the European Commission and the Parliament adopted the agreement on 12 December 2023. Keeping the overall objectives of the original proposal, the new agreement has added aluminium and synthetic graphite to the list of strategic and critical materials, reinforced the benchmark of recycling and clarified the permitting procedure for strategic projects.
- The Council and Parliament reached a [provisional agreement](#) on 16 November on a proposed [EU Directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law](#), including an increase in the number of offences that currently exist under EU criminal law from 9 to 18, tougher penalties such as, for natural persons, a maximum prison term of at least eight years for qualified offence causing catastrophic results and a maximum fine of at least 5% of the legal person’s total worldwide turnover for the most serious offences.
- The Parliament and Council reached a [provisional agreement](#) on 17 November on revising [EU waste shipment Regulation](#), including a strengthening of rules governing exports of waste outside the EUs.
- The European Parliament adopted on 21 November its [position](#) on a [Regulation establishing a Union certification framework for carbon removals](#), to help achieve EU climate neutrality by 2050. The Parliament agreed with setting up a system to improve the EU’s capacity to quantify, monitor and verify carbon removals, while requesting a better distinction between the definitions, quality criteria and rules on carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products, due to their differences and environmental impact.
- The European Parliament adopted its [position](#) on the [Net Zero Industry Act Regulation](#), including amendments to broaden the scope of the draft legislation to encompass the entire supply chain and to create "Net-Zero Industry Valleys" initiatives, speeding up the permitting process.



- The European Parliament adopted its [position](#) on the **Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation** on 22 November, ahead of the trilogue negotiations:
  - Besides the overall packaging reduction targets proposed in the regulation (5% by 2030, 10 % by 2035, 15 % by 2040), MEPs want to set specific targets to reduce plastic packaging (10% by 2030, 15% by 2035, 20% by 2040).
  - They also propose to heavily restrict the use of certain single use packaging formats, such as hotel miniature packaging for toiletry products and shrink-wrap for suitcases in airports.
  - To prevent adverse health effects, MEPs ask for a ban on the use of so called “forever chemicals” and Bisphenol A in food contact packaging.
- The European Parliament adopted on 21 November its [negotiating position](#) on the proposal for a **Directive on common rules promoting the repair of goods**.

COMING  
SOON

- 2040 climate target (Q1)
- Initiative for water resilience (Q1)
- Wind power package (Q4)
- [Legislative Framework for Sustainable Food Systems](#) (FSFS), one of the flagship initiatives of the Farm to Fork Strategy (initially to be adopted by end 2023, no new date set). Its goal is to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems and to promote policy coherence at EU level and national level, while strengthening the resilience of food systems.

## New Reports and publications

- The **UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2023** “Broken Record – Temperatures hit new highs, yet world fails to cut emissions (again)”, [published](#) on 20 November, shows that “present trends are racing our planet down a dead-end 3°C temperature rise”, to quote UN Secretary-General António Guterres.
  - Implementing future policies already promised by countries would cut only 0.1°C off.
  - Putting in place emissions cuts pledged by developing countries on condition of receiving financial and technical support would cut the temperature rise to 2.5°C.
  - To get on track for the internationally agreed target of 1.5°C, 22 billion tonnes of CO2 must be cut from the currently projected total in 2030 – i.e. 42% of global emissions, equivalent to the output of the world’s five worst polluters: China, US, India, Russia and Japan.
- The **Production Gap Report 2023** was [published](#) on 8 November. Jointly produced by the UNEP and several environment and research institutes, it shows that, contrary to pledges to cut fossil fuel production, government policies worldwide will add up to a doubling of production in 2030. It:
  - Urges countries to aim for a near total phase-out of coal production and use by 2040.
  - Calls for at least a 75% reduction in oil and gas production by 2050, compared with 2020 levels -also given risks and uncertainties of carbon capture and storage, as well as carbon dioxide removal.
- The [UNFCCC report](#) on ‘**Nationally Determined Contributions Under the Paris Agreement**’, released on 14 November, synthesises information from the 168 latest available NDCs communicated by 195 parties to the Paris Agreement and recorded in the NDC Registry as of 25 September 2023. It [highlights](#) that:
  - National climate action plans remain insufficient to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement: while in 2030 emissions are projected to be 2% below 2019 levels, they are still not showing the rapid downward trend science says is necessary this decade.
  - The conditional elements of the NDCs need to be implemented, which depends mostly on access to enhanced financial resources, technology transfer and technical cooperation, and capacity-building support; as well as the availability of market-based mechanisms.
- A [second UNFCCC report](#) was released on the same day on **long-term low-emission development strategies**, looking at countries’ plans to transition to net-zero emissions by or around mid-century. it

indicates that these countries' GHG emissions could be roughly 63% lower in 2050 than in 2019, if all the long-term strategies are fully implemented on time.

- [OECD's sixth assessment of progress](#) towards the goal for developed countries to provide and mobilise **USD 100 billion of climate finance annually** in developing countries, released on 16 November, evidenced accelerated growth in funding provided and mobilised in 2021, but showed that developed countries remain short and must continue scaling up to reach the USD 100 billion goal: climate finance provided and mobilised by developed countries for climate action in developing countries reached USD 89.6 billion in 2021 – still showing a positive trend, close to 8% increase over 2020, and significantly higher than the 2.1% average annual growth observed from 2018 to 2020.
- The “[State of Climate Action 2023](#)” released on 14 November by the World Resources Institute, ahead of the final phase of the Global Stocktake, offers a roadmap to avoid irreversible climate impacts while minimizing harms to biodiversity and food security. Among its main recommendations:
  - Dramatically increase growth in solar and wind power.
  - Phase out coal in electricity generation seven times faster than current rates.
  - Reduce the annual rate of deforestation — equivalent to deforesting 15 football (soccer) fields per minute in 2022 — four times faster over this decade.
  - Shift to healthier, more sustainable diets eight times faster, by lowering per-capita consumption of meat from cows, goats and sheep to approximately two servings per week or less across high-consuming regions (the Americas, Europe and Oceania) by 2030.
- The **State of Food and Agriculture 2023** [published](#) by the FAO on 6 November shows that:
  - Although current agrifood systems provide nourishment and sustain economies, they also impose huge hidden costs on health and the environment – the equivalent of at least USD 10 trillion annually.
  - More than 70% of the hidden costs of our food systems stem from unhealthy dietary patterns driven by overproduction and consumption of ultra-processed foods, fats and sugars, leading to obesity and non-communicable diseases, and causing labour productivity losses, especially in richer countries.
  - One fifth of the total costs are environment-related, from greenhouse gas and nitrogen emissions, land-use change and water use, with all countries affected.
- A [WWF report](#) released in October estimates the **economic value of water and freshwater ecosystems at USD 58 trillion** — the equivalent of 60% of global gross domestic product in 2021. “The high cost of cheap water – the true value of water and the freshwater ecosystems to people and planet” explains that:
  - Direct water value, an annual USD 7.5 trillion, is derived from its use in agriculture, industry, and households as well as via inland transport, hydropower, and recreation, while its indirect use in storing carbon, mitigating extreme weather events, and sustaining biodiversity, among other things, can be estimated at USD 50 trillion annually.
  - The degradation of rivers, lakes, wetlands and groundwater aquifers is putting this value at risk and threatening climate resilience in the 21st century.
  - Governments and policymakers at the local, national and regional level, including transboundary river basin authorities, financial institutions, civil society organisations and individuals all have roles to play, including via the restoration of freshwater ecosystems, integrated water management systems, water storage through nature-based solutions or ending harmful subsidies.
- A [research paper](#) published by ecologists in the journal *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, “**Valuing the functionality of tropical ecosystems beyond carbon**”, stresses that:
  - Although land-based carbon sequestration projects, such as tree planting, are a prominent strategy to offset carbon emissions, they threaten tropical biodiversity while only offering modest climate benefit.
  - There is a current financial incentive to maximise carbon gain and the current carbon-centric focus requires carbon additionality from ecosystems for them to be profitable.
  - Emphasis on restoring ecosystems to balance ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, and carbon sequestration is a more appropriate strategy to protect their functioning – which can contribute to both mitigation and adaptation goals while also supporting the provision of ecosystem services.

- A [report](#) released in October by UNICEF highlights that at least **43 million children were displaced due to extreme weather events** over the past six years. “Children displaced in a changing climate: Preparing for a future already underway” analyses the most common weather-related hazards that lead to the largest number of displacements – floods, storms, droughts and wildfires, and calls on governments, donors, development partners and private sector to protect, prepare and prioritise children.

## Calendar



### Upcoming

- **23-25 January:** [Bern III Conference on Cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal GBF](#) (Switzerland)
- **12-17 February:** [Fourteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals](#) (CMS COP 14) in Samarkand (Uzbekistan)
- **21 March:** [International Day of Forests](#)
- **22 March:** [World Water Day](#)
- **30 March:** [International Day of Zero Waste](#)
- **March 2023:** Climate and environment week organised by DG INTPA with EU Delegations
- **15-18 April:** [World Circular Economy Forum](#) in Brussels
- **22 April:** [Earth Day](#)
- **18-24 May:** [10th World Water Forum](#) in Bali, Indonesia
- **22-23 September:** UN [Summit of the Future](#)



### Past

- Second [Summit of the three basins](#), Brazzaville (Congo), 26-28 October: The Summit of the Amazon/Congo/Borneo-Mekong and Southeast Asia, Summit of the Three Basins, Biodiversity Ecosystems, and Tropical Forests (S3B EBFT) [committed](#) inter alia to encourage financial mobilisation and the development of traditional and innovative financing mechanisms, and establish a sustainable system of remuneration for the ecosystem services provided by the three basins.

In the margins of the summit, the roadmap for the implementation of the **EU-Congo Forest Partnership** was [signed](#) on 27 October. It will result in a strengthened dialogue to address deforestation and forest degradation and work towards a sustainable forest economy

## Training and e-learning



### Training, webinars, e-learning

- 🌱 [e-Learning course on European Union Development Effectiveness](#)
- 🌱 [EFSD+ for Dummies](#): presents the basic concepts of the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus and concrete examples of projects

The EU Green Deal webinars series can be followed online regularly and you can also watch their recordings in case you have missed them:

#### 🌱 Series of webinars N°7: European Green Deal - Greening EU cooperation

- [Webinar N° 1: Non-Timber Forest Products and their Value Chains](#)
- [Webinar N° 2: Tracking climate and biodiversity funding – how to use Rio markers?](#)
- [Webinar N° 3: Accelerating the Circular Economy Transition](#)

- [Webinar N° 4: Water & Energy Nexus: Aligning Hydropower, Green Hydrogen and Desalination to the Green Deal](#)
- [Wébinaire N° 5: Introduction aux marchés du carbone](#)
- [Webinar N° 5: Introducción a los Mercados de Carbono](#)
- [Webinar N° 5: Introduction to Carbon Markets](#)
- [Webinar: Forest-based value chains and wood – Focus on LAC](#)

More webinars: [EU Trainings and Webinars | Capacity4dev \(europa.eu\)](#)

🌱 The [E-course on Circular Economy](#) (5 modules)

🌱 Webinar on “[Circular Economy: Raising Climate Ambition](#)”, by the Green Industry Platform, recording available online.

## Tools available

- [Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management](#) (S2S Platform): a multi-stakeholder initiative to exchange and generate knowledge, and supporting joint action, for improved management of land, water, coastal and marine linkages.
- “[Let’s Be Nice to the Ocean](#)”: a new digital platform mandated by the French and Costa Rican co-presidency of the Third UN Ocean Conference (Nice, June 2025), to co-facilitate the input and participation of civil society.
- [Green Performance Toolkit](#): developed by the International Trade Centre to assist small business owners in assessing and tracking their environmental performance across different criteria.

## Green tip #21 – Re-invent presents!

- ✂ **Rethink your presents:** why not give friends and family some non-material presents for a change? They can be cultural like tickets to a concert or wellbeing-oriented like yoga, green cooking or sustainable sewing classes!
- ✂ **Make a donation!** Yes, donating on behalf of your loved ones to a non-profit organisation can be a beautiful present to celebrate the true spirit of Christmas, for instance to provide food to homeless persons or helping out refugees ([Belgian Red Cross](#)), to protect the oceans ([Sea Shepherd](#)), or even to support farm sanctuaries rescuing all kinds of animals, that your children will love visiting with you!
- ✂ **DIY your presents!** Friends and family will love your homemade Christmas cookies and truffles, which you can offer in glass jars for a beautiful present! You can also make them ‘greener’ by opting for plant-based options.

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