



From the 7EAP to an 8EAP: Catalysing the transition to a one planet economy

A Reflection Paper as background to the EU Informal Council in Graz, 29 October 2018

The 7th EAP has proven to be both valuable and yet insufficient to address environmental challenges facing the EU. The 7EAP's existence has allowed environmental issues to remain on the agenda that could otherwise have been lost to short term responses to immediate concerns. On the other hand, its implementation has not been given sufficient priority, as can be seen from the very limited reflection of environmental issues other than climate change in the ten priorities of the Juncker Commission.

All nine of the priority objectives of the 7EAP remain urgent areas of action today. Additionally, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of addressing a range of system lock-ins and need to promote strategies and actions to overcome the locks-ins and enable a transition to sustainability. There has also been growing evidence that our laws are not being implemented properly and that citizens' confidence in the rule of law is eroding. Furthermore citizens are losing confidence in local, national, EU and global institutions as there is insufficient palpable action for example on addressing air pollution, on halting biodiversity loss, and on ensuring a non-toxic environment. Renewed regulatory attention and increased efforts to implementation of EU and national laws are needed to protect EU citizens, their health and rights, the environment and hence confidence in Europe and its institutions.

We therefore urge the Austrian presidency to:

- **Promote commitment** to an ambitious **8EAP catalysing the transition to a one-planet economy**¹ – i.e. that fully respects the resources and ecological limits of our planet.
- Ensure a strong focus also on the **implementation of EU law** to reduce the implementation deficit and bolster confidence in public institutions and the rule of law.
- **Cover not only specific priorities and commitments**, but also **systemic lock-ins** and **need for system change**.
- Encourage **cooperative governance** to facilitate new partnerships, new ideas and stimulate new commitments and actions.
- Catalyse a change in **green finance** to leverage financial flows towards a one planet economy.

¹ As the world's largest economy, Europe must embark upon an immediate and major transformation to avert dangerous climate change and prevent ecosystem collapse. Currently, the impact of the European economy is nearly three times larger than what is required for a sustainable world. A shift to a more sustainable future for Europe must be achieved by building an economy that respects all environmental limits and is socially and financially sustainable. (https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/91316_en.html)

The 8EAP should embrace the over-arching vision of the 7EAP, i.e. 'In 2050, we live well, within the planet's ecological limits', run from **2021 to 2030**, link to the SDGs and its timeline, and have a **mid-term review completed by 2025** to encourage acceptance and motivation for action by the new Commission and Parliament and guide future priorities.

The 7 EAP: its key objectives, 'enabling' measures, and horizontal priority objectives

Three key objectives: Thematic priorities:

- to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's **natural capital**
- to turn the Union into a **resource-efficient**, green, and competitive low-carbon **economy**
- to **safeguard** the Union's citizens from **environment-related pressures** and risks to health and wellbeing

Enabling Framework: Four "enabling" priority objectives

- better **implementation** of legislation
- better **information** by improving the knowledge base
- more and wiser **investment** for environment and climate policy
- full **integration** of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies

Two horizontal priority objectives:

- to **make** the Union's **cities more sustainable**
- to help the Union **address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively**.

In addition, the 7th EAP should be based on the **precautionary principle**, the **principles of preventive action and of rectification of pollution at source** and the **polluter-pays principle**.

See Article 2 of the 7EAP (EU, 2013)

Civil Society Vision for the 8EAP: A draft reflection paper

The 8EAP should focus on **catalysing the transition to a one-planet economy and** run from **2021 to 2030** so as to link to the **SDGs**. It should also have a **mid-term review completed by 2025** to encourage Commission and European Parliament's acceptance and commitments for action and guide future priorities. In light of an assessment of future environmental challenges, the 8EAP could usefully include:

1. Actions and targets for clusters of **specific environmental challenges**
2. Improve **implementation and the rule of law**
3. Develop strategies and plans to address **lock-ins and achieve a system change**
4. Promote **cooperative governance**
5. **Finance** the transition to sustainability

These are outlined in turn below.

1. ***Actions and targets for specific environmental challenges and clusters:*** The EU has committed to a wide range of targets and objectives already, but there are gaps and there is a need to appreciate the inter-connections between the issues and address the nexus within clusters of different issues. This priority should be about reiterating the targets, clarifying 2025 and 2030 milestones, and suggesting measures for action. Importantly, it should also be about recommending specific actions to address the nexus between issues by developing clusters - e.g. food-water-biodiversity; chemicals-air-pollution-health; climate-biodiversity-water-agriculture-forestry. Specific untapped potential remains in focusing on the interconnections of policy areas in the different nexuses. This will support policy coherence and improve policy effectiveness and complement measures already committed to.
2. ***Improve implementation and the rule of law:*** The EU faces an implementation deficit - on air and water quality, on chemicals in products, on nature protection - that is both eroding the health and wellbeing of citizens and the state of the environment and is leading to an erosion of citizens' confidence in policy making and governments. There is also a weakening rule of law as resources for inspections, enforcement and justice are insufficient, and as access to justice for citizens and civil society remains inadequate in some parts of Europe as well as at the EU level itself, even to the point of putting the EU in violation of international law. Attention is needed to improve implementation and the rule of law. Without this, sustainability ambitions are unrealistic and confidence in EU and national institutions will be eroded further.
3. ***Develop strategies and plans to address lock-ins and achieve system change:*** Policy progress faces a wide number of lock-ins – e.g. material (fossil fuels, plastic, chemicals), infrastructure (roads, factories, pipelines, airports, building stock), systems (interconnected product supply chains, agri-industrial food systems), economic paradigms and incentives (pricing, taxation, subsidies), habits, norms and attitudes (consumption and growth fixation). This requires systems thinking that takes account of the inter-dependencies and develops ideas for transition management. A series of strategies to address lock-ins is needed to chart practical ways forward and encourage engagement and commitment.
4. ***Promote cooperative governance:*** The EU's 8th EAP can only succeed if there is close engagement with Member States to ensure acceptance, commitment and implementation. Additional key stakeholders include: civil society who represent the citizen's voice and understand their needs; cities that are driving progress on many areas of the environmental agenda and its implementation; and with global institutions and actors to ensure coherence and compatibility of approaches that enable the EU to live up to its

commitments and responsibilities and drive changes to a one planet economy. Within the EU, this will require more cross-thematic engagement to avoid silos and achieve coherence, increased engagement with Member States to improve the implementation record, as well as more engagement with NGOs, and also networks of inspectorates, prosecutors and judges to support practical progress with implementation and the rule of law.

5. ***Finance the transition to sustainability:*** Explore and encourage innovative financing routes such green bonds, sustainability focused pension funds, as well as improve the impacts of “traditional” funding at EU level (e.g. the EU-MFF, EU-ETS, LIFE) and Member State level (GPP, full cost pricing, tax and subsidy reform, incentives for renewables and energy efficiency, repairs). Without progress on financing – both in focusing on sustainability investment and divesting from harmful investments - there risks being insufficient funds to enable the transition to sustainability.

The above is a first draft of the civil society reflection on the 8EAP and will be developed further in light of consultation among civil society and wider interested stakeholders.

The reflection paper is also the outcome of a broader project on an 8EAP, which will be concluded with an Action Paper on an 8EAP by the end of 2018. For more information visit: <https://www.umweltdachverband.at/themen/europaeische-umweltpolitik/at18/#englisch>

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