



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

ENVIRONMENT

Sectoral Committee
Weekly Update
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Commission sends first warning to Malta for failing to submit the River Basin Management Plan

The European Commission sent a first warning to twelve Member States for failing to submit their plans for managing Europe's river basins, as required by EU water legislation. The Member States involved are: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. The river basin plans are the cornerstone of the Water Framework Directive and essential for achieving the EU's objective of 'good status' for European waters by 2015. They should have been adopted by 22 December 2009 at the latest.

Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik said: "I am pleased that the majority of Member States have successfully delivered their river basin management plans on time. However, we still do not have plans for a quarter of the EU's territory. I urge those Member States to take action quickly, complete the public consultation and submit their plans."

In a statement, the Maltese Government said that Malta sent its draft River Basin Management Plan to the Commission on 26 May 2010. The Plan is available for public consultation on MEPA's website www.mepa.org.mt/topic-waterpc. The Plan will also be discussed by MEUSAC's Core Group as well as by MEUSAC's Environment Sectoral Committee in the coming weeks – more details on the meeting will be sent shortly.

Climate Change Commissioner welcomes fall in EU greenhouse gas emissions for fifth year running

The European Environment Agency today publishes the latest EU inventory of greenhouse gas emissions showing that emissions fell again significantly in 2008, the first year of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period. European Climate Action Commissioner Connie Hedegaard welcomed the news. The fall marks the fifth consecutive annual decrease. The emissions inventory for 2008, the latest year for which complete data is available, shows that EU-15 emissions dropped by 1.9% from 2007 while the economy grew by 0.6 %. The reduction takes EU-15 emissions to 6.9% below their levels in the base year (1990 in most cases). This brings the EU-15 closer to reaching its Kyoto Protocol target of reducing emissions in the 2008-2012 commitment periods to an average of 8% below the base year level. EU-27 emissions fell 2% over the year to 11.3% below the 1990 level.

The data was compiled by the European Environment Agency and has been submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

For further information please follow link to the European Environment Agency:
www.eea.europa.eu

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Calls for taxation regimes to reflect impacts on the environment



On the 2nd of June, the European Commission, together with the UN Environmental Programme, launched a major new report highlighting the need for a radical change in the way major economies are using scarce resources. The report provides science-based priorities for world environmental efforts, ranking products, materials and economic and lifestyle activities according to their environmental and resource impacts. Major findings

include the news that over half of all world food crops are now fed to animals, and that a doubling of wealth leads typically to an increase of environmental pressure by 60 to 80 per cent. The report, put together by the International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management, indicates that legislators and policymakers looking to make the most impact on the Earth's well-being should use taxes and other incentives to encourage more eco-friendly agricultural practices and reduce the use of fossil fuels.

The report "Environmental Impacts of Consumption and Production: Priority Products and Materials", is the latest in a series from the International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management. Using life-cycle analyses, it catalogues the materials and energy required for production, consumption and disposal, and identifies the processes, products and materials most responsible for environmental harm around the globe. At the top of the list are agricultural goods, particularly products from animals, which are fed more than half of all world crops. Fossil fuel users are also under fire, especially electrical utilities and other energy-intensive industries, residential heating, and transportation. Materials with the greatest impact across their life cycle include plastics, iron, steel, and aluminium.

The Panel cites the following pressures on the environment as priorities for reduction:

- climate change,
- habitat change,
- nitrogen and phosphorus pollution,
- overexploitation of fisheries, forests and other resources,
- invasive species,
- unsafe drinking water and sanitation,
- household combustion of solid fuels,
- lead exposure,



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- urban air pollution, and
- Occupational exposure to particulate matter.

The perils of affluence

Worryingly, the Panel produces an array of evidence to show that prosperity and humanity's environmental impact grow in tandem, contrary to the popular belief that greater wealth leads to a lighter environmental footprint.

The report indicates that while greater affluence can lead to relatively simple process changes and devices to control local sources of conventional air and water pollution, rising wealth also results in the growth of wider-scale problems such as energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Regarding CO₂, "a doubling of wealth leads typically to an increase of environmental pressure by 60 to 80 per cent, and in emerging economies this is sometimes even more," the report says.