



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

# ENVIRONMENT

Sectoral Committee  
Weekly Update  
**22.01.10**

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## MEUSAC's Environment Sectoral Committee to meet again on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January

The Environment Sectoral Committee is scheduled to meet once again on the Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> of January. The meeting will be held at MEUSAC premises, 4th floor at 1500hrs. The topics to be discussed are:

1. A short presentation on the priorities of the Spanish Presidency with regards to the Environment
  1. Discussion on the Transposition and Implementation of Directive 2008/10/EC on Environmental Quality Standards in the field of water policy;
  2. Information session on General Binding Rules.

Officials from MEPA will be giving presentations on the subject. **Please note that since items 3 and 4 of the agenda are of interest to other local operators, the meeting will then be opened to representatives that are not part of the committee.**

**Please confirm your attendance by Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January.**

**Information and consultation briefs on the Environmental Quality Standards and GBR's will be sent separately by e-mail to the members of the committee.**

### **COM (2010) 4 - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Options for an EU vision and target for biodiversity beyond 2010**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, the European Commission marked the opening of the International Year of Biodiversity with a paper setting out future options for biodiversity policy. Despite past efforts, species extinctions are continuing at alarming rates, and a new vision is required to halt these losses. The Communication sets out a vision and outlines four possible targets to reach it, with different levels of ambition. The aim is to launch and facilitate a debate between Member States with a view to developing a post-2010 biodiversity policy framework for the EU before the end of the year. New targets are needed, as the current EU and global biodiversity targets expire after 2010. The Communication proposes a long-term (2050) vision for biodiversity, with four options for a mid-term (2020) target – an essential step along the way towards reaching the vision. In this vision, biodiversity and the ecosystem services we get for free from nature are preserved, valued and, insofar as possible, restored for their intrinsic value, enabling them to support economic prosperity and human well-being, and averting any catastrophic changes linked to biodiversity loss.

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This Communication is a first step towards this objective. It presents options for development of a post-2010 EU vision and target. It aims to facilitate further informed debate by identifying the issues at stake and laying out the work that is needed to be able to set and realise ambitious EU goals. Based on this debate, and further work to provide the evidence necessary to underpin the choice among different levels of ambition for an EU target, the Commission will present an EU biodiversity strategy by the end of the year.

The full communication can be found here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/policy/pdf/communication\\_2010\\_0004.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/policy/pdf/communication_2010_0004.pdf)

...from the Council...

### **The 18 month Presidency Programme – Focus on the Environment, Climate change and Energy**

**General:** In their 18 month Presidency Programme, namely the current Spanish Presidency and the subsequent two Presidencies i.e. Belgium and Hungary, the three Presidencies emphasised the need to work towards a Union closer to its citizens and their concerns. Thus they aim to promote targeted policies that directly benefit citizens. Their task is to build a more united and a more integrated Europe, a Europe capable of facing global challenges.

With regards to environment, the implementation and possible review of the energy and climate package is a top priority for the three Presidencies.

Among other things, the Council aims to focus on:

- **Overarching priority: Greening the policies**
  - renewed emphasis on sustainable development and the greening of policies
  - ensure synergy between the Post Lisbon-strategy and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy
  - ensure the integration of environment in the post-2010 Lisbon strategy
  - pursue endeavours to better integrate environment in relevant other policies
  - strengthen the substance of, and coherence between, the CSD process, the Millennium Development Goals, the International Environmental Governance and the follow-up to the Rio and Johannesburg Conferences



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- **Climate change**
  - ensure the implementation of the Climate and Energy Package
  - further the work on the Regulation on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions labelling for vehicles, the Regulation on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction from light commercial vehicles and the forthcoming communication on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from shipping.
  - examine the issue of passing to an EU 30% of green-house gas emissions reduction in the light of the outcome of the Copenhagen Conference
  
- **Biodiversity**
  - develop a post 2010 Action Plan, aiming at a significant improvement of the status of Biodiversity in the EU
  - the protection of forests against fire, storms and droughts, also in the context of climate change and environment protection
  - the UN General Assembly on Biodiversity
  
- **Environment and Health**
  - further the work on the revision of the national emissions ceilings for the main atmospheric pollutants and on the Industrial Emissions Directive
  - take the necessary steps to prepare the successor to the Second Environment and Health Action Plan
  - harmonise methodologies in order to decrease the sources of pollutants (a Green Paper on in-door pollution is expected)
  - examine the impacts and benefits of nanotechnologies (a communication is expected)
  - finalise the work on the Biocides Directive
  
- **Sustainable consumption and production / sustainable use of natural resources**
  - Joint Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy
  - ensure coherence of the Joint Action Plan with other plans, such as the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP)
  - initiate measures related to green public procurement and fight against illegal wood imports
  - emphasise eco-conception and sustainability criteria for biomass
  
- **Water resources**
  - develop an integrated approach to a sustainable water policy



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- focus on the evolving strategy for water scarcity and droughts envisaged for 2012 and on the revision of the drinking water Directive
- promote the assessment and management of critical water-related problems such as extreme events, climate change, endangered ecosystems etc

*The setting-up of the 7th Environment Action Programme will be of utmost importance to underpin these priority policy areas. Together with the evaluation and revision of the Lisbon Strategy as well as the evaluation and development of the Sustainable Development Strategy, it offers a unique opportunity to give the necessary direction to these developments.*

**View the full programme here:**

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st16/st16771.en09.pdf>