



## European Environment Agency (EEA) - <https://www.eea.europa.eu/>

By Jayson Ello, HOPE researcher (Qld)

### Main Objectives:

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is an agency of the European Union, whose task is to provide sound, independent information on the environment. The EEA aims to support sustainable development by helping to achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment, through the provision of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policymaking agents and the public.

The EEA's mandate is:

- To help the community, members and cooperating countries make informed decisions about improving the environment, integrating environmental considerations into economic policies and moving towards sustainability; and
- To coordinate the European environment information and observation network (Eionet)

The EEA now has 33 member countries and six cooperating countries. The European environment information and observation network (Eionet) is a partnership network of the EEA and the countries. The EEA is responsible for developing the network and coordinating its activities. To do so, the EEA works closely with national focal points, typically national environment agencies or environment ministries. They are responsible for coordinating national networks involving many institutions (about 350 in all).

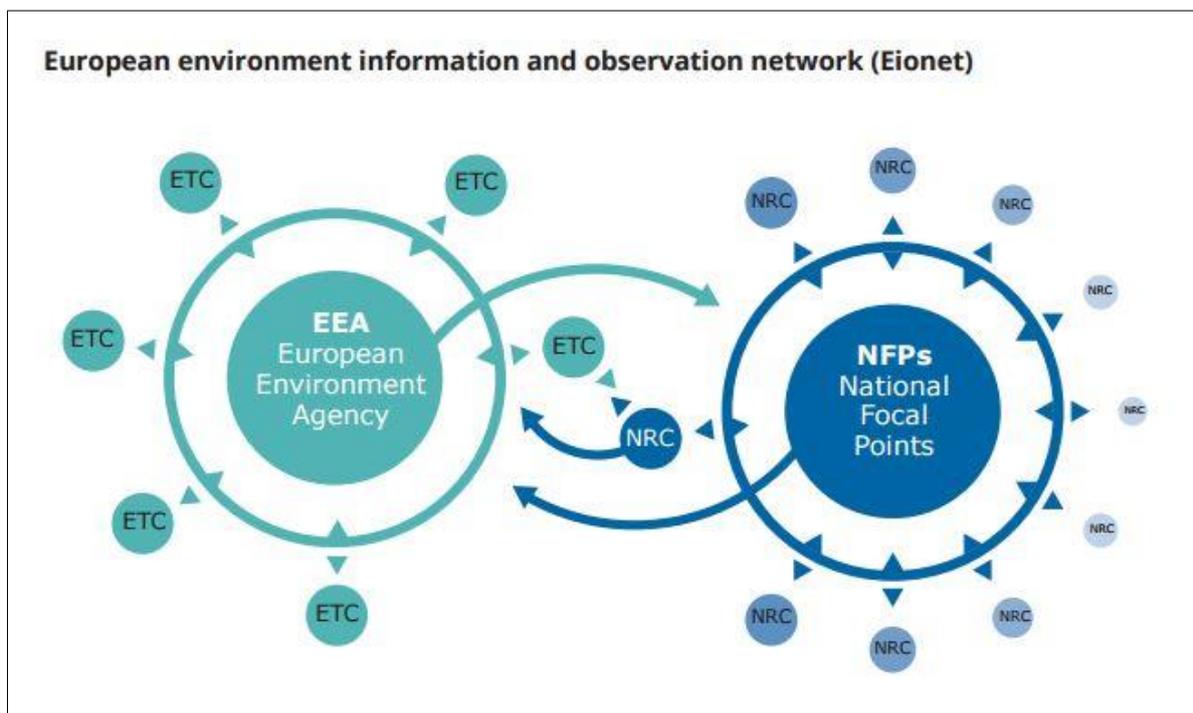


Fig. 1 European environment information and observation network (Eionet).

### Major Achievements to-date:



**27 Nov 2019** – EEA released data showing that more than 400 new climate change mitigation policies between 2017 and 2019. EU Member States have now reported more than 1 900 climate actions, most of them targeting energy supply or energy consumption.

The reported policies primarily target energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, including by enhancing buildings' energy efficiency (18%), deploying more renewable energy (16%), switching to low carbon fuels or electric vehicles (8%), or by improving vehicles' fuel efficiency (7%). More than 10% of the measures concern agriculture, including many of the new actions. In this sector, the EEA data shows that the most common objectives are reducing fertilizer or manure use on cropland and improving animal waste management.



**01 Oct 2019** - EEA published a report stating that circular economy initiatives in Europe are still at an early stage and would benefit from more investments in

upscaling promising innovations and in monitoring progress towards circularity. Circular material use can minimise waste and resource extraction, improve resource efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and contribute to conserving biodiversity.

EEA surveys indicate that 21 out of 32 responding EEA member countries already support circular economy initiatives. Countries use regulation and market-based instruments mainly for recycling, energy recovery and waste management; while eco-design, consumption and reuse are typically targeted with softer policy instruments such as information campaigns and labels.

The new report also notes that monitoring progress on circular economy needs further investment. Many relevant data — for example, on the production and consumption phase of product lifecycles — is not available in established information systems, including national statistics. The EEA report also points out that circular economy policies and initiatives require better integration with bio-economy and climate policies.



**16 Sep 2019** – EEA published a report showing that in 2018 the EU again destroyed or exported more ozone-depleting substances than it produced or imported. The new EEA report shows that the consumption of ozone-depleting substances in the EU in 2018 remained negative (-1,505 tonnes), which means that more of these substances were destroyed or exported than produced or imported. The EU's consumption of these substances has been negative since 2010 with the exception of 2012.



**10 Sep 2019** – EEA published a report identifying ten focus areas for enabling sustainability transitions.

The EEA report 'Sustainability transitions: policy and practice' identifies policy options for responding to systemic environmental and climate problems in Europe and globally. The report sets out 10 sets of messages for policy, outlining how governments and other actors can enable systemic change towards long-term sustainability goals.

Focusing in particular on Europe's food, energy and mobility systems, the report illustrates the importance of promoting diverse innovations — social practices, business models, technologies — that can trigger new ways of living and thinking. It points to the critical need to empower cities as hubs of innovation and networking, to reorient financial flows towards sustainable and transformative innovations, to navigate inevitable surprises and trade-offs, and to ensure socially fair outcomes.

The report also emphasises that achieving sustainability transitions requires that all policy areas and levels of government operate together to harness the creativity and power of citizens, businesses and communities. Environment and climate policy tools remain essential but transforming systems also requires coherent contributions from many other areas, ranging from research and innovation, industry, competition and trade, to employment, education and welfare.

**04 Sep 2019** – EEA published a report saying that adapting to climate change must be made a top priority for the European Union's agriculture sector if it is to improve resilience to extreme events like droughts, heatwaves and floods. Crop and livestock production is projected to decrease and may even have to be abandoned in parts of Europe's southern and Mediterranean regions due to the increased negative impacts of climate change.

#### Current Projects/Campaigns/Events:



#### **17 Sep 2019 | Campaign | Plastic Pollution**

A Danish initiative mobilises schoolchildren to collect plastic waste and research data that will become part of the EEA database on marine litter. Better data on plastic pollution helps inform policies and tackle the problem.

More than 57,000 Danish children made an effort to clean up the country's nature from plastic pollution and gather data for research and the EEA's Marine Litter Watch database. The nationwide initiative was part of an annual science week, organised by Astra, a national centre for science learning, and Marine Plastic, centre for research in marine plastic pollution.

Free newsletter subscriptions: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/media/newsletter>