EU ACTION PLAN
‘Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil’

Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All

Updated -07/12/2021

We are encountering major ecological crises

CLIMATE

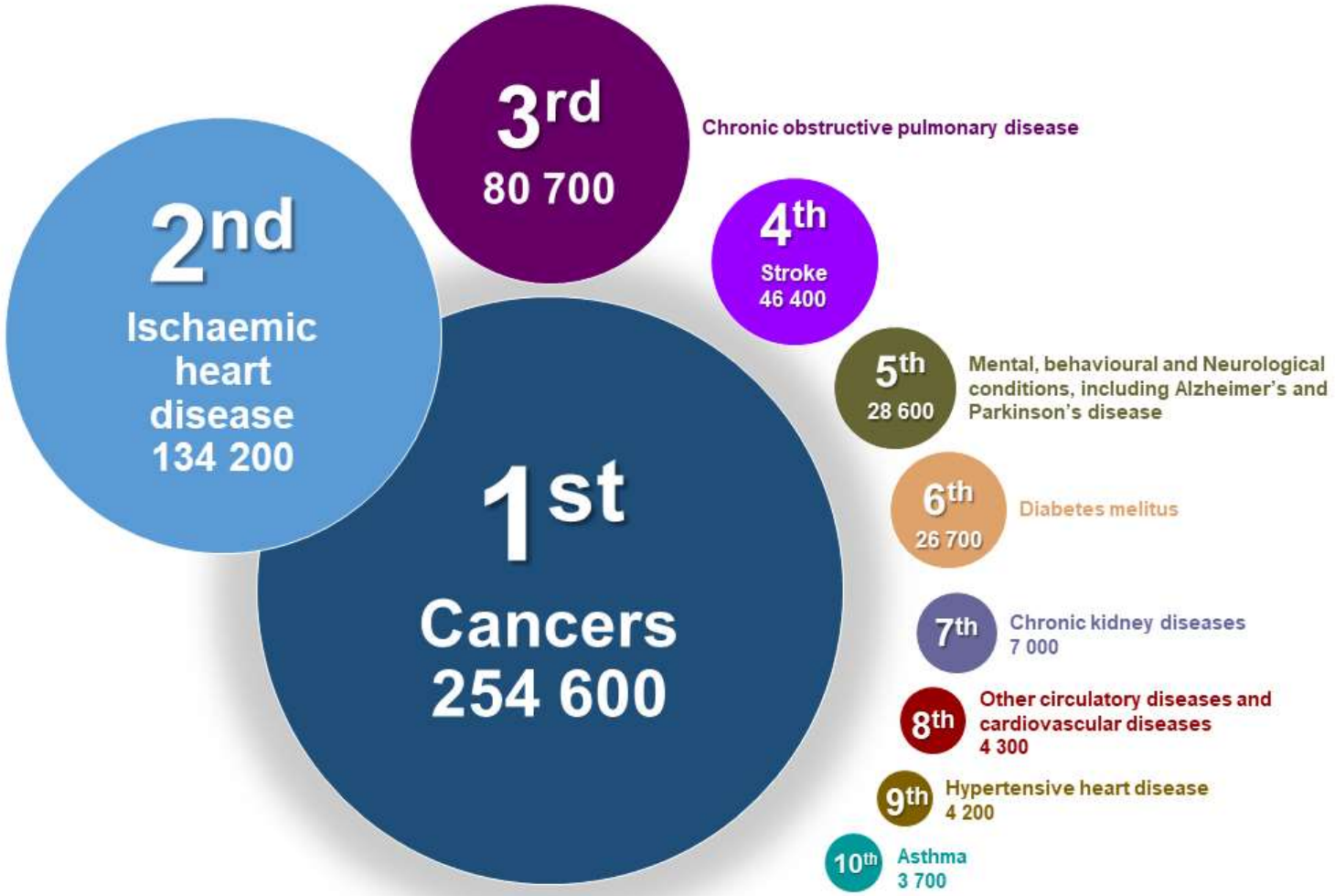
BIODIVERSITY

Photo by Julia Joppien on Unsplash

RESOURCES

POLLUTION

Urgency to act on pollution



Source: EEA – Healthy environment, healthy lives (2018) based on WHO (2016)

"For the **health of our citizens**, our children and grandchildren, Europe needs to move towards a **zero pollution ambition**.

I will put forward a cross-cutting **strategy to protect citizens' health from environmental degradation and pollution**, addressing air and water quality, hazardous chemicals, industrial emissions, pesticides and endocrine disruptors."

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

The European Green Deal
zero pollution actions

Mobilising research and fostering innovation

Transforming the EU's economy for a sustainable future

Increasing the EU's Climate ambition for 2030 and 2050

Supplying clean, affordable and secure energy

Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy

Building and renovating in an energy/resource efficient way

The European Green Deal

A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment

Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity

From 'Farm to Fork': a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system

Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility

And leave No one behind

Financing the transition

Leave no one behind (Just Transition)

The EU as a global leader

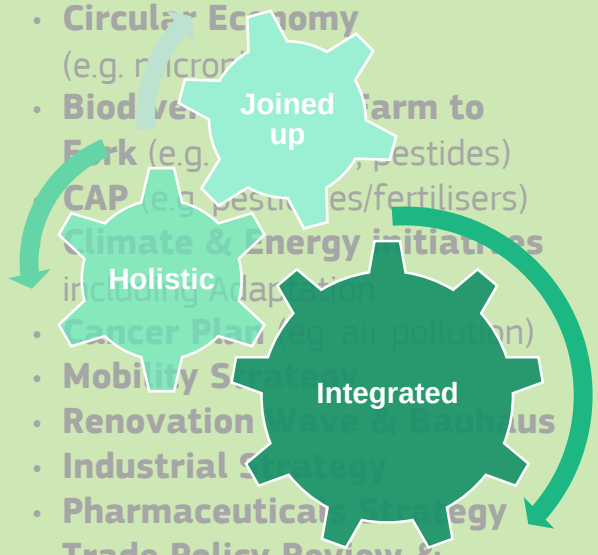
A European Climate Pact

Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability

Zero Pollution Action Plan for Air, Water & Soil

Many Green Deal actions already contribute to the Zero Pollution ambition

- **Circular Economy** (e.g. microp
- **Biodiversity**, **Farm to Fork** (e.g. pesticides)
- **CAP** (e.g. pesticides/fertilisers)
- **Climate & Energy initiatives** including Adaptation
- **Cancer Plan** (e.g. air pollution)
- **Mobility Strategy**
- **Renovation Wave & Bauhaus**
- **Industrial Strategy**
- **Pharmaceutical Strategy**
- **Trade Policy Review & Mulitlateralism**



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The **zero pollution vision** for 2050

"Air, water and soil pollution is reduced to **levels no longer considered harmful to health and natural ecosystems** and that **respect the boundaries our planet can cope with**, thus creating a toxic-free environment."

European Commission

2030 targets complementing SDGs

by **55% the health impacts** of **air pollution**

by **30% the share of people** disturbed by **transport noise**

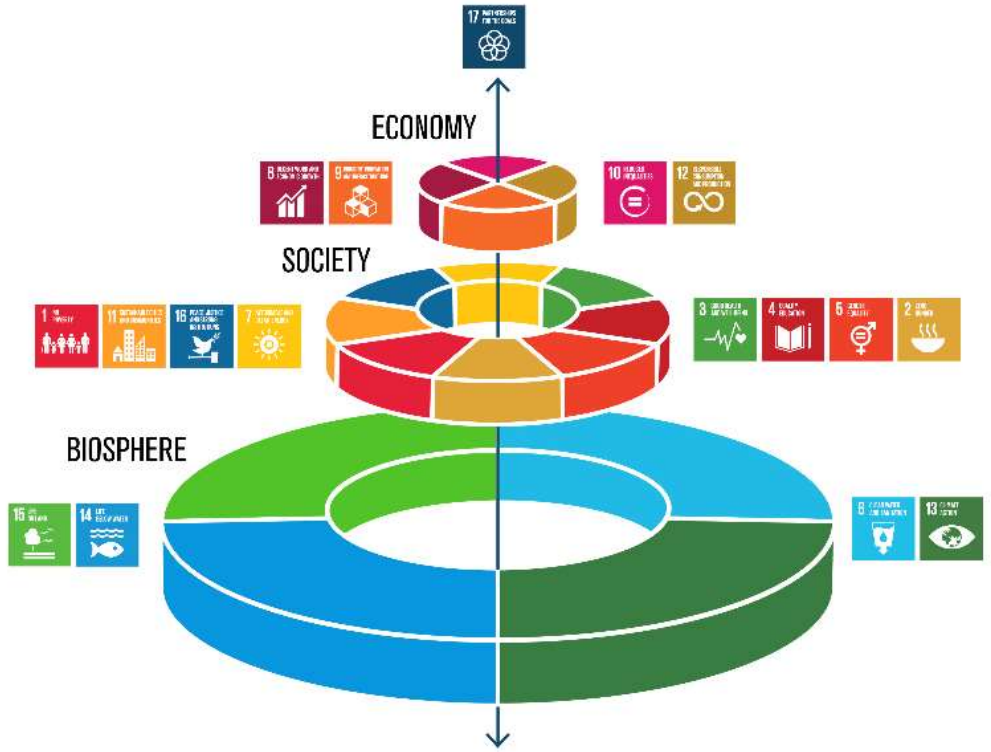
by **25% the EU ecosystems** threatened by **air pollution**

Achieve objectives in EU laws
(air, water, marine and other)
+ **reduce**

by **50% plastic litter at sea** and by **30% microplastics**

by **50% nutrient losses, pesticides use & antimicrobials sales**

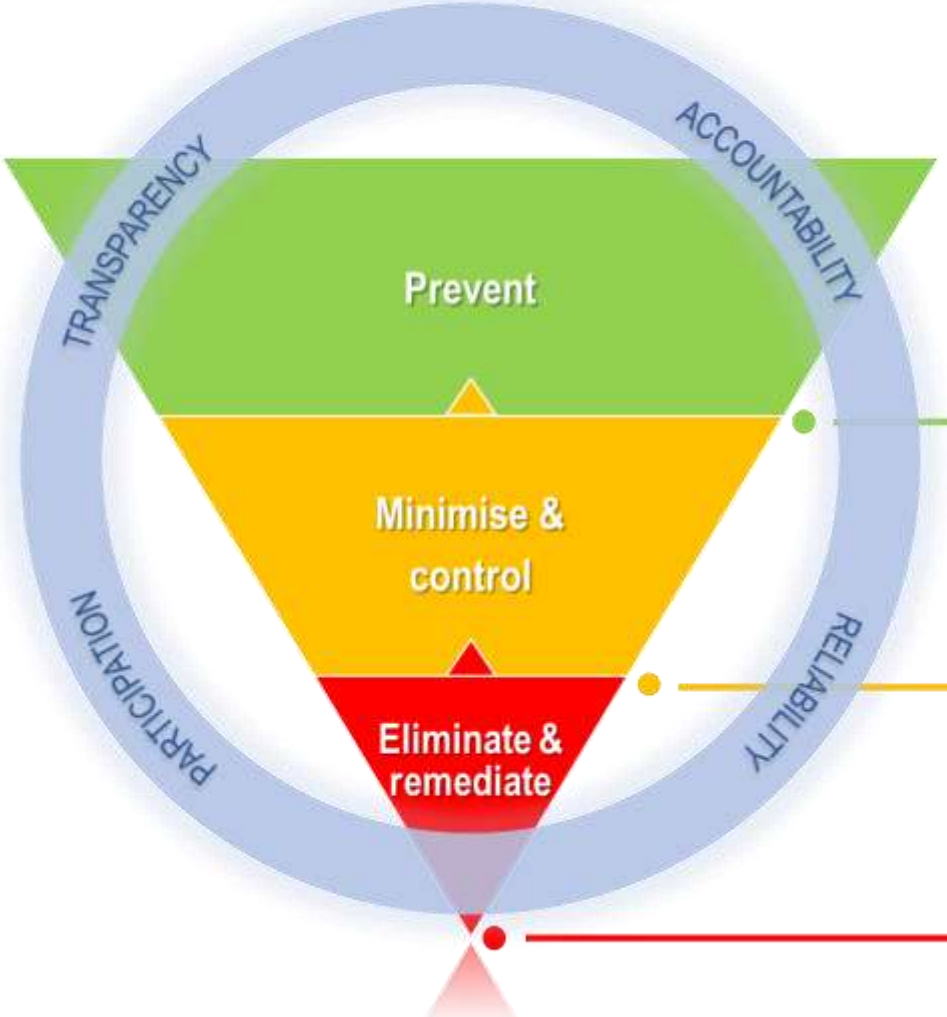
waste generation and by **50% residual municipal waste**



Graphics by Jerker Lokrantz/Azote

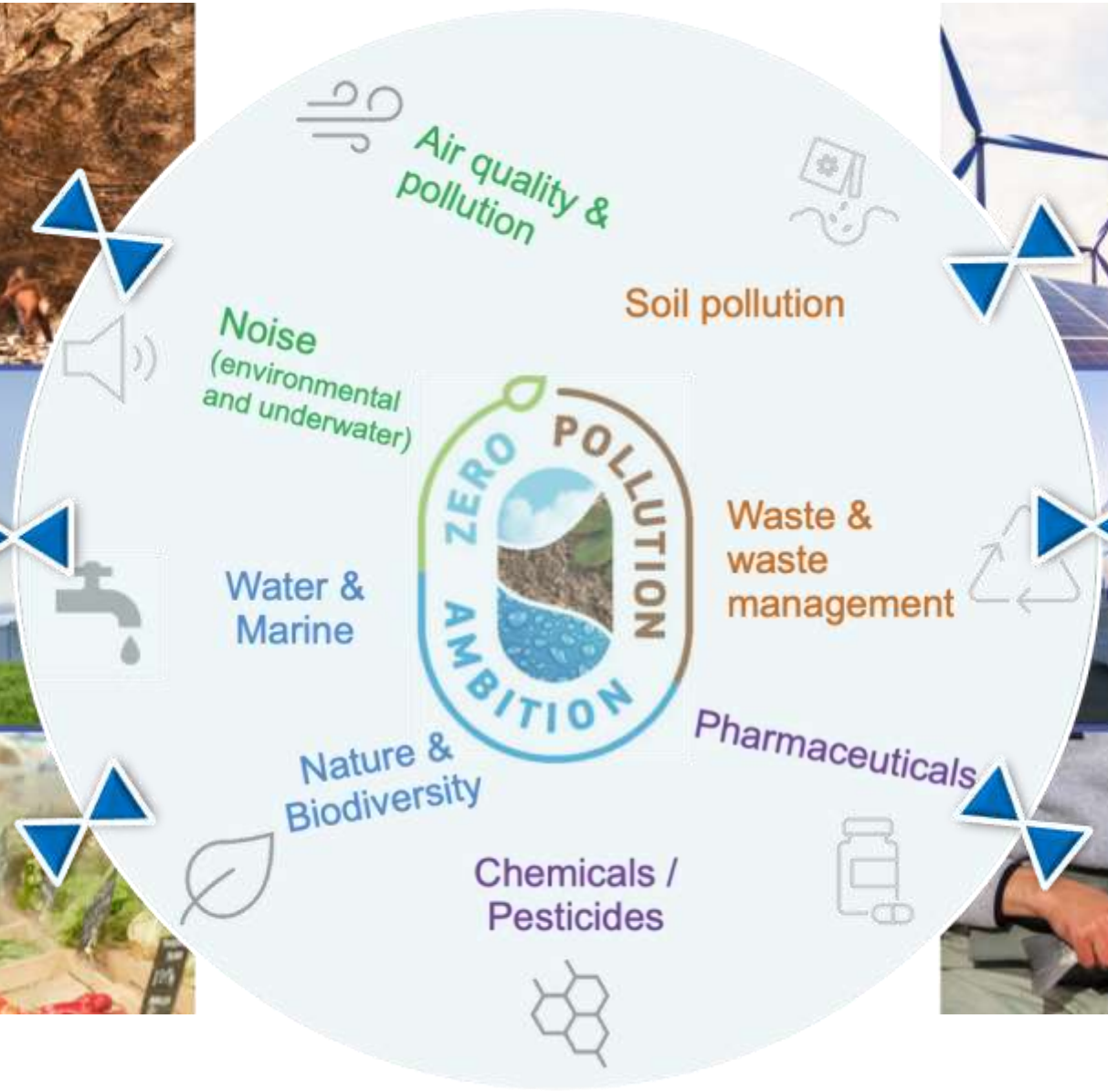
Hierarchy of action on pollution

Union policy on the environment shall be based on the **precautionary principle** and on the principles that **preventive action** should be taken, that environmental damage should as a priority be **rectified at source** and on the **polluter pays principle.**

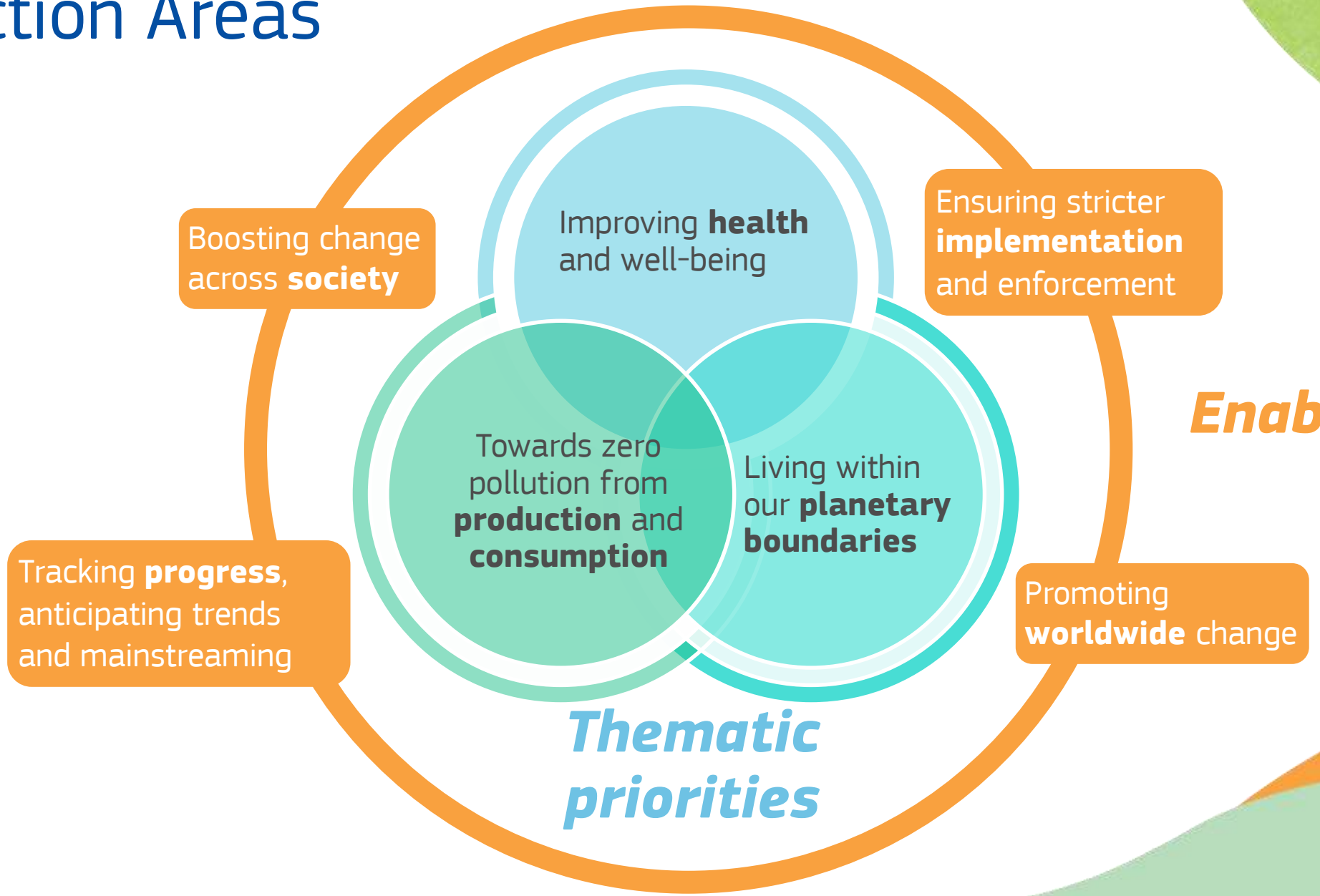


	PROTECT HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT	ENCOURAGE INNOVATION
Prevent	Prevent pollution in all stages of a clean and circular economy from extraction of natural resources, to production, service provision and consumption as at end-of-life.	Promote clean, 'zero pollution' production processes, safe and sustainable products and services by design as well as innovative tools, technologies, and behavioral change.
Minimise & control	Minimise releases and exposure of humans and the environment to pollution through management, technological measures and information about releases.	Promote modern and smart production processes, safe and sustainable product uses, services and business models, and digital solutions for tracking and reducing pollution.
Eliminate & remediate	Eliminate and remediate, as far as possible, existing pollution of water and soils and apply measures to return to a 'good status'.	Promote zero pollution recycling, waste management, decontamination and remediation.

Zero Pollution policies – towards an integrated approach



Action Areas



Flagships – integrated initiatives

1. Reducing health inequalities through zero pollution

2. Supporting urban zero pollution action

3. Promoting zero pollution across regions

4. Facilitating zero pollution choices

5. Enforcing zero pollution together

6. Showcasing zero pollution solutions for buildings

7. Living Labs for green digital solutions and smart zero pollution

8. Minimising the EU's external pollution footprint

9. Consolidating the EU's Knowledge Centres for zero pollution

Timetable (key actions)

First Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook (2022)

- Revision of **Air Quality Directive**
- Revision of the **Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive**
- Revision of **water pollutants list** (Environmental Quality Standards and Groundwater Directives)
- Revision of the **Mercury Regulation**
- Implementation Report of **Environmental Noise Directive**
- Establish EU priority watch list for **soil**

Second Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook (2024)

- Recommendations on implementation of **polluter pays principle**

Launch of the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform (2021)

- New emission limit values for motor vehicles (**EURO7**)
- Revision of the **Industrial Emissions Directive** and EU Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (or early 2022)
- Revision of the **Environmental Crime Directive**
- Launch global initiatives, e.g. on **lead batteries recycling**

EEA's European Environment & Health Atlas (2023)

- Review of **Marine Strategy Framework Directive**
- Review of **Bathing Water Directive**
- Fitness Check of **Environment Liability Directive**
- Assess pathways and policy options for **indoor air quality**
- Dedicated nutrient (ammonia) actions contributing to the **Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan**
- Zero pollution contribution to **European Green Deal Dataspace**

IED Status Quo

Works Well

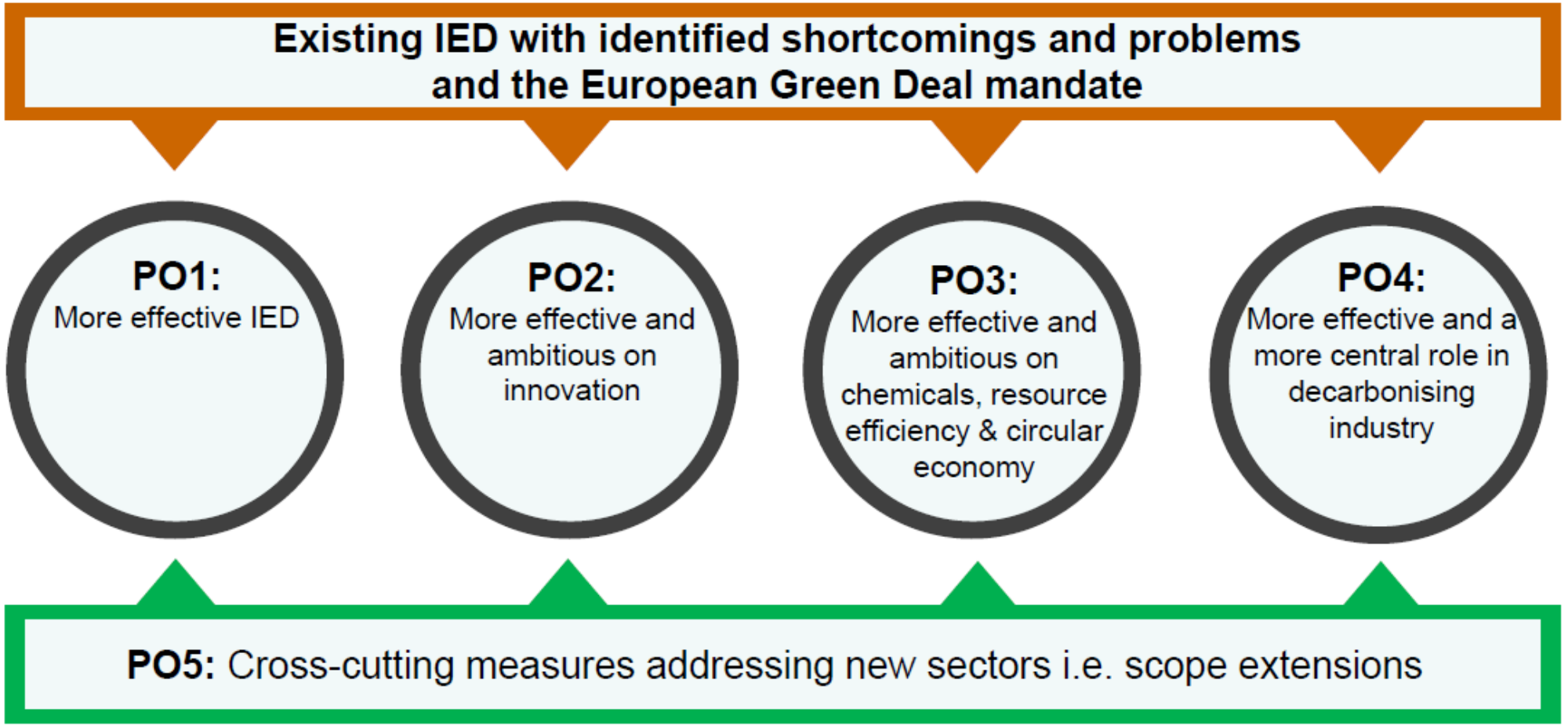
- ✓ BREF process governance
- ✓ Permitting
- ✓ Reduced distortion of competition
- ✓ Reducing industry emissions (especially to air)
- ✓ Cost-effectiveness
- ✓ Promotion of BAT

Challenges to rectify - IED

- **Not as effective as it could be re. ensuring reduced pollutant emissions from industry, public access to information and participation, and coherence in implementation.**
- **Not dynamic enough, insufficient support to rapid deployment of innovative technologies**
- **Does not sufficiently promote use of safer chemicals or chemical alternatives, resource efficiency or Circular Economy approaches**
- **Not optimised to contributed synergistically with ETS to reducing greenhouse gas emissions**
- **Does not regulate some highly polluting (agro)-industrial sectors (under evaluation)**

European Commission

Policy Options (Packages of Measures) Used in IA



Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform

European Commission

European Committee of the Regions

Who?

- Bringing together stakeholders and experts from different policy areas

What?

- mainstream the zero pollution agenda, help create co-ownership, promote collaboration and foster integrated solutions and actions that maximise synergies

How?

- share good practices on cross-cutting topics such as financing for zero pollution innovation and jobs, boosting sustainable production and consumption as well as creating thematic hubs (e.g. air, digital, soil)
- Create synergies with European Climate Pact, Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, Green City Accord, Business@Biodiversity, Chemicals Roundtable, etc.

Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform

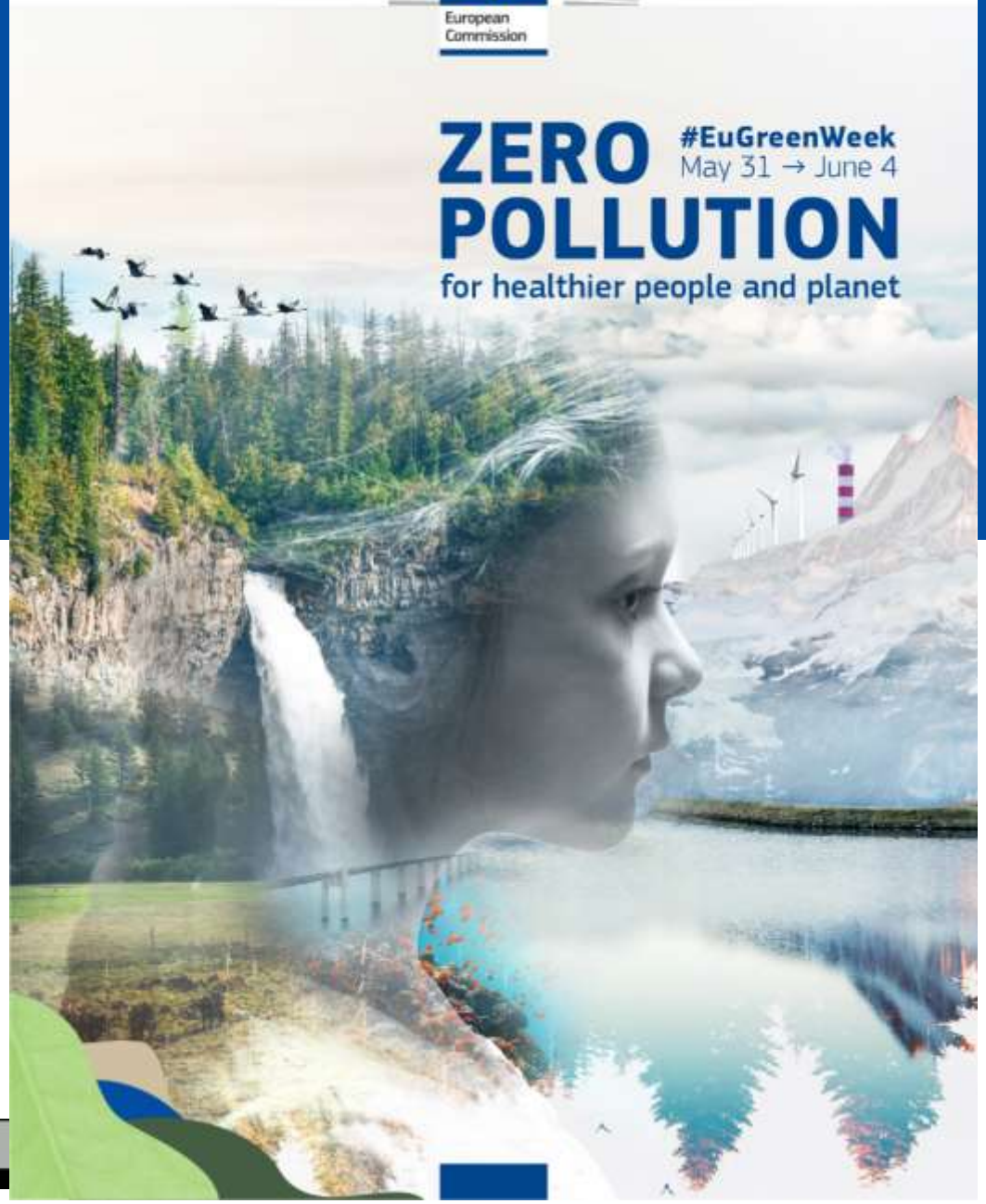
European Commission

European Committee of the Regions

- **Co-chaired by DG ENV and Committee of the Regions**

- **37 members:**
  - up to 12 civil society organisations,
  - up to 12 organisations from the business sector
  - up to 5 scientific / research organisations
  - up to 5 local and regional authorities
  - 3 Member States (present, outgoing and incoming EU Presidencies)

- **Observers from UNEP, WHO, OECD, EEA/Candidate countries, EU bodies** (e.g. EIB, EESC) **and agencies** (e.g. EEA)
- **Others can apply for observer status**



Thank you!

More information:

- [Zero Pollution webpage]
- [Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform]
- **Contact:** ENV-ZERO-POLLUTION@ec.europa.eu

Your input is welcome!

European Commission

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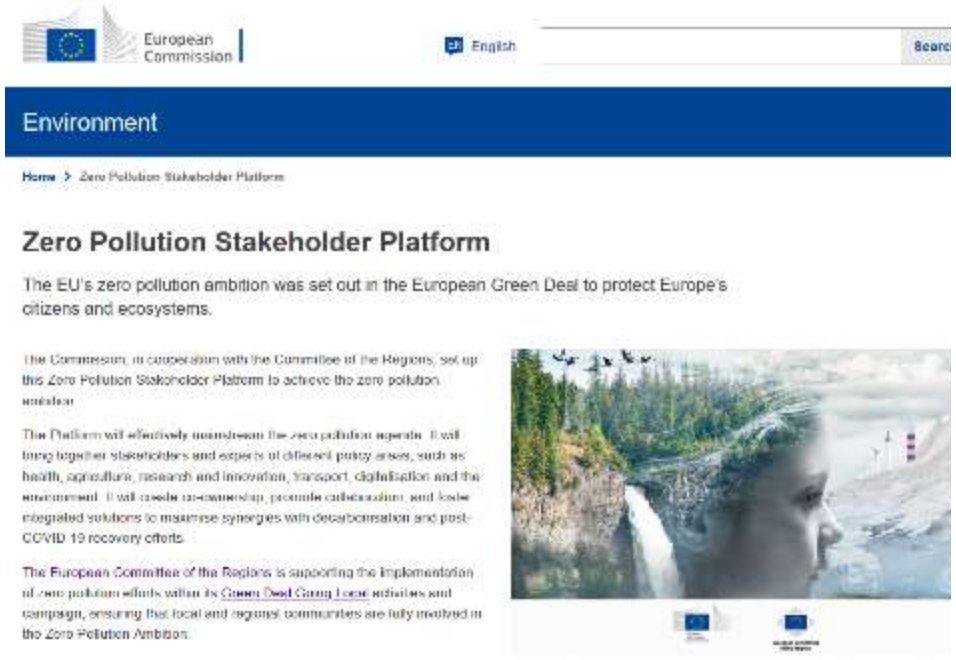
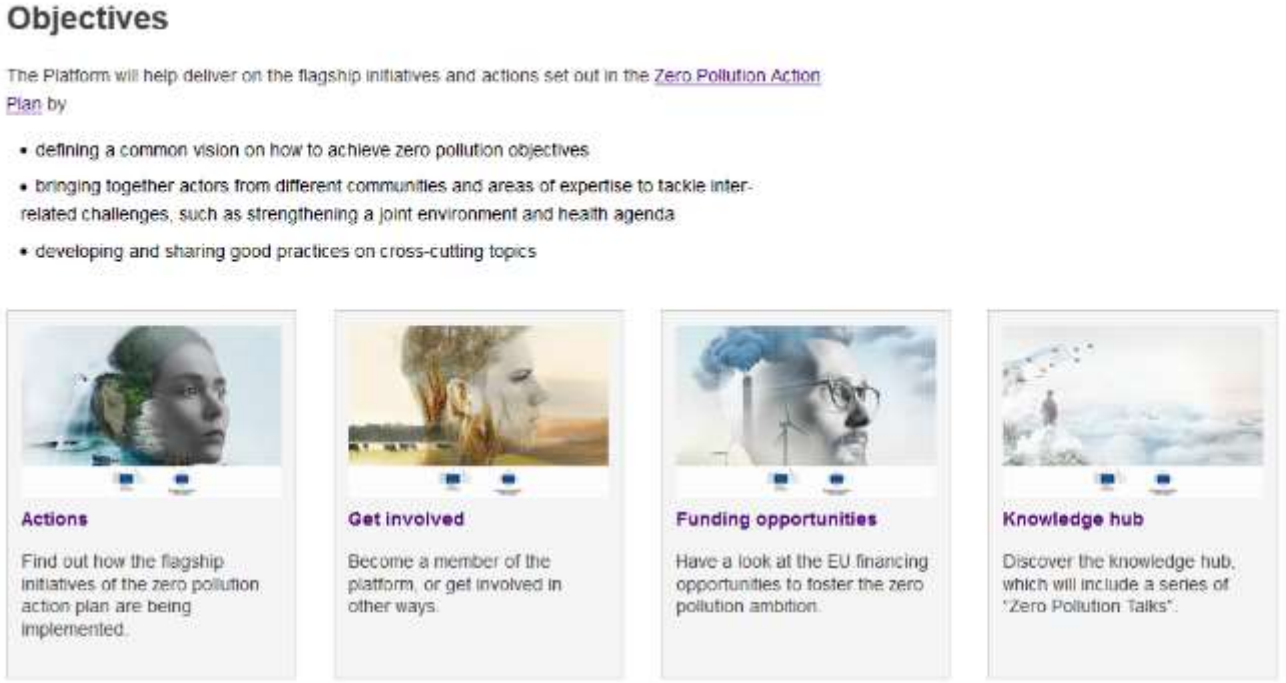
New website





https://ec.europa.eu/environment/zero-pollution-stakeholder-platform_en