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
- RESOURCES
- POLLUTION
Urgency to act on pollution

1st
Cancers 254 600

2nd
Ischaemic heart disease 134 200

3rd
80 700
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

4th
Stroke 45 400

5th
Mental, behavioural and Neurological conditions, including Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease 28 600

6th
Diabetes mellitus 26 700

7th
Chronic kidney diseases 7 000

8th
Other circulatory diseases and cardiovascular diseases 4 300

9th
Hypertensive heart disease 4 200

10th
Asthma 3 700

“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

Transforming the EU’s economy for a sustainable future

A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment

And leave No one behind

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

Financing the transition

Leave no one behind (Just Transition)

Mobilising research and fostering innovation

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

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. microplastics)
- Biodiversity & Farm to Fork (e.g. nutrients, 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 & Multilateralism

Integrated

Joined up

Holistic

Zero Pollution Action Plan for Air, Water & Soil
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.”
2030 targets complementing SDGs

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

by 55% the health impacts of air pollution
by 25% the EU ecosystems threatened by air pollution
by 50% nutrient losses, pesticides use & antimicrobials sales
by 50% residual municipal waste
by 30% the share of people disturbed by transport noise
by 50% plastic litter at sea and by 30% microplastics
by 50% waste generation and by 50% residual municipal waste
by 25% the EU ecosystems threatened by air pollution

Graphics by Jørker Løkrantz/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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROTECT HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>ENCOURAGE INNOVATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Promote clean, ‘zero pollution’ production processes, safe and sustainable products and services by design as well as innovative tools, technologies, and behavioral change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimise releases and exposure of humans and the environment to pollution through management, technological measures and information about releases.</td>
<td>Promote modern and smart production processes, safe and sustainable product uses, services and business models, and digital solutions for tracking and reducing pollution.</td>
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<td>Eliminate and remediate, as far as possible, existing pollution of water and soils and apply measures to return to a ‘good status’.</td>
<td>Promote zero pollution recycling, waste management, decontamination and remediation.</td>
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Zero Pollution policies – towards an integrated approach
Improving health and well-being
Living within our planetary boundaries
Towards zero pollution from production and consumption

Action Areas

Boosting change across society
Tracking progress, anticipating trends and mainstreaming
Ensuring stricter implementation and enforcement
Promoting worldwide change

Thematic priorities
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 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 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)
Policy Options (Packages of Measures) Used in IA

Existing IED with identified shortcomings and problems and the European Green Deal mandate

PO1: More effective IED

PO2: More effective and ambitious on innovation

PO3: More effective and ambitious on chemicals, resource efficiency & circular economy

PO4: More effective and a more central role in decarbonising industry

PO5: Cross-cutting measures addressing new sectors i.e. scope extensions
Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform

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

- 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](mailto:ENV-ZERO-POLLUTION@ec.europa.eu)

Your input is welcome!
New website

Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform

The EU's zero pollution ambition was set out in the European Green Deal to protect Europe's citizens and ecosystems.

The Commission, in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, set up the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform to achieve this goal.

The Platform collectively mobilises the zero pollution agenda. Key segments of stakeholders collaborate on defined work areas, such as health, agriculture, research and innovation, transport, depreciation and the environment. Field studies are monitored, provide policy advice, and take regulatory action to ensure synergies with other environmental and public COVID-19 recovery efforts.

The Platform’s Committee monitors the implementation of the zero pollution actions in line with the Green Deal. Existing gap identification and policy advice remain the main actors in the Zero Pollution Study for Zero Pollution Research.

Objectives

The Platform will help deliver on the flagship initiatives and actions set out in the Zero Pollution Action Plan by:

- defining a common vision on how to achieve zero pollution objectives;
- bringing together actions from different communities and areas of expertise to tackle inter-related challenges, such as strengthening a joint environment and health agenda;
- developing and sharing good practices on cross-cutting topics.

Actions

Find out how the flagship initiatives of the zero pollution action plan are being implemented.

Get involved

Become a member of the platform or get involved in other ways.

Funding opportunities

Have a look at the EU financing opportunities to foster the zero pollution ambition.

Knowledge hub

Discover the knowledge hub, which will include a series of "Zero Pollution Talks".

News

PRESS RELEASE | 11 OCTOBER 2021

Zero pollution: Commission report shows more needs to be done against water pollution from nitrates

The latest Commission report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive shows that nitrates are still causing harmful pollution to water in the EU.

CONTACTS

For Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform

Topics

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Topics

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Single-use plastics: Rules for the calculation, verification and reporting of data on the separate collection of waste single-use plastic beverage bottles published

From 34 October 2021, EU Member States shall ensure that the targets for the separate collection for recycling of waste single-use plastic beverage bottles are calculated, verified and reported according to harmonised methodology and provisions.