

2001: The year in brief

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Note

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2001: The year in brief

The European Environment Agency (EEA) aims to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment through the provision of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policy-making agents and the public.

In 2001, the EEA continued to fulfil its mission through consolidating its annual reporting cycle in line with the developing environmental and sustainable development policy context in Europe, by publishing a wide range of reports on environmental issues and by improving access to data and information on its web site. It also continued to undertake many activities together with member countries and other partners aimed at improving the quality and timeliness of the information it can provide.

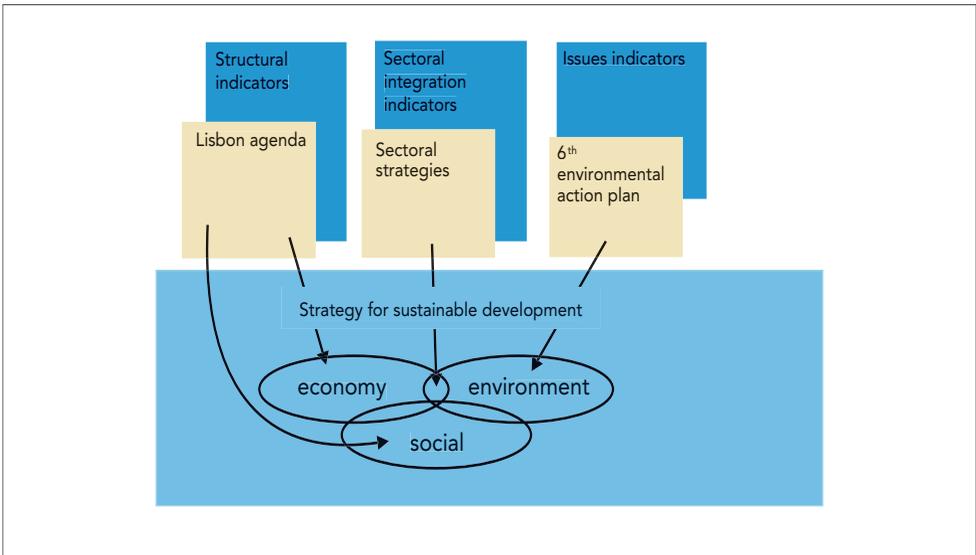
At the same time, it prepared itself for enlargement to 31 member countries in 2002 by reviewing its overall strategy and identifying three priority actions to guide future work programmes. The Agency also developed its internal organisation and procedures and extended its work programme.

The developing framework for environmental policy and sustainable development in the European Union
On the European scene, the most important developments for the Agency in 2001 were the European Commission's proposal for the sixth environment action programme and ensuing negotiations in the European Parliament and the Council, and the launch of the EU strategy for sustainable development at the Gothenburg Summit in June.

Internationally, the agreement on the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change in Marrakesh provided a clearer framework for many key aspects of environmental and sectoral policy and related information needs.

Throughout the year, the Agency sought to provide guidance on how to integrate the information needs of these initiatives and the so-called Cardiff (sector integration) process into a coherent whole (see figure below). At the same time, it worked to align its own work and outputs to this developing context, as regards both content and timing. In November, the Agency provided indicators and assessments to the Commission to support the work on the Commission's report to the spring 2002 summit in Barcelona.

Information aspects of the strategy for sustainable development



Major reports

Major reports were the overarching *Environmental signals 2001* and *TERM 2001* on the integration of environment into the transport sector, both of which followed on from the first indicator reports in these series published the year before. Other major publications were on greenhouse gas emissions, sustainable water use and air pollution by ozone. In a new field of work, the Agency produced a report on success stories in renewable energies.

Another important milestone was a report on Community reporting obligations and the usefulness of the information they provide for the evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental measures (the REM project).

Finally, the Agency completed a ground-breaking report on the use (or otherwise) of the precautionary principle over the last century.

Environmental signals 2001

This report was launched in May at a press conference in Brussels followed by a presentation for members of the Environment Committee of the European Parliament. Interestingly, some member countries of the Agency produced national press releases setting the national situation into the European context.

This series is developing into the main indicator report to monitor progress on the sixth environment action programme, the environmental dimension of the strategy for sustainable development and the sectoral integration process. Together with social and economic indicators, *Environmental signals* thus helps to provide a comprehensive view of progress on sustainable development.

TERM 2001

This report, developed together with Eurostat, the Energy and Transport DG and the Environment DG of the Commission, was launched in September immediately prior

to the Commission's White Paper on sustainable transport and the informal joint Transport and Environment Council under the Belgian Presidency. It is linked to the Cardiff process of integrating environmental concerns into sectoral policies.

This series has become an indispensable part of transport policy review and a reference model for other sectors. The Agency, together with partners, is now developing similar mechanisms to cover other important sectors, such as energy and agriculture.

Reporting on the effectiveness of environmental measures

A major message of the sixth environment action programme is the need to improve Community reporting systems *inter alia* to enable better evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental measures. The so-called REM report, *Reporting on environmental measures: Are we being effective?*, contributes to this process by analysing present requirements and pointing to ways of improving matters in the future.

The precautionary principle

This report, published early in 2002, is based on experts' case studies of 14 well-known problems, such as asbestos and protection of the ozone layer. The findings of the experts are distilled into 12 'late lessons', focusing especially on how better information could help to avoid some of the worst problems society encounters.

Specific policy support

Mention has already been made of the Agency's support for/input to the Commission report on the strategy for sustainable development for the spring summit in Barcelona.

Active support was again given to Council Presidencies during the year, with the Agency *inter alia* providing

substantial input into discussions on biodiversity (Sweden) and transport and environment (Belgium).

As regards the European Parliament, the Agency provided papers on the urban wastewater treatment directive and the packaging directive, providing targeted support for Parliamentary own-initiative reports on these issues. The paper on urban wastewater was also input into a debate on the implementation of the directive organised by Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström.

Access to information — the media, web site and information centre

Media

The Agency's ability to channel information on the environment and the Agency itself to key users and members of the public via the media was greatly improved by the appointment of a media relations manager. Eleven news releases were issued during the year, most of them in all the 'major' European languages to improve the geographical coverage.

The introduction of a 'press room' on the web site increased the visibility and accessibility of Agency communications towards the media and other interested persons.

Web site

Use of the Agency web site increased again in 2001, reinforcing its role as the main dissemination channel for Agency reports and other information services. A new record of 2.7 million hits was reached in October, compared with 2 million as the highest monthly figure in 2000.

The operation of the web site was substantially improved in 2001 through procedures to ensure that new reports are immediately available, new features to make the site more interesting and easy to use, and regular updates, *inter alia* using the press room.

Information centre

The information centre is responsible for dealing with direct requests for information from the public. It received more than 9 000 requests in 2001, an increase of 15 % on 2000. Based on the experience of the information centre, a 'Frequently asked questions' section was established on the web site as an aid to users of Agency information.

Support activities

Targeting data requirements and streamlining flows

The information the Agency provides is based on contributions from many sources at national and international level. The Agency, member countries and other partners continued to put a lot of effort into improving the quality and relevance of the information it receives and into streamlining data flows.

The new European topic centres (see next section) continued work on developing core sets of policy-relevant indicators within their respective fields, while work started on developing indicators for energy, agriculture and tourism reporting mechanisms similar to the Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TERM).

The REM report referred to earlier is another example of work in this field in 2001, contributing to the development of a more effective and streamlined system for reporting in the future.

New European topic centres

European topic centres (ETCs) are designated by the Agency to carry out specific tasks within the work programme. The five new topic centres designated by the Management Board in November 2000 and March 2001 started work in 2001.

All ETCs are consortia with a variable number of partner organisations from at least eight different member countries of the EEA, including new member countries.

The five European topic centres (ETCs) — location of lead organisation and partners

Air and Climate Change (ETC/ACC)	Water (ETC/WTR)	Waste and Material Flows (ETC/WMF)	Terrestrial Environment (ETC/TE)	Nature Protection and Biodiversity (ETC/NPB)
Netherlands	United Kingdom	Denmark	Spain	France
Partners in seven countries	Partners in nine countries	Partners in seven countries	Partners in seven countries	Partners in seven countries

Development of the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET)

The national focal points (NFPs) and the EIONET as a whole in the member countries and additional participating countries continued to play a major role in developing EEA data and information systems and providing concrete input. As reflected in the regular reports produced by the EEA on priority data flows, almost all countries continue to improve performance significantly.

A major restructuring of the national reference centres in the EIONET was carried out in 2001, providing strengthened and more targeted support for the work of the EEA and the new ETCs.

The first NFP/EIONET meeting ever held outside Copenhagen was hosted by the French Ministry of the Environment and Management of the Territory in Paris in February.

Cooperation with partners

The Agency continued to work closely together with partners within and outside the Community framework — Commission services, including Eurostat and the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Phare programme, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Major focuses of cooperation were the *Environmental signals 2001* and *TERM 2001* reports, and the input into the Commission report to the spring Summit on Sustainable Development. Preparatory work for major events or publications in the coming years was initiated or continued in many areas (for example, UNEP's third global environmental outlook (GEO-3), the Kiev report for the pan-European 'Environment for Europe' conference in Kiev in 2003, the 2002 Euro-Mediterranean Environment Ministerial Conference, the joint Environment and Health Ministerial Conference in 2004).

Developing the Agency

Strategy

In the light of the findings of the performance evaluation completed in 2000, the Agency revised its strategy in (early) 2001 with the aim of developing the Agency from a report producer to an information provider with three main lines of action.

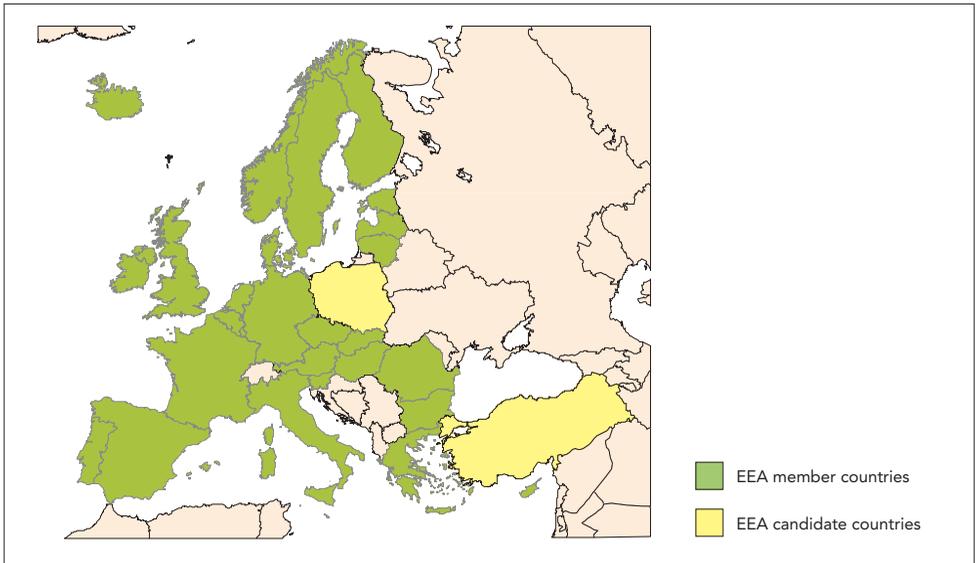
1. Building up and contributing to the development and implementation of a regular, consistent and integrated reporting system by developing policy-relevant indicators, and supporting the streamlining of the overall reporting system at EU level (as described earlier), and by developing and promoting a shared, multi-purpose European environmental information system (EEIS).
2. Building analytical capacities and improving in-house and networked expertise to strengthen the EEA's added value.
3. Further development of the reference centre.

The strategy and related development in streamlining reporting were considered at a Management Board seminar in November. The seminar endorsed the proposal to develop an EEIS and called on the Agency to explore with relevant international and Community bodies how this could be developed.

Enlargement

Eleven countries in central and eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area ratified the agreements to join the Agency in 2001, bringing the total number of member countries to 29 on 31 December 2001. The remaining two, Poland and Turkey, are expected to ratify shortly.

Membership of the EEA, year-end 2001

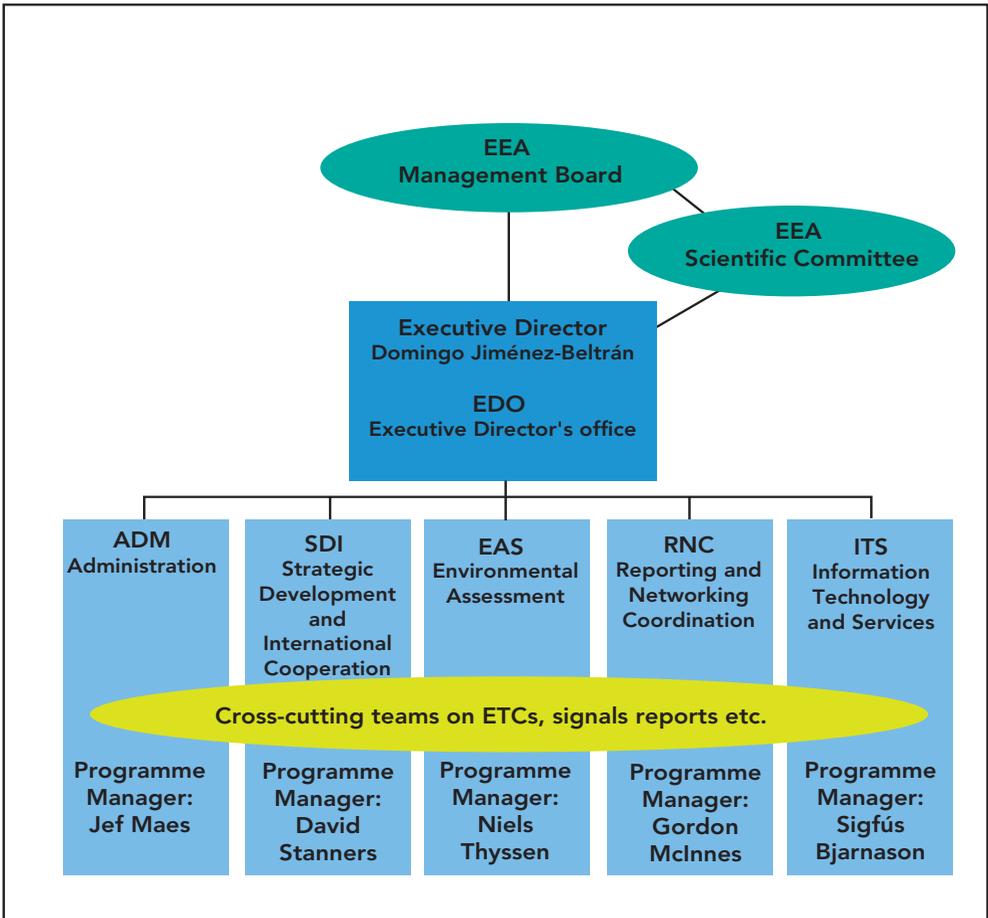


Enlargement of the EEA brings benefits both for the new members in the form of less burdensome implementation of EU environmental legislation and capacity-building and to the EU through more comprehensive, pan-European reporting better reflecting all major environmental issues in Europe.

Reorganisation

In the light of the evaluation and in view of enlargement, the Agency was reorganised into five programme groups. In addition, a number of cross-cutting teams are being established to work with horizontal tasks within the Agency. See the organisational chart.

EEA organisational chart, year-end 2001



Resources

The year 2001 saw a substantial increase on the resource side, with total income amounting to EUR 21.7 million, EUR 3.1 million (16.7 %) more than in 2000. This increase was mainly due to an increase in the core budget of EUR 1 million and to supplementary income for specific projects:

- EUR 1.1 million from the Enlargement DG for helping the accession countries before joining the EEA;
- EUR 0.7 million from EuropeAid for the Balkans;
- EUR 0.225 million from the Energy and Transport DG for the TERM programme.

As in earlier years, valuable funds outside the Agency's budget were allocated to specific projects related to the work of the Agency. In this way, the Agency's work was supported by EUR 1.8 million from the Enterprise DG's 'Interchange of data between administrations' programme (IDA) for e-EIONET work.

A significant amount of the operational budget is used to co-finance the European topic centres. In 2001, the proportion of the total going to the topic centres was 51 %. This figure has been fairly stable throughout the lifetime of the Agency.

Key figures for budgetary and staff resources are given in the Annex to this report.

Annex: Key figures for budgetary and staff resources

Table 1: Income, 1998–2002

	Million EUR				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
EU	16.5	18.0	17.9	19.0	19.4
EFTA	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4
New member countries					4.0
Miscellaneous revenues	0.1	0.1	0.4	2.3	1.2
Total	16.9	18.4	18.6	21.7	25.0

Table 2: Expenditure (E), 1998 2000, and budget (B), 2001 and 2002

	Million EUR				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	E	E	E	B	B
Staff and administration (Titles 1 and 2)	9.1	9.25	9.9	11.2	13.4
Operational expenditure (Title 3)	7.8	9.25	8.7	10.5	11.6
Total	16.9	18.5	18.6	21.7	25.0

Operational expenditure (Title 3 - Budget) and related staff allocations (staff-months) for 2000-02 by programme area

Table 3:

Programme area	2000		2001		2002	
	1 000 EUR	Months	1 000 EUR	Months	1 000 EUR	Days ^(a)
1. Topic databases	2 415	52.5	2 390	62.5	2 830	225
2. Integrated assessments	1 280	100.0	1 800	113.0	3 325	511
3. Periodical reporting	365	44.5	750	52.0	980	217
4. Reporting system support	1 090	154.5	1 170	171.0	1 360	693
5. Service and network infrastructure	1 750	103.0	1 720	98.5	1 850	453
Total allocated to projects	6 900	454.0	7 830	497.0	10 345	2099
Expert meetings, translations	1 100	—	832	—	1 221	0
Total	8 200	454.0	8 662	497.0	11 566	2099

- a. One week covers five days working directly on projects. General activities (general meetings and correspondence etc.) formerly included in overheads have now been listed separately. The total man-weeks are based on the estimates for filling vacant posts and new posts in the year. Some uncertainty in numbers can be expected. For 2001, please note that one month covers three working weeks directly on projects and about six days' overhead (general meetings, correspondence, etc.).

Staff development, 1996–2001 (December), by category

Table 4:

Category	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
A (academic staff)	21	25	27	30	28	33
B (technical assistants)	10	12	16	16	17	17
C (secretarial staff)	14	19	20	22	20	18
D (service staff)	2	2	2	3	3	3
National experts	7	5	8	8	8	9
Total	54	63	73	79	76	80

Table 5: Staff by category and sex on 31 December 2001

Category	Female	Male
A	8	25
B	6	11
C	18	0
D 2	1	
National experts	1	8
Total	34	46

Table 6: Staff by category and nationality on 31 December 2001

Category	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	I	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	N	IS
A	3	5	3	1	2	2	2	3		1	2	3	5		1
B	2	4	2		1			1	1	1	1	2	2		
C		8		1	3	2	1			2			1		
D		3													
National experts			3	1		2		2							1
Total	5	20	8	3	6	6	3	6	1	4	3	5	8	1	1