



## THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT — STATE AND OUTLOOK 2010:

# SOER 2010 in a policy context

---



This document, 'SOER 2010 in a policy context', highlights a number of significant European Union (EU) policy reviews or revision processes that are planned for the coming years, and makes the connection to relevant supporting information provided by the European Environment Agency (EEA). It therefore seeks to enhance the timeliness, targeting and relevance of the Agency's information and knowledge base.

### What is 'SOER 2010 in a policy context?'

*The European environment — state and outlook 2010* (SOER 2010) is the European Environment Agency's (EEA) flagship assessment.

SOER 2010 is aimed primarily at policymakers, in Europe and beyond, involved with framing and implementing policies that could support environmental improvements in Europe. The information also helps European citizens to better understand, care for and improve Europe's environment.

Environmental policy in the EU and its neighbouring countries has delivered substantial improvements to the state of Europe's environment. However, major environmental challenges remain, which will have significant consequences for Europe if left unaddressed.

'SOER 2010 in a policy context' highlights a number of significant EU policy reviews or revision processes that are planned for the coming years, and makes the connection to relevant supporting information provided by the EEA. The information presented is environmental background information, with a review of relevant web links, rather than a focused analysis of the environmental impacts of policy decisions.

It is therefore a tool to help decision-makers and policy influencers access EEA information that supports the framing and implementation of sound and effective policies to improve Europe's environment.

### The broader policy context

In broad terms, two processes will help to shape the EU environmental policy context in the coming years: the final assessment of the 6th Environment Action Programme and the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, adopted in 2010. One of the Europe 2020 strategy's five headline EU-level targets is achieving the '20/20/20' climate and energy targets: a 20 % cut in greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption by 2020 compared to 1990 levels, and a 20 % share for renewables in the energy mix.

The EU flagship initiative on 'resource-efficient Europe', under the Europe 2020 strategy, will also be particularly relevant. It aims to 'decouple economic growth from the use of resources, by decarbonising our economy, increasing the use of renewable resources, modernising our transport sector and promoting energy efficiency.'

### What is *resource efficiency*?

With the global economy dependent on the environment's limited capacity to provide resources and absorb waste and pollution, resource efficiency (the relationship of resource inputs to economic output) is essential for long-term economic growth. It offers other benefits too: increasing the competitiveness of industry, creating jobs, stimulating innovation and helping to ensure secure supplies of key resources.

For these reasons resource efficiency has rightly been identified as an EU 2020 flagship initiative. But although resource efficiency is necessary to sustain the wellbeing of current and future generations, by itself it will not guarantee sustainability. We could become more resource efficient but still exceed the environment's limits. SOER 2010 therefore suggests that resource efficiency policy should be grounded in an awareness not just of the quantity of resources used but also the impacts on the environment and its capacity to sustain us.

These issues will also resonate internationally. In 2012 the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) or 'Rio+20' will take place in Rio de Janeiro. Also referred to as the Rio+20 Earth Summit, due to the initial conference held in Rio in 1992, the objectives of the Summit are to: secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development; assess progress towards internationally agreed goals on sustainable development; and address new and emerging challenges. The Summit will also focus on two specific themes: a green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development; and an institutional framework for sustainable development (see [www.earthsummit2012.org/](http://www.earthsummit2012.org/)).

### A selection of EU policy reviews

'SOER 2010 in a policy context' links relevant elements of the EEA knowledge base to 11 key EU review or revision processes taking place in the coming years. Because they are closely linked to the EU's current financial framework, some policies need to be reviewed and others created by 2013, when the financial framework expires. Against this backdrop, the European Commission recently adopted its strategic priorities for 2011 (see [http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/cwp2011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/cwp2011_en.pdf)).

This document highlights some key processes without seeking to be comprehensive (i.e. it does not seek to cover all of the review processes of importance for the state of Europe's environment). In this first version of 'SOER 2010 in a policy context', connections are made between EEA information and the following 11 key policy areas:

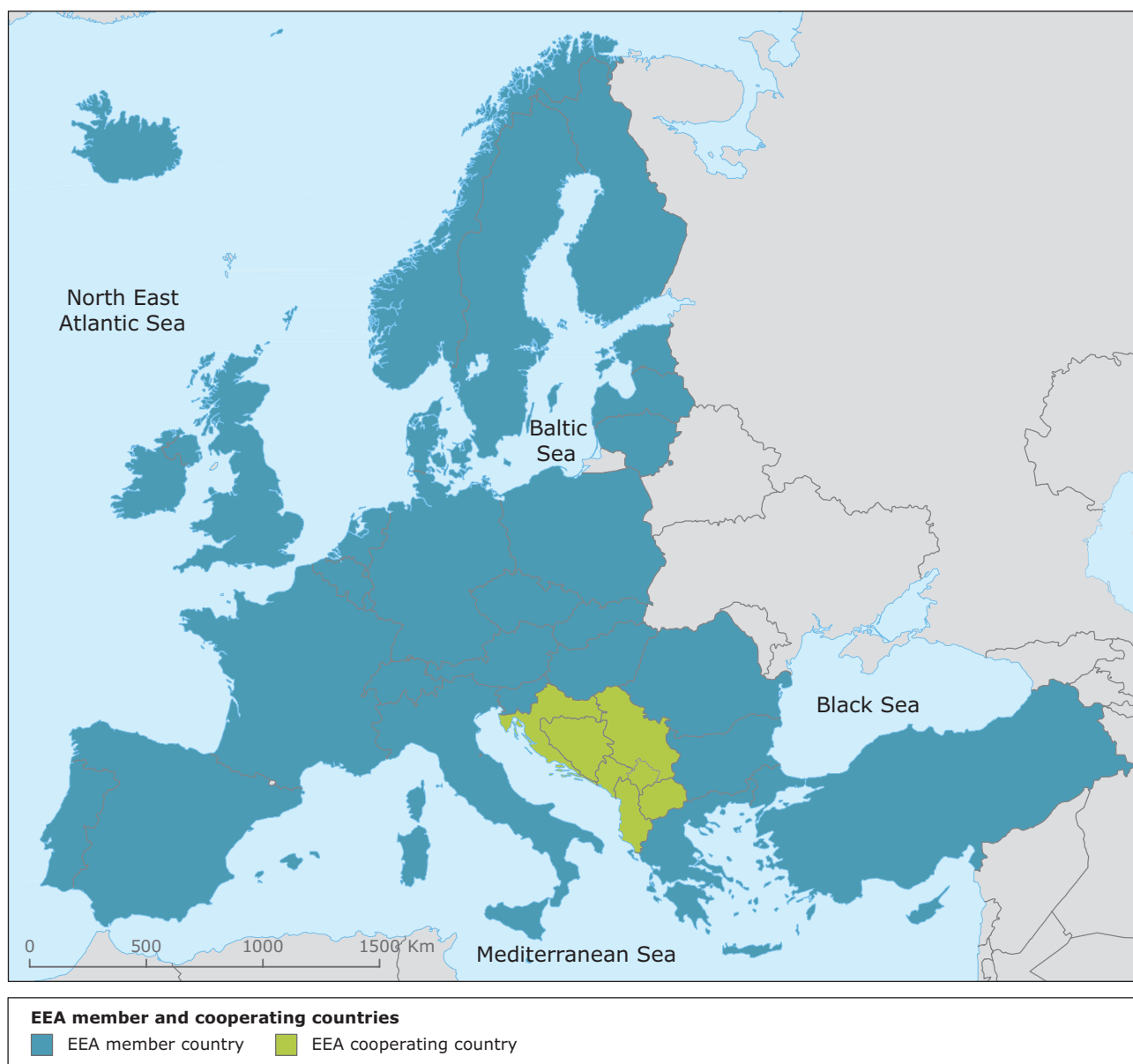
| Sectoral and cross-sectoral policy areas |
|--|
| Transport Policy                         |
| Energy Policy                            |
| Common Agricultural Policy               |
| Common Fisheries Policy                  |
| Structural Funds                         |
| Environmental policy areas               |
| Climate change mitigation                |
| Climate change adaptation                |
| Biodiversity                             |
| Water                                    |
| Air                                      |
| Waste                                    |

A one-page summary is presented for each of the 11 policy areas, including:

- a short description of the **issue** and its relevance for Europe's environment;
- a summary of the policy **review process**;
- links to relevant **information** on the environment's state, trends and prospects, from the SOER 2010 and other EEA products.

Updated information can be found on the EEA website ([www.eea.europa.eu](http://www.eea.europa.eu)) and the dedicated SOER 2010 (website <http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu>).

In addition, the final page of 'SOER 2010 in a policy context' includes a selection of external links for further information.



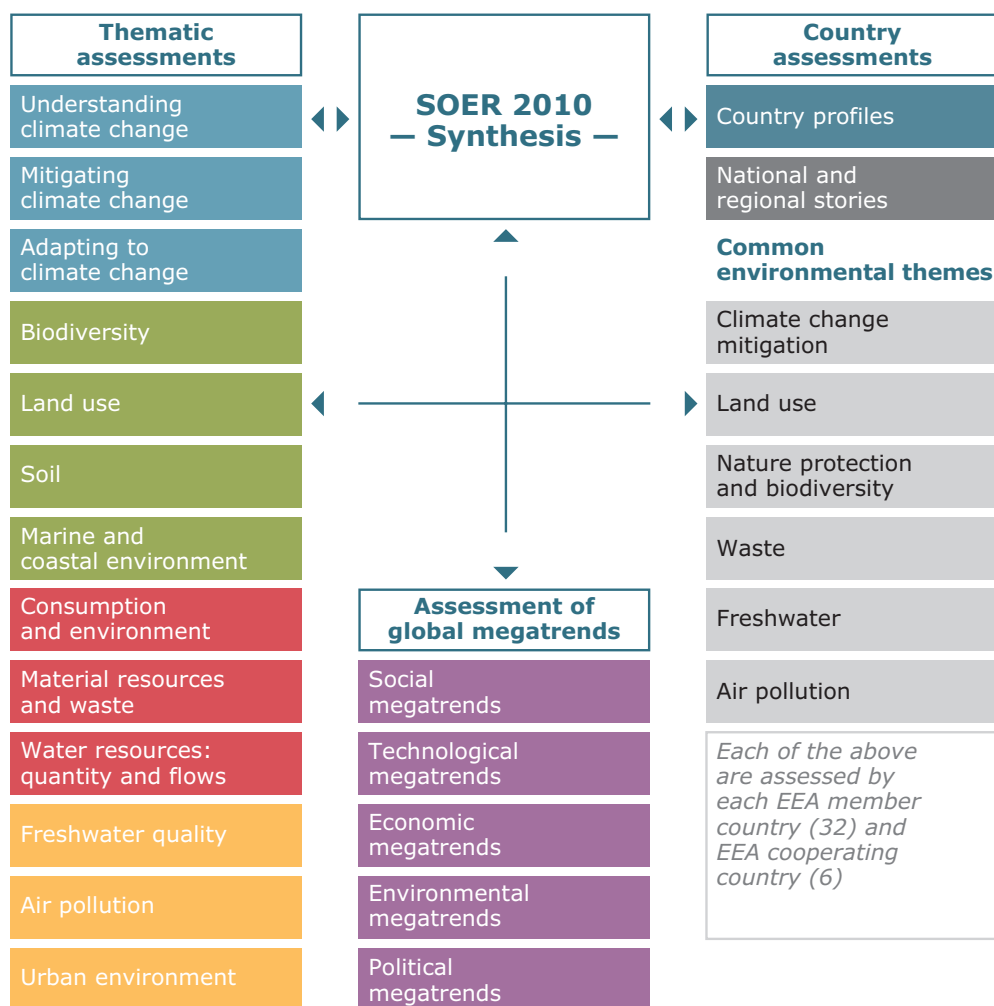
## What is SOER 2010?

*The European environment — state and outlook 2010* (SOER 2010) is aimed primarily at policymakers, in Europe and beyond, involved with framing and implementing policies that could support environmental improvements in Europe. The information also helps European citizens to better understand, care for and improve Europe's environment.

The SOER 2010 'umbrella' includes four key assessments:

1. a set of 13 Europe-wide **thematic assessments** of key environmental themes;
2. an exploratory assessment of **global megatrends** relevant for the European environment;
3. a set of 38 **country assessments** of the environment in individual European countries;
4. a **synthesis** — an integrated assessment based on the above assessments and other EEA activities.

**Figure 1 SOER 2010 assessments**



All SOER 2010 outputs are available on the **SOER 2010 website**: [www.eea.europa.eu/soer](http://www.eea.europa.eu/soer). The website also provides key facts and messages, summaries in non-technical language and audio-visuals, as well as media, launch and event information.

# Transport Policy

## The issue

The transport sector directly accounts for roughly 7 % of GDP and 5 % of employment in the EU. Transport continues to have a disproportionate impact on the environment and there is little evidence as yet of a shift to sustainable transport across Europe. Key negative impacts relate to air quality, climate change, biodiversity loss, noise and human health, especially in urban areas. Some energy efficiency gains have been made, and environmental regulations have led to some progress in reducing emissions, but these are unlikely to meet international and national environmental targets. Overall, transport volumes, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, with the least energy efficient transport modes — road and air freight — witnessing the largest increases.

## Review process

Under the EU 2020 Strategy's 'resource-efficient Europe' flagship initiative, the European Commission announced that it would 'work on a plan defining the key actions necessary to achieve the energy saving potential of 20 % in the building and transport sectors.' The planned white paper on the future of transport will aim to 'achieve transport sustainability, which requires actions to remove bottlenecks to competitiveness, progress towards a transport system less dependent on fossil fuels and improvements in safety, security and working conditions.' Furthermore, according to the European Commission's Work Programme for 2010, 'it will set out the actions required to create a Single Transport Area and address the targets of the EU 2020 Strategy.'

## Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                          | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment    | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change              | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity     | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health      | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                       | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context              | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities           | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                    | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                    | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |                                    | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Other EEA products                 | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | TERM 2009                          | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | Beyond transport policy            |                                     |
|                                  | Transport subsidies                |                                     |
|                                  | Road transport success stories     |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).

## Energy Policy

### The issue

Generating and using energy imposes various negative pressures on the environment. For example, the energy sector accounts for roughly four fifths of total EU greenhouse gas emissions. Increasing energy consumption since 1990 has largely offset the benefits of improved energy efficiency and a growing renewable energy sector. European energy policy sets clear targets for sustainable energy. In March 2007 European leaders agreed that by 2020 renewable energy should account for 20 % of the energy mix and that primary energy consumption should be cut by 20 % through increased energy efficiency. Meeting these targets could save money, increasing Europe's competitiveness in global markets.

### Review process

Under the EU 2020 Strategy's 'resource efficient Europe' flagship initiative, the European Commission proposes to 'increase the use of renewable energy sources' and 'promote energy efficiency', and states that 'we should aim to decouple growth from energy use and become a more resource-efficient economy.' It will 'work on a plan defining the key actions necessary to achieve the energy saving potential of 20 % in the building and transport sectors' (Commission Work Programme 2010). Moreover, the development of renewable energies might have environmental impacts (e.g. bioenergy, hydropower, off shore wind parks). Regular reporting processes (every two years from 2012) are also built into the Directive on the use of energy from renewable sources regarding the implementation of sustainability criteria, food price impacts and respect of international obligations linked to EU biofuels targets.

### Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                          | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment    | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change              | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity     | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health      | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                       | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context              | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities           | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                    | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                    | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |                                    | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | <b>Other EEA products</b>          | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | EU wind energy potential           | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | Energy and environment report      |                                     |
|                                  | Bioenergy analysis                 |                                     |
|                                  | Application of ETD                 |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).

# Common Agricultural Policy

## The issue

Farmers represent only 4.7 % of the EU's working population but manage nearly half of EU land. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the main EU tool supporting their work, accounting for 34 % of the EU budget in the period 2007–2013. Past CAP spending has supported the modernisation of farming and helped to intensify production with significant environmental impacts linked to soil erosion, water pollution, over-exploited water resources as well as biodiversity. Various CAP reforms since the 1990s have increasingly de-linked farm support from production, established certain environmental safeguards linked to the receipt of farm payments, and introduced rural development and agri-environment measures into the CAP. The budget share of these measures remains small, however, and increasing demand for food and biomass from farming could lead to further agricultural intensification. Certain CAP measures

support extensive 'high-nature value (HNV) farmland' but this support could be better targeted. Further environmental reform of the CAP reform would be an important step in securing EU targets in relation to biodiversity protection, water quality or the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

## Review process

The Europe 2020 Strategy notes that the CAP can contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Under its 'Innovation Union' flagship initiative, the strategy proposes to launch 'European Innovation Partnerships' between EU and national levels, including one on 'building the bio-economy by 2020'. The 2010 Commission communication on the future of the CAP after 2013 shows the way forward and proposes key improvements in environmental integration, with the review process expected to be completed by the end of 2013.

## Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                            | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment      | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change                | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity       | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste   | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health        | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                         | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context                | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities             | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                      | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                      | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |                                      | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Other EEA products                   | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | CAP budget and biodiversity          | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | HNV farmland report                  |                                     |
|                                  | Bioenergy potential from agriculture |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).



## Common Fisheries Policy

### The issue

Fishing has substantial and severe impacts on Europe's coastal and marine ecosystems, imposing pressures that exceed safe biological limits (SBL) in most of Europe's seas. Fishing has focused on large fish and large fish species, reducing reproductive capacity and threatening the future productivity of stocks. Furthermore, the harvest capacity of European fishing fleets still exceeds available fish resources, despite years of political efforts. As a result, 30 % of Europe's fish stocks (for which information exists) are now fished outside SBL and fish catches have generally declined since 1985. Other pressures include the destruction of sea-floor habitats, targeting new fish species, by-catch (of species not targeted by fishing) and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF).

### Review process

The European Commission has announced that it is preparing a fundamental reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) to create the conditions for a genuinely viable and sustainable EU fishing industry and the further development of an Integrated Maritime Policy. The reform of the CFP should be completed by the end of 2012 and is expected to be a top political priority for the EU. A reform package was launched in October 2010. This work will comprise different proposals: on the basic framework for the functioning of the CFP; to reform the market policy; and on a fund to support the new Integrated Maritime Policy, the CFP and aquaculture.

### Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                          | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment    | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change              | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity     | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health      | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                       | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context              | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities           | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                    | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                    | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |                                    | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Other EEA products                 | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | Mediterranean environment          | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | Assessing env. performance         |                                     |
|                                  | Biodiversity of regions and seas   |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).



## Structural Funds

### The issue

The Commission's 5th Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion, published in November 2010, shows that the EU's cohesion policy has made a significant contribution to growth and prosperity and to promoting balanced development across the Union. However, in view of recent substantial economic and social developments, the policy now has to address new challenges. In the wider context of the EU budget review, the report underlines that future cohesion policy investments must be closely aligned to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The key challenge is to ensure balanced and sustainable territorial development of the EU as a whole, strengthening its economic competitiveness and capacity for growth while respecting the need to preserve the regional diversity of its natural assets and ensuring social cohesion.

### Review process

Under the EU 2020 Strategy's 'resource efficient Europe' flagship initiative, the Commission proposes to: use structural funds to promote resource efficiency; develop Europe's networks towards a European supergrid, support 'smart grids' and connect renewable energy sources to the grid; and invest in energy efficiency. The Commission will prepare for future reform of cohesion policy through discussions on the 5th Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion. Legal proposals for the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund are being considered and will be accompanied by new EU strategic guidelines on cohesion for the period after 2013.

## Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                            | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment      | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change                | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity       | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste   | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health        | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                         | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context                | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities             | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                      | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                      | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |                                      | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Other EEA products                   | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | Territorial dimension of SD          | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | Territorial cohesion and environment |                                     |
|                                  | Biodiversity of regions and seas     |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).

## Climate change mitigation

### The issue

A rapid, sustained and effective transition to a low carbon economy is necessary to mitigate climate change and meet global greenhouse gas (GHG) emission targets. Numerous initiatives are therefore needed across all sectors to reduce emissions. The cost of addressing climate change now is low compared with the costs of inaction. The EU-15 is on track to meet its Kyoto Protocol target of reducing average emissions in 2008–2012 to 8 % below 1990 levels. Assuming full implementation of EU legislation, the EU-27 should likewise achieve its goal of cutting emissions by 20 % by 2020. However, national pledges under the 2009 Copenhagen Accord are still insufficient to keep average global temperature from rising by more than 2 °C above pre-industrial levels.

### Review process

In 2011, the Commission will present a communication on a Roadmap for a Low Carbon Economy by 2050, a revision of the Decision on a Monitoring Mechanism of EU GHG emissions, and an assessment and proposal for potential inclusion of Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) into the EU's unilateral commitment for 2020 if no international rules are agreed in 2010. This will be followed in 2012 by the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (2008–2012), and the extension of the EU Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS) to include aviation. The third trading period of the EU ETS will begin in 2013 with an extension to new sectors (e.g. aluminium) and gases (e.g. nitrous oxide). Also in 2013, the implementation phase, from 2013–2020, of the Effort Sharing Decision (ESD) will start with an annual compliance cycle.

## Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis  | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment                  | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change                            | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity                   | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste               | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health                    | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                                     | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context                            | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities                         | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |  | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |  | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |  | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | <b>Other EEA products</b>                        | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | EU greenhouse gas inventory                      | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | Tracking progress towards Kyoto and 2020 targets |                                     |
|                                  | Greenhouse gas profiles                          |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).

# Climate change adaptation

## The issue

Climate change is happening and will continue to have far-reaching consequences for human and natural systems. Specifically the frequency and intensity of natural hazards are expected to increase, potentially leading to increases in the negative effects of disasters (e.g. floods, droughts). However a large part of such increases so far are due to increased wealth in general and increased infrastructure and human activities in risk prone areas. The contribution due to climate change is projected to increase. Impacts and vulnerabilities differ considerably across regions, territories and economic sectors in Europe. Strategies to adapt to climate change are necessary to manage impacts even if global temperature increases are limited to below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels.

## Review process

The European Commission adopted a White Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change in 2009. As a next step the Commission plans to publish a communication on mainstreaming adaptation and mitigation in 2011. The EU is furthermore developing a comprehensive adaptation strategy by 2013, to be supported by a clearinghouse for sharing and maintaining information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation (to be in place by early 2012). The Commission also adopted a communication on disaster risk prevention in 2009, which aims to integrate policies and instruments related to disaster risk assessment, forecasting, prevention, preparedness and recovery. The communication also called for improving and better sharing data in the context of the EU civil protection mechanism. The Commission plans to publish guidelines on risk assessment in 2010. Links between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are expected to be further explored in the coming years.

## Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis   | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment                       | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change                                 | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity                        | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste                    | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health                         | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links  | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context                                 | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities                              | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |   | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |   | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |   | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Other EEA products                                    | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | Cost of inaction and adaptation                       | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | Better management of municipal waste                  |                                     |
|                                  | Regional CC adaptation — the Alps and water resources |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).

## Biodiversity

### The issue

Biodiversity – the variety of ecosystems, species and genes – is essential to human well-being, delivering enormously valuable services that sustain our economies and societies. Its huge importance makes biodiversity loss all the more troubling. Species are going extinct globally at 100–1 000 times the historic rate and, despite progress, the EU, like other regions, failed to halt biodiversity loss by 2010. Land use changes, pollution, climate change, overexploitation of resources and invasive species continue to have negative impacts. The EU has set ambitious goals for halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2020 but achieving them will require better policy implementation, coordination across sectors, ecosystem management approaches and a wider understanding of biodiversity's value.

### Review process

In 2011 and every three years thereafter EU Member States will report on implementation of the Directive on the conservation of wild birds, which the Commission will compile into a composite report and publish. There is currently an ongoing process to streamline, synchronise and improve reporting under both nature directives with a view to moving further from process to outcome reporting. In 2012 and every six years thereafter, Member States will report on implementation of the Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna. The Commission will publish a composite report no later than two years after receiving the Member State reports. December 2013 marks the end of the implementation period for national strategy plans under the Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

### Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                          | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment    | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change              | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity     | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health      | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                       | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context              | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities           | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                    | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                    | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |                                    | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Other EEA products                 | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | Assessing biodiversity in Europe   | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | Biodiversity information system    |                                     |
|                                  | Biodiversity baseline              |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).

# Water

## The issue

The continuing presence of pollutants in Europe's freshwaters, their structural modifications and increasing problems with water scarcity and floods threatens aquatic ecosystems and raises concerns for public health. Reporting under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) reveals that a substantial proportion of Europe's freshwaters may not achieve 'good status' by 2015. Even though the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) has significantly reduced emissions of pollutants, challenges remain because UWWTD implementation is incomplete and other significant sources of water pollution exist, notably agriculture and urban storm flows. Climate change is expected to increase concerns over water scarcity and floods. Effective and timely water management measures are required under the WFD, focusing on controls 'at source' and efficient use of all resources including clean water, energy and chemicals.

## Review process

In 2012 the Commission will publish a 'Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources', building on reviews of WFD implementation, the policy for water scarcity and droughts, and an assessment of the vulnerability of water resources to climate change. Also in 2012 and every two years thereafter the EU will review the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. In 2015 the EU will review the Water Framework Directive. In 2018 the EU will review the Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks.

## Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                          | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment    | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change              | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity     | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health      | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                       | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context              | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities           | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                    | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                    | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |                                    | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Other EEA products                 | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | Quality of bathing water           | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | Water resources across Europe      |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).

## Air

### The issue

Emissions of air pollutants derive from almost all economic and societal activities: electricity generation, industrial production, transport, residential heating, product use, agriculture and waste treatment. In Europe, policies and actions at all levels have significantly reduced anthropogenic emissions and exposure to important air pollutants such as sulphur dioxide and lead. However, complex links between emissions and ambient air quality mean that for some pollutants lower emissions have not produced a corresponding drop in the concentrations found in the environment. The result is clear risks to human health and the environment. An estimated 5 million years of lost life per year are due to fine particles (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) alone in the EEA-32 countries. Similarly, as emissions of acidifying pollutants have declined, the situation of Europe's rivers and lakes is (slowly but steadily) improving, although atmospheric nitrogen oversupply still threatens biodiversity in sensitive terrestrial and water ecosystems.

### Review process

In 2013 the EU will review the Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe, and in particular the provisions related to PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The European Commission has signalled that the Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution will be reviewed in the same year. The Gothenburg protocol to the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution is presently under review with a revised protocol expected to be agreed at the end of 2011. The EU National Emission Ceilings Directive has been under review but to date a proposal for a revised Directive has not been finalised. The review of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive (IPPC) and other directives related to industrial emissions has led to a European Commission proposal for a directive on industrial emissions (IED), presently undergoing its second reading.

### Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                          | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment    | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change              | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity     | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health      | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                       | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context              | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities           | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                    | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                    | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance |                                    | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Other EEA products                 | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | NEC Directive status               | Urban environment                   |
|                                  | EU emission inventory report       |                                     |
|                                  | Air pollution by ozone             |                                     |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).

# Waste

## The issue

The European economy consumes a significant amount of resources which puts pressure on the environment in Europe and elsewhere. These pressures include depletion of non-renewable resources, intensive use of renewable resources and emissions of pollutants into water, air and soil. Housing, mobility and food account for the largest share of resource use. On average, the economies of the EEA countries generate some six tonnes of waste per inhabitant every year. In the EU, the majority of this waste (51.5 %) is still sent to landfill, but an increasing amount is recycled or recovered (43.6 %) or incinerated (4.9 %). The EU aims to reduce waste amounts through waste prevention and to improve waste management via recycling, recovery and re-use. Whereas the trend for waste generation is upwards for many waste streams, waste management is improving but with large differences between countries.

## Review process

The Waste Framework Directive, which sets the legal framework for waste, will be reviewed by the end of 2014. It includes basic concepts and definitions related to waste management and lays down principles such as the 'polluter pays principle', 'life cycle thinking' and the 'waste hierarchy'. The Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste, which sets out a number of actions to improve waste management, is also currently under review.

## Links to SOER 2010 and other EEA products

| Global megatrends                | Synthesis                          | Thematic assessments                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population                       | Ch. 1: State of the environment    | Understanding climate change        |
| Urban                            | Ch. 2: Climate change              | Mitigating climate change           |
| Health                           | Ch. 3: Nature and biodiversity     | Adapting to climate change          |
| Accelerating technologies        | Ch. 4: Natural resources and waste | Biodiversity                        |
| Continued growth                 | Ch. 5: Environment and health      | Land use                            |
| Global power shifts              | Ch. 6: Links                       | Soil                                |
| Global competition               | Ch. 7: Global context              | Marine and coastal environment      |
| Decreasing natural resources     | Ch. 8: Future priorities           | Consumption and environment         |
| Climate change consequences      |                                    | Material resources and waste        |
| Environmental pollution          |                                    | Water resources: quantity and flows |
| Global regulation and governance | Other EEA products                 | Freshwater quality                  |
|                                  | Diverting waste from landfill      | Air pollution                       |
|                                  | Waste without borders in the EU    | Urban environment                   |

**Note:** Above cells marked with colour represent specific SOER 2010 information that is relevant to the policy area on this page. Cells under 'Other EEA products' represent EEA publications beyond SOER 2010, found on the EEA website at: [www.eea.europa.eu/publications](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications).



## Some useful official links

6th Environment Action Programme: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm>

Europe 2020 Strategy:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm)

Headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/targets/eu-targets/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/targets/eu-targets/index_en.htm)

Flagship Initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/tools/flagship-initiatives/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/tools/flagship-initiatives/index_en.htm)

UN Conference on Sustainable Development 'Rio plus 20':  
<http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

EU Financial Perspectives:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/prior\\_future/fin\\_framework\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/prior_future/fin_framework_en.htm)

European Commission Work Programme 2010:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/cwp2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/cwp2010_en.pdf)

European Commission Work Programme 2011:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/cwp2011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/cwp2011_en.pdf)

European Transport Policy:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/index_en.htm)

European Strategy Energy 2020:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2010/2020\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2010/2020_en.htm)

Common Agriculture Policy:  
[http://europa.eu/pol/agr/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/pol/agr/index_en.htm)

Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/>

A Maritime Policy for the EU:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/subpage\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/subpage_en.html)

Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion5/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion5/index_en.cfm)

Building a post-2012 global climate regime: the EU's contribution:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/future\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/future_en.htm)

White Paper – Adapting to Climate Change:  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0147:FIN:EN:PDF>

EU Biodiversity Policy Development:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/policy/index_en.htm)

EU Water Policy:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/index_en.htm)

EU Air Quality Policy:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/index_en.htm)

EU Waste Policy:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/index.htm>