
POLICY ISSUES

RACE FOR INFLUENCE IN BRUSSELS: WHICH COUNTRIES' PARTIES WILL DOMINATE THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT?

The race for influence over Brussels future agenda and the key portfolios has started. Italy and Germany are top dogs in the EU's most influential political groups – but where is France?

The structure of the new European Parliament still isn't finalised – but already it's becoming clear which delegations will dominate the major political blocs. Euronews analysis shows the German delegation as the most significant player in the bloc's biggest grouping, Ursula von der Leyen's European People's Party (EPP), and it also dominates the much smaller Green party. [link to article](#)

Source: Euronews 17/06/2024

INSIDE SINKEVIČIUS' PLANS FOR PARLIAMENT

Outgoing Commissioner for Environment Virginijus Sinkevičius may be taking his MEP seat in less than a month, but he's still focused on his Commission job — and will be until he hands over his resignation letter, he told Louise while in Luxembourg for the Environment Council on Monday. He hasn't resigned yet, he confirmed, and only plans to at the last minute. But he said that “continuation of the [Commission] president's line of work is something that we would be looking for in the next mandate” as he'll sit with the Greens.

You need the Greens: Sinkevičius said he'd like to see the Greens as part of a coalition, together with the European People's Party, Renew Europe and the Socialists and Democrats. “We need a pro-European coalition in this geopolitical uncertainty, and Greens can definitely strengthen that pro-European coalition,” he argued, adding that it would also “ensure that the Commission has a strong mandate and comfortable conditions to be ambitious.”

Difficult road ahead: But pushing forward green priorities in the next five years won't be easy, Sinkevičius admitted. “It's never been easy to pass environmental policies because ... people react only when there is immediate degradation of the environment, something disastrous happens.” He added that increasing the EU's long-term budget will be a key discussion on that matter. “Clearly with the current EU budget, it's just not enough,” Sinkevičius said, “and I'm not only speaking about nature, I'm speaking much more broadly.” He added that “if we are serious about defense or enlargement, I guess that the current budget, which is 1 percent of the EU's GDP, is just not enough.”

Source: Politico Pro 19/06/2024

GREEN CLAIMS DIRECTIVE: COUNCIL READY TO START TALKS WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Council adopted its position ('general approach') on the green claims directive, which aims to address greenwashing and help consumers make truly greener decisions when buying a product or using a service. Consumers need **reliable, comparable and verifiable** environmental claims in order to make fully informed decisions. However, a 2020 study found that more than half of the environmental claims offer vague, misleading or unfounded information.

The directive sets minimum requirements for the substantiation, communication and verification of explicit environmental claims. [Link to press release](#)

Source: Council of the EU Brussels, 17/06/2024

WASTE FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE: COUNCIL SET TO START TALKS ON ITS REVISION

The Council adopted its position ('general approach') on the targeted revision of the waste framework directive, with a focus on food and textile waste. The general approach aims to prevent waste from fast fashion and to facilitate re-use. It also sets ambitious targets to significantly reduce food waste by 2030. Given the food and textile sectors are the first and the fourth most resource-intensive respectively, today's agreement represents a crucial step towards a more sustainable and circular European economy. [Link to press release](#)

Source: Council of the EU Brussels, 17/06/2024

ROGUE AUSTRIAN MINISTER BURNS BRIDGES TO SAVE EU NATURE LAW

LUXEMBOURG — The EU on Monday proved it can still pass a green bill. All it took was a rogue Austrian minister willing to throw away her job, get sued by her own government, and potentially tank her entire coalition. You know, easy stuff.

Wearing a dark green suit, Austrian Environment Minister Leonore Gewessler arrived in Luxembourg on Monday ready for a fight. She had decided at the 11th hour that it was her duty to approve the EU's Nature Restoration Law, a central pillar of the bloc's efforts to reverse the major degradation of its landscapes. And she knew the decision would lead to a direct showdown with her boss, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer. [Link to article](#)

Source: Politico 17/06/24

WATER - STATES GRANT THEMSELVES A TEMPORARY RIGHT TO POLLUTE RIVERS

EU - The compromise which must be formally validated on June 19 by the Twenty-Seven introduces new possibilities for derogation from key principles of the water framework directive, including that of non-deterioration of watercourses. States ensure that the overall ambition is not revised downwards, but environmental NGOs are worried about this.

Source: Contexte 19/06/2024

DEFORESTATION LAW RISKS PUSHING INDONESIA TOWARD CHINA

However well-intended, the EU's directive has particularly rattled producers in the Indo-Pacific region. When Austria's ministers of agriculture and economy called on the European Commission to delay the implementation of its European Union Deforestation legislation (EUDR), exporters in the Indo-Pacific and Latin America sighed with relief. The EUDR is part of the EU's ambitious Green Deal, and it hopes to put an end to the felling of trees at home and abroad that are down to consumption in Europe. Between 1990 and 2020, an area larger than the Continent was deforested, and the EU is considered responsible for 10 percent of global deforestation.

However well-intended, though, the directive has rattled producers in Europe and its allies in the developing world — particularly those in the Indo-Pacific region, where the EU hopes trading partners will derisk from China. Several stakeholders and experts told POLITICO the EUDR wasn't well thought-through and, at this stage, perhaps far too demanding to actually work, imposing too heavy administrative and financial burdens without offering sufficient details regarding compliance. [Link to article](#)

Source: Politico 09/06/24

US PUSHING FOR EUDR DELAY

The U.S. is pushing the EU to delay the Deforestation Regulation over concerns a ban on cocoa, timber and sanitary products linked to deforestation could hurt American paper producers, [the FT reports](#).

Source: Politico Pro 19/06/2024

PLASTICS - THE CIRCULARITY OF PLASTICS IS INCREASING SLOWLY BUT SURELY

This is one of the key points of the briefing from the European Environment Agency (EEA), published on June 18 with a report on the same theme. The trend is progressing slowly but is encouraging. Same observation for the Union's recycling capacities: they have increased (1.7 million tonnes more between 2020 and 2021), but are not enough to achieve the plastic recycling target set (50%) for nineteen Member States, identified as those at risk of not achieving this before 2025. This is also a factor in the export of waste. In addition to these mixed conclusions, the EEA warns about production and consumption: no decline in sight, on the contrary. Plastic consumption in the Old Continent, already high, will increase, driven by the overall increase in production. Policies are key to reversing the trend: the EEA includes the legislative environment in the drivers of circularity. Data collection also needs to be improved; it is currently incomplete and focuses mainly on recycling, omitting other circular strategies, such as reuse.

Source: Contexte 19/06/2024

POPS GLOBAL MONITORING PLAN

The UN calls for "global monitoring" of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) - This is one of the "key messages" of the report (its synthesis) of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) on persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The study consisted of collecting data, between 2016 and 2024, on the presence of POPs in the environments (air, water, soil, food, breast milk) from 42 countries in Africa, Asia, South America. South and Caribbean. The studies "confirm an increasing global prevalence of POPs such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) and chlorinated paraffins, even in remote areas." The UNEP notably detected "high levels" of substances used as a substitute for PFAS, and "which were subsequently discovered to also have persistent organic pollutant properties". And he found three families of PFAS now banned (PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS) in all samples of breast milk and in the drinking water of archipelagos very far from places of production, "at levels far exceeding the EU and US standards. UNEP recommends relying on the Stockholm Convention, which entered into force in 2004 and ratified by 151 States and the European Union. [Link to article in Liberation](#)
[Link to report](#)

Source: Contexte 19/06/2024

EU ELECTION – VOLT TO STAY WITH THE GREENS

The pan-European liberal green party Volt is set to stay with the Greens in the European Parliament, the movement said today. It will bump up the Greens' numbers by an additional two MEPs — two were elected in the Netherlands and are new joiners, while the three Volt MEPs elected in Germany were already part of the group. This will raise the Greens' group's size to 54 MEPs. **Caveat:** Members of the Volt party from across Europe still need to give their blessing to this decision and are expected to do so by Sunday evening. **Unconvinced by Renew:** The five Volt MEPs were also courted by the liberal Renew Europe group, but they explained that on a number of issues like migration or social policy, Volt is still more aligned with the Greens ideologically.

AGRI COMMITTEE CHAIR WANTS A SECOND GO: European People's Party MEP Norbert Lins told POLITICO he's eyeing a second term helming the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. "There is no left majority anymore ... So there is no majority possible against [the EPP]," Lins, who chaired AGRI in the last term, told my colleague Paula in an interview in his office. "Some are criticizing, but I think you are not surprised that we are happy with that situation," he laughed. **Walk in the park:** The 46-year-old, who has served two terms in Strasbourg and chaired the agriculture committee for the past five years, anticipates "less polarization" in the coming mandate — adding that "the proposals from the Commission will be more in the center [...] or compatible with the EPP."

Source: Politico Pro 19/06/2024

RICH COUNTRIES LAGGING BEHIND ON BIODIVERSITY FINANCE

Rich countries are not investing enough in international biodiversity conservation, and are therefore not on track to achieve global commitments made in 2022. That's according to a report by the ODI think tank, commissioned by the NGO Campaign for Nature, and released today.

Refresher: In 2022, rich countries agreed to provide at least \$20 billion per year by 2025 — and \$30 billion annually by 2030 — to developing countries to help them protect nature and reverse biodiversity loss. **Methodology:** Using OECD data from 2021, the think tank looked at rich countries' population size, their financial capacities and their historical impact on biodiversity to come up with an estimate of how much they should fairly pay for global nature protection. **Not on track:** The report found that only two out of 28 developed countries — Norway and Sweden — are currently contributing their "fair share" of the \$20 billion commitment. France and Germany are doing pretty well, providing respectively \$1.7 billion and \$2.52 billion, which corresponds to 92 percent and 99 percent of their fair share respectively. However, the biggest laggards include Poland, Greece and Lithuania, which provide less than 10 percent of their fair share. Italy, Spain, Canada and Japan contributed less than 20 percent of their fair share. **Where things stand:** The think tank estimated that there is a \$11.6 billion shortfall in rich countries' contributions to hit the \$20 billion target. **Why it matters:** In October, world countries will gather in Cali, Colombia, to assess the progress made over the last two years to implement the deal agreed at COP15 in Montreal. Experts argue that increasing financial support for conservation, paying people for protecting biodiversity and phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies are key to achieving the COP15 goals of stopping and reversing biodiversity loss by mid-century. **Peer pressure?** At the G7 last week, leaders committed to "spearhead global efforts to preserve forests and oceans, and to end plastic pollution" and to "continue exploring innovative financing sources for climate and biodiversity action," such as green bonds or payments for ecosystem services (for example paying farmers to protect land or water courses). They also wrote that they are "working to fulfil our respective applicable commitments," like scaling up finance for nature protection, and "identify these [environmentally harmful] incentives by 2025, and redirect or eliminate them, while scaling-up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by 2030 at the latest" and are "taking initial steps without delay."

Source: Politico Pro 19/06/2024

NEW EUROPEAN CENTER TO FIGHT POLLUTION

The European Commission [today launched](#) the Innovation Centre for Industrial Transformation and Emissions in Seville, Spain. It will provide industries with independent information about innovation and other clean technologies to help them decarbonize, reduce pollution and become more resource-efficient. It also aims to support the implementation of the EU's new rules to slash pollution from industrial sites as agreed under the [revised Industrial Emissions Directive](#). Commissioner for Environment Virginijus Sinkevičius said in a statement that he believes the center "will accelerate the uptake of cutting-edge technologies and drive a greener, more competitive industry in the EU."

Source: Politico Pro 19/06/2024

EC MEMBER STATES ENDORSE BAN OF BISPHENOL A IN FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

Today, taking into account the latest scientific evidence and in view of protecting the health of citizens and ensuring the highest food safety standards, **Member States have endorsed a proposal from the Commission to ban Bisphenol A (BPA) in food contact materials (FCM)**. This means that, after a phase-out period, the chemical will no longer be allowed to be used in these products in the EU.

The decision is based on a scientific assessment from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which concluded that BPA had “*potential harmful effects on the immune system*”. This ban will apply mainly to the use of BPA in packaging, such as the coating used on metal cans. The use of BPA in consumer articles such as reusable plastic drink bottles, water distribution coolers or other kitchenware will also be banned. The ban, which was proposed following a public consultation and extensive discussions with all Member States, will be formally adopted following a scrutiny period by the European Parliament and the Council, and will enter into force at the end of 2024. Limited exceptions where there are no available safe alternatives and transition periods will apply where they do not pose a risk to consumers. This will allow industry to adjust and avoid potential disruptions to the food chain. [Link to EU presscorner](#)

Source: one policy place 19/06/2024

THAILAND INCREASES FOCUS ON FOOD CONTACT MATERIAL STANDARDS

Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI) publishes new standard for plastic bags in contact with food including limits on heavy metals and temperature requirements; published new standard for single-use wooden utensils earlier in 2024; Industry Minister instructs TISI to increase pace to control other articles. [Link to article here](#)

Source: Food packaging forum 7/06/2024

APPLYING THE SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE BY DESIGN FRAMEWORK

European Joint Research Centre (JRC) publishes document to guide designers and assessors through the application of the voluntary Safe and Sustainable by Design framework; describes the steps of the framework, how to define system, frequently asked questions, and suggestions for where to find more information; following framework does not guarantee EU regulatory compliance. The SSbD criteria are a key element of the Commission’s Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS) but applying the criteria does not guarantee compliance with all EU regulations. The Commission is collecting [feedback](#) regarding the SSbD framework until August 30, 2024.

Source Food Packaging Forum

ECHA UPDATE: SVHC INTENTIONS

The registry of SVHC intentions until outcome aims to make interested parties aware of the substances for which an SVHC dossier is planned to be submitted to ECHA.

Member States, or ECHA at the request of the European Commission, may propose a substance to be identified as a substance of very high concern (SVHC) by preparing a dossier in accordance with the requirements set out in Annex XV to REACH.

Interested parties can follow the progress of a proposal through the SVHC identification process, from the notification of the intention until the outcome. The advance notice gives interested parties time to prepare for commenting later in the process.

Interested parties with relevant information on the identity or hazard properties of the substance may submit such information during the consultation. [Link to ECHA website](#)

Source: one policy place 19/06/2024

PERU INCREASING CIRCULAR ECONOMY, REGULATING PLASTIC BAG CONTENTS AND CLAIMS

Ministry of Production proposes technical regulation on plastic bags to reduce use of harmful substances, increase recycled content, and decrease microplastics production; also bans unsupported claims like “eco-friendly”, “green”, etc.; proposal open for comment until August 14, 2024 [article](#)

Source Food Packaging Forum

EVENTS

FCM CONFERENCE

13th International Akademie Fresenius FCM Conference on „Residues of Food Contact Materials in Food“ from 8-9 October 2024

Register www.akademie-fresenius.com/fcm ,

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7174006490754641920>

STUDIES/REPORTS/ARTICLES

JRC PUBLICATION - BIOECONOMY KNOWLEDGE BASE: AN ONLINE LIBRARY TO SUPPORT EU POLICYMAKING

The registry In this context, the Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy includes an online library that provides a one-stop shop for filtered and distilled knowledge on the bioeconomy to support evidence-informed EU policymaking. Its strength is the relevance, quality and accessibility of its resources as a result of a curation process and method that emerged from a series of gradual improvements and optimisations based on the lessons learnt over the previous years. This library is constantly updated with the latest publications, datasets, events, news, visualisations and other resources, and made publicly accessible on the Commission's Knowledge for Policy Platform (<https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/>)

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

- [Persistent organic pollutants – methoxychlor](#) open consultation deadline 27 June
- [EU environmental and State aid law](#) – access to justice in relation to State aid decisions (regulation) deadline 27 June
- [Safe and Sustainable by Design chemicals and materials - 2nd TESTING PHASE](#) - Joint Research Centre, EU deadline August 30, 2024
- [Mutual recognition of goods – evaluation](#), EC have your say deadline 26 September
- [Emissions trading system \(ETS\) – permanent emissions storage through carbon capture and utilisation](#) deadline for feedback **16 July 2024**
- [EU rules on land use, land use change and forestry \(LULUCF\) – evaluation](#) Feedback period till 11 July 2024
- [EU environmental law – 2025 implementation review](#) - Feedback period till 05 July 2024
- [European standardisation – evaluation](#) - Feedback period till 25 July 2024