WECOOP
EU – Central Asia cooperation on Water – Environment – Climate Change
Funded by the European Union

WECOOP NEWS BULLETIN

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1. INTRODUCTION

European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP)

The EU renewed the project **"European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP)"** in October 2019 to run for three years. The project continues strengthening the policy dialogue on sustainable development between the CA partner countries and facilitating their cooperation with the EU on environment and climate change. Specifically, the project efforts are focused on improving and rationalising policies and enhancing the capacities of national ministries and government agencies working in relevant fields.

The WECOOP project aims to enhance environment, climate change and water policies in Central Asia through **approximation to EU standards** and **to promote green investments** in relevant sectors with the aim of contributing to measurable reductions in man-made pollution, including CO_2 emissions.

Priority areas for consultations and cooperation include **environmental governance, circular economy** and **sustainable consumption and production, climate change adaptation and mitigation,** and **water resources management.**

The WECOOP News Bulletin provides brief information on the recent developments in EU policies and legislation, as well as on new relevant reports and studies published by the European Environment Agency, OECD or other specialized agencies (UNECE, WHO, IEA). Special attention is paid to the documents developed under the umbrella of the European Green Deal.

Detailed information on the WECOOP project is available at the project website **https://wecoop.eu**.

2. EU POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

2.1. NEW EU POLICIES

8TH GENERAL ENVIRONMENT ACTION PROGRAMME

The general action programme in the field of the environment for the period up to 31 December 2030 (the **'8th Environment Action Programme'** or **'8th EAP'**) lays down the **priority objectives**, identifies the **enabling conditions** necessary to attain those priority objectives and establishes a **monitoring framework** to measure the progress towards the attainment of the priority objectives.

The 8th EAP aims to accelerate the green transition to a climate-neutral, sustainable, non-toxic, resource-efficient, renewable energy-based, resilient and competitive circular economy in a just, equitable and inclusive way, and to protect, restore and improve the state of the environment **by, inter alia, halting and reversing biodiversity loss. It supports and strengthens an integrated policy and implementation approach, building upon the European Green Deal.**

The 8th EAP forms the basis for achieving the environmental and climate objectives defined under the **UN 2030 Agenda** and its **SDGs** as well as for those pursued by multilateral environmental and climate agreements.

The monitoring framework of the 8th EAP shall contribute to the Union's efforts to measure **progress towards sustainability, well-being and resilience**.

The 8th EAP is based on the precautionary principle, the principles of preventive action and of rectification of pollution at source and the polluter pays principle.

The 8th EAP has the **long-term priority objective** that **by 2050 at the latest, people live well, within the planetary boundaries in a well-being economy where nothing is wasted, growth is regenerative, climate neutrality in the Union has been achieved and inequalities have been significantly reduced. A healthy environment underpins the well-being of all people and is an environment in which biodiversity is conserved, ecosystems thrive, and nature is protected and restored, leading to increased resilience to climate change, weather- and climate-related disasters and other environmental risks.** The Union sets the pace for ensuring the prosperity of present and future generations globally, guided by intergenerational responsibility.

The 8th EAP shall have the following **six interlinked thematic priority objectives** for the period up to 31 December 2030:

- swift and predictable **reduction of greenhouse gas emissions** and, at the same time, enhancement of removals by natural sinks in the Union to attain the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target in line with the Union's climate and environment objectives, whilst ensuring a just transition that leaves no one behind;

- continuous progress in **enhancing and mainstreaming adaptive capacity**, including on the basis of ecosystem approaches, strengthening resilience and adaptation and reducing the vulnerability of the environment, society and all sectors of the economy to climate change, while improving prevention of, and preparedness for, weather- and climate- related disasters;

- advancing towards a **well-being economy** that gives back to the planet more than it takes and accelerating the transition to a non-toxic circular economy, where growth is regenerative, resources are used efficiently and sustainably, and the waste hierarchy is applied;

- pursuing **zero pollution**, including in relation to harmful chemicals, in order to achieve a toxic-free environment, including for air, water and soil, as well as in relation to light and noise pollution, and protecting the health and well-being of people, animals and ecosystems from environment-related risks and negative impacts;

- protecting, **preserving and restoring marine and terrestrial biodiversity and the biodiversity of inland waters inside and outside protected areas**;

- promoting **environmental aspects of sustainability** and significantly **reducing key environmental and climate pressures** related to the Union's production and consumption, in particular in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system.

In order to attain these priority objectives, 34 detailed enabling conditions requiring activities from the European Commission, Member States, regional and local authorities and stakeholders are laid down by the 8th EAP.

Document (English):
Decision (EU) 2022/591 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 April 2022 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030
Link (English): *https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2022/591/oj*

EU STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE AND CIRCULAR TEXTILES

The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles sets out the vision and concrete actions to ensure that by 2030 textile products placed on the EU market are long-lived and recyclable, made as much as possible of recycled fibres, free of hazardous substances and produced in respect of social rights and the environment. Consumers will benefit longer from high quality textiles, fast fashion should be out of fashion, and economically profitable re-use and repair services should be widely available. In a competitive, resilient and innovative textiles sector, producers have to take responsibility for their products along the value chain, including when they become waste. In this way, the circular textiles ecosystem will be thriving, and be driven by sufficient capacities for innovative fibre-to-fibre recycling, while the incineration and landfilling of textiles has to be reduced to the minimum.

Document:

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles. *COM(2022) 141 final*

Link (English): https://ec.europa.eu/environment/publications/textiles-strategy_en

2.2. NEW EU LEGISLATION

2.2.1 LEGISLATION IN PROGRESS

AMENDED AND UPDATED DIRECTIVE 2010/75/EU ON INDUSTRIAL EMISSIONS

Updated rules will help guide industrial investments necessary for Europe's transformation towards a zero-pollution, competitive, climate-neutral economy by 2050. They aim to spur innovation, reward frontrunners, and help level the playing field on the EU market. The revision will help provide long-term investment certainty, with first new obligations on industry expected in the second half of the decade.

The revision builds on the overall approach of the existing Industrial Emissions Directive, which currently covers some 50,000 large industrial installations and intensive livestock farms in Europe. These installations need to comply to emissions conditions by applying activity-specific 'Best Available Techniques'.

The **main changes** include:

- **More effective permits for installations.** Instead of settling for the least demanding limits of the best available techniques, as some 80 % of installations do currently, permitting will have to assess the feasibility of reaching the best performance. It will also tighten the rules on granting derogations by harmonising the assessments required and securing a regular review of derogations granted.
- **More help for EU innovation frontrunners**. As an alternative to permits based on well-established best techniques, frontrunners will be able to test emerging techniques, benefitting from more flexible permits. An Innovation Centre for Industrial Transformation and Emissions (INCITE) will help industry with identifying pollution control solutions. Finally, by 2030 or 2034 operators will need to develop Transformation Plans for their sites to achieve the EU's 2050 zero pollution ambition, circular economy and decarbonisation aims.
- **Supporting industry's circular economy investments**. New best available techniques could include binding resource use performance levels. The existing Environmental Management System will be upgraded to reduce the use of toxic chemicals.
- **Synergies between depollution and decarbonisation**. Energy efficiency will be an integral part of permits, and systematic consideration will be given to technological and investment synergies between decarbonisation and depollution when determining best available techniques.

The **new rules will also cover more installations**, notably:

- **More large-scale intensive livestock farms**. Under the new rules, the largest cattle, pig, and poultry farms would be gradually covered: about 13 % of Europe's commercial farms, together responsible for 60 % of the EU's livestock emissions of ammonia and 43 % of methane. The health benefits of this extended coverage are estimated at more than €5.5 billion per year. As farms have simpler operations than industrial plants, all farms covered will benefit from a lighter permitting regime. The obligations stemming from this proposal will reflect the size of farms as well as the livestock density through tailored requirements. The Common Agricultural Policy remains a key source of support for the transition.
- **Extraction of industrial minerals and metals and large-scale production of batteries**. These activities will significantly expand in the EU to enable the green and digital transitions. This requires that the best available techniques are employed to ensure both the most efficient production processes and the lowest possible impacts on the environment and human health. The governance mechanisms of the Directive that closely associate industry experts to the development of consensual and tailored environmental requirements, will support the sustainable growth of these activities in the Union.

Finally, the new rules will increase transparency and public participation in the permitting process. In addition, the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register will be transformed into an **EU Industrial Emissions Portal** where citizens will be able to access data on permits issued anywhere in Europe and gaining insight into polluting activities in their immediate surroundings in a simple way.

Documents:
Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2010/75/EU

of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) and Council Directive 1999/31/EC of 26 April 1999 on the landfill of waste. *COM(2022) 156 final/2*
Link (English): https://ec.europa.eu/environment/publications/proposal-revision-industrial-emissions-directive_en
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on reporting of environmental data from industrial installations and establishing an Industrial Emissions Portal. *COM (2022) 157 final*
Link (English): https://ec.europa.eu/environment/publications/proposal-regulation-industrial-emissions-portal_en

NEW ECODESIGN REGULATION

The proposal for a Regulation on Ecodesign for Sustainable Products addresses product design, which determines up to 80 % of a product's lifecycle environmental impact. It sets new requirements to make products more durable, reliable, reusable, upgradable, reparable, easier to maintain, refurbish and recycle, and energy and resource efficient. In addition, product-specific information requirements will ensure consumers know the environmental impacts of their purchases. All regulated products will have Digital Product Passports. This will make it easier to repair or recycle products and facilitate tracking substances of concern along the supply chain. Labelling can be introduced as well. The proposal also contains measures to end the destruction of unsold consumer goods, as well as expand green public procurement and provide incentives for sustainable products.

This proposal extends the **existing Ecodesign framework** in two ways**: first, to cover the broadest possible range of products;** and second**, to broaden the scope of the requirements with which products are to comply**. Setting criteria not only for energy efficiency, but also for circularity and an overall reduction of the environmental and climate footprint of products will lead to more energy and resource independence and less pollution. It will strengthen the Single Market, avoiding diverging legislation in each Member State, and create economic opportunities for innovation and job creation, notably in remanufacturing, maintenance, recycling and repair. The proposal will set a framework and a process through which the Commission, working in close cooperation with all those concerned, will progressively set out requirements for each product or group of products.

Documents:
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for setting ecodesign requirements for sustainable products and repealing Directive 2009/125/EC. *COM(2022) 142 final*
Link (English): https://ec.europa.eu/environment/publications/proposal-ecodesign-sustainable-products-regulation_en
Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions On making sustainable products the norm*. COM(2022) 140 final*
Link (English): https://ec.europa.eu/environment/publications/communication-making-sustainable-products-norm_en

2.3 BEST AVAILABLE TECHNIQUES (BAT)

New draft BREFs

- **Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference Document (BREF) for Common Waste Gas Management and Treatment Systems Chemical Sector**. Final draft March 2022.
  Link (English): https://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference
- **Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference Document (BREF) for the Textile Industry**. Final draft March 2022.
  Link (English): https://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference
- **Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference Document (BREF) for the Smitheries and Foundries Industry**. First draft February 2022.
  Link (English): https://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference

Newly available BAT Conclusions in Russian language

Waste Treatment
- Waste Incineration
- Food, Drink and Milk Industries
- Surface Treatment Using Organic Solvents including
- Wood and Wood preservation with chemicals

Link (all Russian translations of BAT Conclusions): https://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/translation/index.html

3. REPORTS AND STUDIES

3.1. EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EEA)

EEA Briefing: Resource nexus and the European Green Deal

Resource nexus assessments analyse the direct and indirect interconnections between different natural resources, their management, use and governance, as well as the synergies and trade-offs that can be generated through policy interventions. This briefing reflects on the role of the resource nexus in supporting policy coherence and integration in the context of the European Green Deal. Key messages:

- Managing natural resources has historically focused on individual resources and value chain-based approaches. While these provide valuable insights, wider systems thinking is needed to address the complex interactions between different natural resources. For example, the links between food, energy and water resources point to the need for such a systems approach.
- The resource nexus concept fulfils this need, as it specifically looks at resource interlinkages. Applying it to policy interventions generates important information about synergies and trade-offs across several resource-related goals as a contribution to more effective management strategies.
- The findings of three case studies on organic farming, advanced biofuels and electric vehicles point to the usefulness of the approach for identifying knowledge gaps, imbalances in policy focus, potential 'winners and losers', and as a basis for informed discussions.
- Resource nexus assessments add to the systemic understanding of sustainability challenges and responses. Combined with other tools and frameworks, e.g. foresight and governance approaches, they could effectively support the European Green Deal's ambitions of strengthening policy coherence and integration.

Link (English): https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/resource-nexus-challenges-and-opportunities

EEA Briefing: Managing air quality in Europe

Air quality remains a persistent problem in Europe, harming health and ecosystems. This briefing reviews the status of countries' air quality plans, put in place for situations where air pollution limits are exceeded. It also identifies the sources behind such exceedances. The assessment covers 21 EU Member States, as well as Norway and the United Kingdom. The European-level assessment is complemented by case studies providing examples of measures that have led to improvements in air quality in seven European cities or regions. Key messages:

- Over the period 2014-2020, 944 air quality plans were reported to the EEA. These plans were developed in response to EU air quality standards being exceeded, mainly in urban and suburban areas.
- Most air quality plans explicitly aim to protect health, with the majority focusing on reducing levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and coarse particulate matter (PM10).
- Sixty-four per cent of all exceedances reported were linked to emissions from road traffic, which was the main cause of NO2 exceedances.
- Domestic heating was linked to 14 % of all exceedances and was the main cause of PM10 exceedances.
- Over two thirds of measures included in air quality plans focused on the transport sector. Only 12 % focused on commercial and residential energy sectors linked to domestic heating.
- Public awareness of air pollution is important for gaining support for action to improve air quality.

Link (English): https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/managing-air-quality-in-europe

EEA Briefing: The role of (environmental) taxation in supporting sustainability transitions

First, this briefing analyses past and current trends in taxes in their ability to raise revenues, and their use as a basis for reform programmes that aim to shift taxes from labour and capital to resource use and environmental pollution. Second, it considers the potential for generating revenue from energy taxes and carbon pricing in the coming decade and their role in achieving the EU's aim of being climate neutral by 2050, and the implications of this for tax shifting programmes. Key messages:

- Revenues from environmental taxes could support the transition to a climate-neutral economy by 2050 and achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal reaching a net reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 55 % by 2030. Given Europe's ageing population and the implications of this for labour tax revenues and welfare system costs, the arguments in favour of environmental taxes have never been stronger.
- Despite calls for more environmental taxes at the national, European and global levels, implementation has been very slow. In the EU, environmental taxes account for 5.9 % of total taxes, less than 6.6 % almost 20 years ago. This varies considerably by country however.
- The Green Deal acknowledges the crucial role of taxation in the transition to a greener and more sustainable economy, and this may drive the implementation of environmental taxes in coming years.
- Carbon pricing measures are essential components of the European Green Deal and also the European Commission's 'Fit for 55' package, supporting the transition to a climate-neutral economy.
- The amendment and revision of current EU energy taxation and carbon pricing schemes, including of the EU Emission Trading System, will also lead to higher revenues in the coming decade.
- However, decarbonising the European economy will inevitably erode the tax base, as current energy taxation

and carbon pricing schemes rely heavily on non-renewable energy products. It will be essential to strike the right balance between achieving transition objectives and maintaining revenue stability, and to future proof tax systems with new revenue sources.

- The long-standing idea of shifting taxes from labour to environment in support to sustainability objectives has largely not been realised. With the EU facing multiple fiscal pressures in coming decades, the idea could be reformulated as sustainable fiscal reform, embracing taxes from other revenue sources e.g. financial transactions, land, wealth.

Link (English): https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/the-role-of-environmental-taxation

EEA Briefing: Who benefits from nature in cities? Social inequalities in access to urban green and blue spaces across Europe

This briefing reviews the evidence of socio-economic and demographic inequalities in access to the health benefits derived from urban green and blue spaces across Europe. It showcases examples of green spaces that were designed to meet the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged social groups. Key messages:

- The health benefits of urban green space are well recognised for children, whose physical and mental development is enhanced by living, playing and learning in green environments. The elderly also benefit significantly from visiting green and blue spaces, through improved physical health and social well-being.
- Access to green and blue spaces differs across Europe. Overall, cities in the north and west of Europe have more total green space within their area than cities in southern and eastern Europe.

- Within cities, the degree of greening varies across neighbourhoods, with less and lower quality green space typically found in communities of lower socio-economic status.
- The WHO recommends that all people reside within 300m of green space. In contrast, national and local recommendations vary across Europe. Guidance on access for specific vulnerable groups is rare.
- Targeted action to reduce inequalities in access to high-quality green space can maximise the health and well-being benefits of nature in cities.
- Involving local communities in the design and management of green space has been found to foster a sense of ownership and promote use.

Link (English): https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/who-benefits-from-nature-in

3.2 UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

Making water and sanitation affordable for all: Policy options and good practices to ensure the affordability of safe drinking water and sanitation services in the pan-European region. UNECE and WHO 2022

The Protocol on Water and Health specifies that in pursuing the aims of providing access to drinking water and the provision of sanitation for all, special consideration should be paid to ensure equitable access to these services for all members of the population. This policy brief:

- aims to support the efforts of countries in the pan-European region in the progressive realisation of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. Specifically, it intends to raise the profile of affordability issues among policymakers, enhance the understanding of how affordability concerns can be addressed, and inspire and promote further action on ensuring affordable water and sanitation services.
- reflects on why affordability matters, how affordability can be defined, what policy and social protection options and measures are available to ensure affordability. It also describes the good practices in implementing them and explains how affordability measures can be financed, as well as the current needs and way forward at the regional level.

It is intended for government representatives from ministries responsible for water and sanitation services, social protection, and finance; water regulatory authorities; local authorities; and providers of water and sanitation services.

Link (English): https://unece.org/info/Environment-Policy/pub/365490

3.3 ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

Best Available Techniques (BAT) for Preventing and Controlling Industrial Pollution Activity 5: Value chain approaches to determining BAT for industrial installations

Value chain refers to the process of adding incremental value to products and services as they are generated and transformed at each step along the production cycle. The benefit of taking more holistic value chain approaches to BAT determinations is the opportunity to consider broader sustainability goals, where the focus is not on "less emissions" or "reduced environmental impacts" from the installation, but rather upon finding overall solutions that reduce negative environmental impacts on a whole-system basis, whilst still providing local emissions control and the intended output, and hence benefits of the value chain as a whole (i.e. including the service or product output of the industrial activity). This study assesses how value chain approaches are/should be incorporated in BAT determinations and related environmental regulatory and policy concepts. Four concepts for expanding BAT determination through a value chain perspective were considered:

- Green chemistry
- Resource efficiency
- Circular economy
- Decarbonisation

Link (English): https://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/risk-management/best-available-techniques.htm#Activity5

3.4 WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)

Compendium of WHO and other UN guidance on health and environment, 2022 update

This updated version of the compendium provides a systematic compilation of published guidance from WHO and other UN organizations on health and environment. Guidance on policies and actions as well as awareness raising and capacity building interventions represented for all major areas of health and environment. Guidance referring to priority settings for action such as cities and other urban settlements, housing, workplaces and health care facilities is also listed.

For greater practical relevance, each guidance is classified according to principally involved sectors, level of implementation and instruments for implementation.

This compendium is intended to serve as a repository and easy-to-use and useful resource for decision and policy makers in health and environment at various levels. It will be updated as additional guidance becomes available.

Link (English): https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-HEP-ECH-EHD-22.01

3.5 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)

Global Methane Tracker 2022

Methane is responsible for around 30 % of the rise in global temperatures since the Industrial Revolution. The energy sector – including oil, natural gas, coal and bioenergy – accounts for around 40 % methane emissions from human activity. Tackling methane emissions from the energy sector represents one of the best near-term opportunities for limiting global warming because the techniques for reducing methane emissions are well known and often cost-effective. The oil and gas sector in particular has the know-how and resources to take quick action. The Global Methane Tracker details the available abatement measures and lays out the state of methane reduction policies and regulations across major emitters.

The 2022 update of the IEA Global Methane Tracker provides, for the first time, a complete set of country-level estimates for methane emissions from the energy sector, making the Tracker an indispensable resource in the fight to bring down these emissions and implement the new Global Methane Pledge.

Link (English): https://www.iea.org/reports/global-methane-tracker-2022

4. CONTACTS

European Union
92 Avenue Reine Astrid
1310 La Hulpe, Belgium
Phone: +32 2 655 2230

Central Asia
Office 15, 5 Dostyk street
Z05H9M1 Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan
Phone: +7 701 140 5982

info@wecoop.eu
www.wecoop.eu
@wecoopproject

Authors of the photographs:
Page 1 - Tatiana Menshikova
Page 4 - Vladislav Ushakov
Page 6 - Ivan Turkovskii

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