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HOTSPOT

July 2015

The European Urban Policy

European Urban Policy came back under the spotlights following the [Second European Cities Forum](#) organised by the European Commission on 2 June 2015 and the Riga Declaration on 10 June 2015, on the European Urban Agenda.

FROM 1997 TILL 2014

A few milestones can be pinpointed regarding the elaboration of a European Urban Agenda:

1997: the European Commission published a Communication "Towards an urban agenda in the European Union", arguing that efforts were needed to strengthen or restore the role of Europe's cities «as places of social and cultural integration, as sources of economic prosperity and sustainable development, and as the bases of democracy. »

2011: the European Parliament adopted a resolution for a strengthening of the urban dimension of EU policies and for a joint working programme or European Urban Agenda.

Late 2013: the Committee of the Regions initiated its own initiative opinion calling for an Integrated Urban Agenda for the EU

Early 2014: the European Commission organised the first global Cities Forum while several stakeholders organisations argued for a strong EU Urban Agenda.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS ISSUE:

Resource efficiency: moving towards a circular economy

EU new legislation to reduce plastic bags use

Closing the loop – Circular Economy Conference

Consultation for the Circular Economy Package

Developing a common EU Construction & Demolition Waste Management Protocol

Fair trade and more green economy at the Committee of the Regions



JULY 2014: PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A [public consultation on the EU Urban Agenda by the European Commission](#) was launched in July 2014. The [results of the consultation](#), unveiled on 2 June 2015, highlight a clear demand by stakeholders for more coordination between all of the EU policies with an urban dimension. Following the contributions to the public consultation, the Commission is proposing to work on three main directions:

- concerted action on few priorities,
- improved policy coherence and coordination of instruments,
- development and better use of the knowledge base

“A concrete EU Urban Agenda is now really needed ; we have to implement the EU 2020 strategy with the participation of the cities; Better Regulation means Better Coordination about the impacts on cities”

Corina CRETU (Commissioner for Regional Policy | 2nd EU Cities Forum 2015)

THE KEY FEATURES OF AN EU URBAN AGENDA

The question of what to include in an EU Urban Agenda has been addressed by the European Commission in a [communication published in July 2014](#).

From the European Commission’s point of view, an EU Urban Agenda could respond to several objectives :

- ✓ better coordination of policies, actors and governance levels
- ✓ better understanding of urban development contexts in the conception and implementation of policies
- ✓ strengthening of cities’ engagement and ownership of EU and national policymaking and implementation.
- ✓ supporting cities’ capacity for transition and structural change to sustainability

According to Eurocities, this Agenda should ensure a better policy coordination, integrate urban development objectives in a larger number of policies, ensure a better balance between priorities in European investment programmes and strengthen direct dialogue between cities and the Commission.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) also calls for an EU Urban Agenda that should facilitate the access and active involvement of all types of cities - small, medium-sized and large cities. Similarly, Energy Cities affirms the need to formulate and implement an EU Urban Agenda in order to leverage local authorities’ full potential and to place territorial cohesion at the heart of EU policies.

An EU Urban Agenda should:

1. **simplify the existing framework (energy performance, urban mobility, financial instruments, green capital award, covenant of mayors, innovative partnership,...)**
2. **improve the integrated focus (energy, waste, transport, air quality, resource efficiency, and [...] education)**
3. **facilitate the financing (European regional fund, cohesion fund, Juncker investment fund)**
4. **take into account the global (world) urban dimension**

Marcos SEFCOVIC (Vice-President EC | 2nd EU Cities Forum 2015)

Concerning priorities areas, the results of the public consultation launched in July 2014 suggest to focus on the following:

- **Smart cities:** to better integrate and connect energy, transport, water, waste and a broader ICT dimension encompassing skills, sectors and technologies
- **Green Cities:** to focus on the potential of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions to overcome the climate and environmental related challenges of urban development
- **Inclusive cities:** to support urban physical and economic regeneration to fight urban poverty and build equitable cities for all, as well as addressing the challenges of migration, affordable housing and the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities

On 10 June 2015, a declaration was adopted in Riga to provide “political support for the development of the EU Urban Agenda in full respect of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and [...] [to pay] particular attention to the Presidency TRIO’s (Italy-Latvia-Luxembourg) common priority – small and medium sized urban areas, as an integral part of the EU Urban Agenda».

This declaration does not bring new elements but it definitely paves the way for an operational Urban Agenda to be adopted under the Dutch Presidency of the European Union.

CONSEQUENCES FOR ACR+ MEMBERS

The principle of subsidiarity is still driving the EU Urban policy. However, a wide variety of European decisions have a strong territorial or urban impact.

Waste management and, of course, local circular economy are directly or indirectly falling under many European initiatives (cf. The European Urban portal), may it be as “smart cities”, “green cities”, “inclusive cities” or even “cities in a regional context”.

The latest developments helped reinforcing the urban and territorial dimension of European policies. In this context, new opportunities can open up for ACR+ members (and their networks): more direct relations with the European institutions as well as better opportunities to influence the content of the directives or the participation to co-financing.

THE “URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS EU FINANCING INSTRUMENT

During the [Second European Cities Forum](#), the European Commission presented a new instrument to promote innovative urban actions.

This instrument, which has been allocated a 371 million euros budget (for the period 2015-2020) “should text innovative solutions to key urban challenges”.

The ERDF contribution is however limited to a maximum of 5 millions euros by project and to a maximum of 80% co-financing rate. The targeted projects should last less than 3 years and include at least 50.000 inhabitants.

The different topics of the calls will be linked to the priorities of the EU Urban Agenda (fixed probably by October 2015), with 5 selection criteria: innovativeness, quality, partnership, measurability and transferability.

This instrument will be implemented by the “Service Europe” of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region (FR).



Resource efficiency: moving towards a circular economy

On 17 June 2015, the Environment Committee voted (by 56 against 5 and 5 abstentions) for binding waste-reduction targets, revamped ecodesign legislation and measures to break the link between growth and the use of natural resources.

The resolution calls on the Commission to table a new proposal with the following points by the end of 2015:

- waste prevention measures;
- binding waste-reduction targets for municipal, commercial and industrial waste to be achieved by 2025;
- application of the “pay as you throw” principle;
- targets for recycling and preparation for reuse to be raised to at least 70% of municipal solid waste and 80% of packaging waste by 2030;
- incineration to be strictly limited by 2020 to non-recyclable and non-biodegradable waste;
- a binding, gradual reduction of all landfill waste.

The MEPs also call on the Commission to promote a life-cycle oriented approach towards product policy and ecodesign, with an ambitious work programme. They want a review of eco-design legislation by the end of 2016, broadening its scope and covering all product groups. They demand definitions of the requirements for criteria such as durability, repairability, reusability and recyclability. They also want the Commission to draw up measures to eliminate planned obsolescence.

The committee says that the Commission should also propose indicators for resource efficiency, measuring resource consumption, including imports and exports and their use should be mandatory from 2018. It calls for a binding target to increase resource efficiency at EU level by 30% from 2014 levels, by 2030, as well as individual targets for each member state.



For the acceleration of the shift towards advanced biofuels

In the plenary session of 28 April 2015, the European Parliament has voted a legislative project aiming to cap crop-derived biofuel production and accelerate the shift to alternative sources. This project also aims to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused by the growing use of farm land for biofuel crops.

The new law says that:

- first-generation biofuels (from crops grown on agricultural land) should account for no more than 7% of energy consumption in transport by 2020
- fuel suppliers must report the estimated level of GHG caused by “indirection land-use change” (ILUC)

EU member states will have to set a national target by 2017 for the share of advanced biofuels, e.g. those sourced from certain types of waste and residues and new sources such as seaweed.



EU new legislation to reduce plastic bags use

On 28 April 2015, the European Parliament has voted to give final approval to a new EU rules to reduce plastic bag use.

EU countries will be required to reduce the use of the commonest and most polluting plastic bags drastically. Billions of these single-use plastic bags end up directly in nature as untreated waste.

Binding reduction targets have now been decided and EU member states will be able to choose:

- either to take measures to reduce annual average consumption of plastic bags to 90 lightweight bags per citizen by the end of 2019 and 40 by the end of 2025
- or ensure that by the end of 2018, no more light plastic bags are handed over free of charge to shoppers

Furthermore, the European Commission is required to assess the impact on the environment of oxo-degradable plastic materials, which fragment into small particles, and propose suitable measures. By 2017, the European Commission will have to propose labelling and marking measures for an EU-wide recognition of biodegradable and compostable plastic bags.

As a reminder, lightweight plastic bags thinner than 50 microns, the vast majority of plastic carrier bags used in the EU, are less reusable than thicker models and become waste more quickly. In 2010 every EU citizen used an estimated 198 plastic carrier bags, some 90% of which were lightweight.



New EU forest strategy

On 28 April 2015, the EP voted a resolution on the EU forest strategy calling for more focus on managing forests sustainably, promoting efficient use of the raw materials that they produce, and boosting the competitiveness of forest-related industry so as to create jobs.





New “circular economy roadmap”

As announced in the 2015 Commission Work Programme, a new and more ambitious Circular Economy Package will be presented before the end of 2015 to transform Europe into a more competitive resource-efficient economy, addressing a range of economic sectors, including waste.

The proposal will lay out the green growth opportunities and build on the previous EU resource efficiency and innovation initiatives. The new strategy will include a new legislative proposal on waste targets, taking into account the input already given during public consultations, and by Council and in Parliament, in particular the comments made by many that the previous proposals needed to be more country-specific.

As part of the process, the Commission launched a [public consultation](#) from 28th May until 20th August 2015.

More information in the [“indicative” roadmap for the revised circular economy package](#).



Closing the loop

Circular Economy: boosting business, reducing waste

Ahead of the release of a new circular economy strategy and to support the [public consultation](#) in collecting the views of stakeholders on the main policy options and measures explored for this initiative, the Commission organized a [Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference](#) on 25 June 2015.

The conference was open to all stakeholders wishing to contribute in shaping the European economy policy making. It consisted of a plenary session with keynotes from circular economy experts and business representatives, followed by a series of split-up sessions addressing specific factors of the circular economy, and it was closed by a panel.

The [agenda of the conference](#) is available online and the whole conference can be watched as a webstream. Click here for the [plenary sessions](#), here for the [split-up sessions 1 and 4](#) (MANS), here for the [split-up sessions 3 and 5](#) (JENK) and here for the [split-up sessions 2 and 6](#) (GASP).

In the presence of different EU Commissioners and a wide broad of stakeholders, the new strategy promised by Timmermans was described in a very general way.

The various speeches and interventions of the day showed that there is a consensus on circular economy and its benefits. The main issue discussed now is how to make it a reality – how much EU regulation is necessary and what should be included?

Regarding this issue, MEPs (especially Sirpa Pietikäinen, rapporteur of the [report on resource efficiency](#)) urged everyone in favour of ambitious targets and strong regulation to speak out more.

The conference was the opportunity for the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) to present their new study: [“Growth Within: a Circular Economy Vision for a Competitive Europe”](#).

Consultation for the Circular Economy Package

Although details of the project have not been released yet, the European Commission (EC) has launched [a consultation on the new version of the Circular Economy Package](#) from 28 May 2015 to 20 August 2015.

As previously mentioned in different communications from EU officials, the aim of this new package is to be broader and more ambitious than the original, especially by moving away from the exclusive focus that was made on waste management. The ambition of the Commission is to take into account all stages of the lifecycle of products, from the extraction of raw material to waste management and recycling.

The Commission also wants the new proposal to be more country specific and implementable on the ground. It is supposed to establish a framework to overcome shortcomings and create conditions for the development of a circular economy.

The action plan could notably include proposals concerning the following topics:

- materials production and use
- product design;
- distribution and consumption;
- labelling and product information;
- repair and reuse;

For this consultation, contributions from citizens, organisations and public authorities are welcome. ACR+ will send its own contribution during the next few weeks and invites its members to do the same before August.

For more information, you can consult the [European Commission website](#).

European Forum on Eco-innovation

Environmental labelling, information and management schemes are central to the circular economy.

Eco-innovation, as well as environmental labels, information and management schemes are essential to get Europe on the path to a circular economy. This was the primary conclusion of the [18th European Forum on Eco-innovation](#) held in Barcelona, on 20-21 May.

Over 300 stakeholders from across Europe came together to make recommendations on what the European Commission should consider in its current reworking of the circular economy strategy and concurrent review of the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and EU Ecolabel scheme. Both are voluntary programmes that reward organisations and products respectively, for environmental excellence.

Participants at the conference agreed that a credible label must be transparent, easy to understand, and verified by a third party.

The Forum included the official delivery of the first Statements of Verification of technologies under the EU pilot programme on Environmental Technologies Verification (ETV). These were practical examples of how SMEs can use third-party verification to back performance claims and differentiate from competitors.

Last but not least, it was also the occasion to present an analysis of [the results of CIP Eco-innovation market](#) replication projects and a showcase of successful practices.

The [19th EU Eco-Innovation Forum](#) will take place in Seoul, South Korea, on 27-28 October 2015, entitled “Business opportunities in eco-Innovation: materials and products for a sustainable future”.

Draft 2016 EU budget

On 27 May 2015, the Commission proposed a 2016 EU budget of €143.5 billion in payment credits to support the recovery of the European economy and help improve lives in Europe and beyond. It focuses on jobs, growth, migration and global action.

Main features of the draft [2016 EU budget](#) include:

- Nearly half of it (€66.58 billion) used to stimulate growth, employment and competitiveness.
- Supporting the political priorities of the European Commission, for example the Energy Union and the Digital Single Market, via programmes like the Connecting Europe Facility (€1.67 billion in 2016).
- €1.8 billion (30% more than 2015) to Erasmus+, the European programme for education, training, youth and sport, which will help over 4 million people to work and study across the EU in 2014-2020.
- Increasing competitiveness through research and innovation with programmes like Horizon 2020 (€10 billion in 2016, up 11.6% from 2015).
- €2 billion in commitments and €500 million in payments for the guarantee fund of the EFSI, to unlock €315 billion in investment for Europe.
- A total of €42.86 billion for farmers.

The draft has been sent to the European Parliament and EU Member States who will jointly decide on the final budget. In autumn 2015, the Parliament will formally respond to Council's position on the Draft Budget for 2016.

Sustainable Energy Week 2017



The 2015 EU Sustainable Energy Week took place in Brussels from 15 to 19 June 2015. It sought to inspire consumers, public authorities and other stakeholders to join forces in shaping Europe's sustainable energy future.

Over 2700 people took part in it to exchange experiences in all fields and debate about the Energy Union and its three pillars:

- Energy efficiency;
- Decarbonising the economy with a focus on renewables;
- Research, Innovation and Competitiveness.

The EU Sustainable Energy Week helps building the energy community that is indispensable for shaping the Energy Union. This is to reply to the expectations of the EU citizens, who in large majority want to see a strong and united approach in energy.



Green Week 2015

The 2015 edition of Green Week, the biggest annual conference on European environment policy, took place from 3 to 5 June in Brussels. The theme was nature and biodiversity.

The Green Week looked at the benefits we receive from nature, and the framework in place to protect it. It offered a unique opportunity for debate and exchanges of experience and best practice



Study on EU primary & secondary mineral raw material sectors

A new study on EU primary and secondary mineral raw material sectors has been published to provide the European Commission with a clear and up-to-date understanding of the current competitiveness of the EU non-energy extractive industries (NEEI) and recycling industries (RI) in respect of the Mineral Raw Materials Sectors (MRMS).

This study aims to provide a sound foundation of evidence that will enable the European Commission to support the sustainable growth of the industries.

In doing so, the intention is to assist the European Commission, as well as Member States, industry and other stakeholders, in developing, implementing and assessing the policies and actions supporting the goals of EU Industrial policy to increase the share of industry on GDP to 20% as well as the goals of EU Raw Materials Strategy, and the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials.

Previous studies have identified that some of the NEEI industries face significant challenges associated with global competition, and they foresaw that this was likely to continue. Similar investigations have also concluded that Europe has a significant opportunity in the field of recycling, although the basis for this is not so clear.

Additionally, the Commission emphasises the potential growth that could be realised by developing and enhancing 'industrial symbiosis' whereby waste materials from some firms are used as raw material inputs by other firms, as outlined in the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe.

The combined assessment in this study of both the extractive and recycling industries aims, for the first time, to present a combined picture of the MRMS. It is hoped that this affords valuable insight as part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, helping to support the development of MRMS for the benefit of Europe



Environmental economy - employment and growth

Eurostat published its last statistics on employment and growth for the EU's environmental economy.

The environmental economy encompasses two broad groups of activities and / or products: all activities related to preventing, reducing and eliminating pollution and any other degradation of the environment ('environmental protection'); and preserving and maintaining the stock of natural resources and hence safeguarding against depletion ('resource management').

According to Eurostat estimates, employment in the EU-28's environmental economy rose from 2.9 million full-time equivalents in 2000 to 4.3 million full-time equivalents in 2012. The environmental economy in the EU-28 generated €671 billion of output and €271 billion of value added in 2012.



Developing a Common EU Construction & Demolition Waste Management Protocol: kick-off meeting

DG Grow launched, on [26 June 2015](#), a new project to develop a “[Common EU Construction and Demolition Waste Management Protocol](#)”. This project constitutes a new initiative within the framework of the “Construction 2020” Governance Structure– TG3.

The aim of the [project](#) is to address the problem of limited confidence about the quality and performance of processed Construction & Demolition waste in the EU market, by increasing the transparency and confidence in the market. The overall aim is to develop a common set of technical, environmental and managerial principles, which are applicable in the entire EU and based on the highest common standards in each stage of the waste management chain that would be recognised in all Member States. At the end, the common set of principles should lead to a common C&D Waste Management Protocol that can be used by:

- Construction and demolition industry professionals
- Public authorities
- Other industry players

After finalisation, the Protocol will function as ‘soft legislation’: a reference document for industry professionals and policy makers who can refer to it when developing new policies.

Study for the 'development of a common EU framework of indicators for the environmental performance of buildings'

A study to develop a common EU framework for building environmental performance indicators to drive improvements in both new and refurbished buildings will be carried out for the Commission by the [Joint Research Centre](#) (JRC), during 2015-2017.

This study responds to the need identified in the Communication ‘[Resource Efficiency Opportunities in the Building Sector](#)’ COM (2014)445 for a common European approach to assess the environmental performance of buildings throughout their lifecycle, taking into account the use of resources such as energy, materials and water.

DG ENV and DG GROW will lead the development of the framework with the technical support of the Joint Research Centre, its in-house science service, and in close co-operation with relevant stakeholders. For that purpose, different sub-groups of stakeholders will be set up to guide the process at different stages.

The aim is to develop a common framework that is open source in the sense that it should be possible to use it:

- directly by building professionals and their clients to prioritise their focus for making environmental improvements, as well as;
- indirectly by assessment and certification schemes to ensure that their criteria reflect priority areas of focus for resource efficiency at a European level and to ensure the comparability of data and results.

For more information you are most welcome to take a look at the [Project Overview](#)



Green capital 2017 and Green Leaf 2015

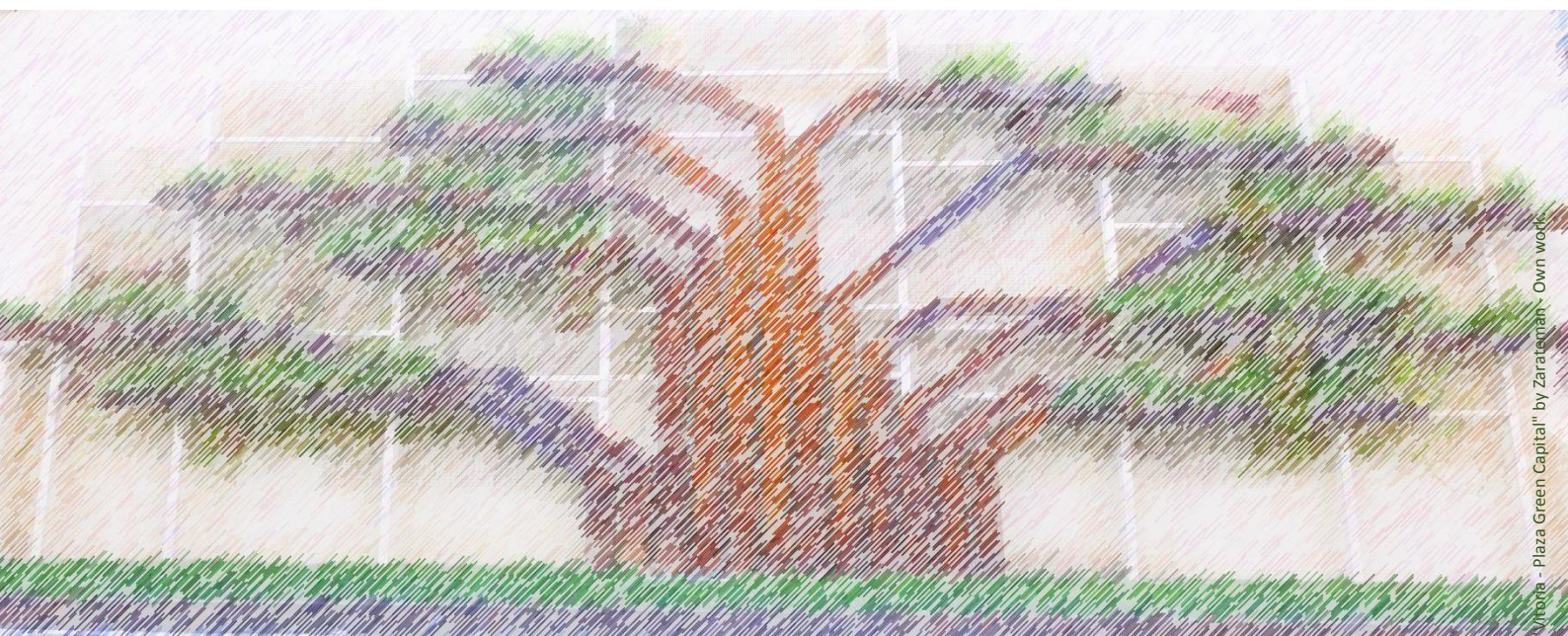
Essen, Torres Vedras and Mollet del Vallès awarded

The German city of Essen has won the [2017 European Green Capital Award](#). The award was presented by Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, at a ceremony in Bristol, UK, which currently holds the title. Essen was singled out for its exemplary practices in protecting and enhancing nature and biodiversity and its efforts to reduce water consumption. Essen participates in a variety of networks and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to improve the city's resilience in the face of climate change.

The European Commission also announced the winners of the inaugural European Green Leaf 2015 competition. [Mollet del Vallès](#) and [Torres Vedras](#) became the first cities to receive the accolade in recognition of their commitment to better environmental practices and green growth. [The European Green Leaf](#) (EGL) 2015 targets cities with a population between 50.000 and 100.000 inhabitants.

Before these announcements, the Commission launched the [2018 European Green Capital Award and the European Green Leaf 2016](#). The Green Capital Award is given to a European city (with more than 100.000 inhabitants) that has demonstrated a well-established record of achieving high environmental standards and is committed to ongoing and ambitious goals for future sustainable development. Cities from 50.000 to 20.000 inhabitants can apply to the Green Leaf Award which recognises towns and cities that demonstrate a strong environmental record, with a particular emphasis on efforts that engage in environmental awareness, generate green growth and new jobs.

Both competitions are open to EU Member States, EU Candidate Countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland and for both, cities can [apply online](#). The deadline for applications for the 2018 EGCA title and the 2016 European Green Leaf is 19 October 2015. A European jury supported by a panel of renowned experts across the different environmental fields will assess the applications.





COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Fair trade and more green economy

During its [112th plenary session](#), on 3-4 June 2015, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) adopted four opinions and a Resolution on CoR sixth mandate's priorities 2015-2020.

Barbara Duden is the rapporteur for [the opinion on "Local and regional support for Fair Trade in Europe"](#) which supports a common European strategy for fair trade as well as the creation of a "European fair trade capital/region" award. The CoR calls on the European Commission to use the opportunity of the announced communication on trade to outline how to move towards a coherent framework for EU fair trade. An EU strategy on this should promote the active involvement in fair trade of local and regional authorities.

A recent published CoR publication "[Local and regional authorities promoting fair trade](#)" unites both the study and a collection of examples of regional and local fair trade support. It provides insightful background information on the legal and policy frameworks and their limits for Fair Trade at European, national and sub-national level in Europe and on the adoption at the local and regional level of instruments supporting Fair Trade.

As a part of [the opinion on the Guidelines for the Employment Policies of the Member states](#), the CoR highlights the need for a better integration of the digital, green and social economies in the new employment guidelines drafted by the European Commission.

Additionally it reminds the Commission that public investment by LRAs plays a key role in encouraging economic growth; and endorses the suitability of the Europe 2020 Strategy's three pillars relating to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the relevance of the key indicators selected. The Committee calls, however, for the introduction of a "territorial dimension" for Europe 2020, setting targets for the local and regional level. The rapporteur of the opinion is Mauro D'Attis.



Water resources protection

The CoR has warned that delivering the 2020 objectives to protect Europe's waters was running off course and needed a significant "political step-change" to succeed.

The CoR argues that delivering the targets in that field would need further reforms and would require setting out several proposals to achieve this end:

- bring in new rules to restrict and even ban plastic bag;
- introduce an EU-wide ban on the use of micro-plastics in cosmetics and cleaning products;
- investigate the impact of energy on seas;
- set up an EU noise register and develop legal standards/limits to reduce the impact
- require private companies to collect data and share data on marine environmental status;
- restrict fishing and marine mineral mining in marine conservation areas (including no-take areas) to ensure that the level of protection of such areas is improved;
- a set of new marine conservation areas to be designated where needed to achieve good environmental status.





EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Support for RE-USE targets

A conference has been co-organized on 20 April 2015 with the RREUSE network on the topic: **“re-use target : why they matter and how to make them work”**.

Speakers included the European Commission, MEPs Bas Eickhout and Karl-Heinz Florenz, the Spanish Ministry of Environment, Producer Responsibility Organisations and social enterprise networks. The conference demonstrated that re-use is measurable; targets are achievable and that support for re-use from producer responsibility organisations is possible and must be further promoted.

It was concluded that re-use activities have significant environmental and socio-economic impact.

Current combined re-use/recycling targets undermine the waste hierarchy. Separate re-use targets are needed in order to ensure access to discarded reusable goods. Re-use is not a threat to producers, it is instead complementary to it. The second hand market is a socially established and accepted option that promotes green jobs. Without a doubt, circular economy will not be complete without promoting re-use effectively.



Optimisation of agricultural waste

On 12 May 2015, the **WasteReuse project** organised, in collaboration with the European Economic and Social Committee, a forum entitled **“Towards Sustainable Use of Agricultural Waste”**.

The Forum provided briefing on latest research results and practical experiences regarding the sustainability of agricultural and organic waste types to be reused in farming and gave an opportunity to environmental and agricultural sector representatives and to other stakeholders to discuss the key challenges related to sustainable agriculture and waste treatment and to contribute in these areas.

The WasteReuse project aims to evaluate innovative and traditional agricultural waste treatment technologies, develop alternative cultivation practices, protect soil quality, reduce carbon footprint and increase competitiveness of agriculture in the Mediterranean region.

It focuses on two problems:

- the uncontrolled disposal of agricultural wastes (olive oil mill wastes, wastes from the wine industry, etc.), as well as their uncontrolled use for crops/land fertilization
- the excessive use of nutrients and natural resources (water, phosphoric minerals used for the production of fertilizers) and the potential to increase recycling of nutrients and water with sustainable use of treated (or potentially untreated) agricultural wastes





EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Building a shared environmental information system with Eastern neighbours

A synthesis report “[Building a Shared Environmental Information System with the Eastern Neighbourhood: Outcome of cooperation, 2010–2014](#)” has been published by the EEA, together with the appointed representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine and financed by the [ENPI-SEIS project](#).

Since 2010, the European Environment Agency (EEA) has been engaging the countries of the Eastern Partnership in regional cooperation in order to improve national capacities for managing and sharing environmental data and information.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of advancements made in all countries in building a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). It demonstrates significant improvements in putting in place national coordination structures, mobilizing capacities to produce environmental indicators and upgrading the information systems for better reporting and easier sharing of environmental data. However, the EU’s eastern neighbours need to strengthen further their capacities to be able to produce regular, policy-relevant and indicator-based state of the environment reports. The work has focused on a selected list of indicators on air, climate change, water, biodiversity and waste.



How vulnerable are cities to climate change?

The EEA has published a series of interactive maps, illustrating various climate threats European cities face as well as cities’ capacity to respond to these threats. This new ‘[map book](#)’ provides background information and allows users to view the maps, selecting different parameters.

The maps are clustered around four climate threats (heatwaves, drought and water scarcity, flooding and forest fires) and cities’ capacity to respond. The map book shows how different factors, such as the amount of green urban areas, the share of elderly people or levels of trust and financial resources, interact at city level and determine the vulnerability of the cities included.

The [map book](#) provides a first indication of cities’ vulnerability and can be supplemented with more detailed local data. The section ‘Explore further’ guides users to create their own web maps by adding supplementary data. The section also provides links to other information sources and tools.



MILESTONES

☑ **Second stage of HORIZON 2020 call open till 8 September!**

Applicants who passed the first stage of the call Horizon 2020 “Waste: a resource to recycle, reuse and recover raw materials” are invited to submit a full proposal by 8 September 2015

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☑ **INTERREG Europe call open till 31 July!**

The first call for proposals of [Interreg Europe](#) is now open from 24 June to 31 July 2015.

The Interreg Europe programme is divided into four priority axes related to the Europe 2020 strategy:

1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
3. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
4. Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency

If you have a project ready for interregional cooperation, you are invited to submit an application before noon on 31 July 2015. You can [download the application pack](#).

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☑ **Call for Applications 2018 European Green Capital and 2016 European Green Leaf open till 19 October!**

The search for the 2018 [European Green Capital](#) and the 2016 [European Green leaf](#) has been launched.

Both competitions are open to EU Member States, EU Candidate Countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland and for both, cities can apply [online](#).

The deadline for applications for both titles is 19 October 2015.

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☑ **Consultation on Circular Economy still open till 20 August!**

Public consultation on the Circular Economy organised by the European Commission. **It is however strongly advised to submit your inputs in July.**

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☑ **EU Parliament: ENVI and ITRE meetings**

The next ENVI and ITRE Committee meetings will be held on 15 and 16 July 2015 in Brussels.