



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU

2015 Annual Conference

EEB 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

“A reform agenda for a sustainable Europe”

Monday 19 October 2015

Flagey, Brussels

Twitter: Green_Europe #sustainableEurope

Wifi: Network – Flagey, password – Flagey1050

About the conference

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker wants to be "big on big things and small on small things" and it doesn't get much bigger than safeguarding the environment, the world's life support system.

This year's annual conference will take a hard look at the roles of 'better regulation', sustainability and the rule of law in rising to this challenge.

What the EU and in particular the Commission does in these areas over the next five years matters more than ever before if it is truly serious about a reform agenda fit for the 21st century and capable of tackling the environmental and social challenges both within and outside Europe in a comprehensive and effective manner.

Taking place shortly after the adoption of the global United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and in the run up to the COP21 Climate Change Conference at the end of the year, the conference is a timely forum for discussion. At the same time the Commission's Better Regulation Agenda has been gathering momentum and its impact on draft proposals for a Circular Economy package and ongoing review of Europe's flagship conservation policy Natura 2000 will become clearer in the months ahead.

Doubts over the future direction of Europe have seldom been greater: the fallout from the Greek crisis has seen the ranks of traditional Euroscepticism reinforced from unexpected parts of the political spectrum that have hitherto been supportive of 'the European project'. In this context, the environmental challenges that Europe faces provide a strong reason for avoiding knee-jerk reactions and for building on what the EU has been good at, namely successful environmental regulation, first and foremost by delivering on the commitments set out in the Seventh Environmental Action Programme.

Including high-level speakers from the European institutions, academia and civil society, the EEB conference will unleash new ideas, inspire and inform.

Check out the conference website for the full programme, speakers' biographies and participants list: www.eebconference.eu

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

MONDAY 19 OCTOBER

Morning

8.00 – 9.00: Welcome coffee and registration

9.00 – 9.15: Welcome address [Studio 1]

Message of welcome and introduction to the programme by Mikael Karlsson, EEB President

9.15 – 11.00: Setting the scene: Opportunities and obstacles on the path to a sustainable Europe [Studio 1]

The opening plenary discussion will involve presentations from key representatives of the EU institutions on the challenges facing environmental and sustainable development policy in Europe today, as well as the opportunities for making real progress, reactions from other stakeholders and a debate involving all speakers and participants.

Moderator: Jacki Davis, Journalist, Editor and Senior Adviser to the European Policy Centre

Presentations:

André Weidenhaupt, Director General, Department of the Environment, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure, Luxembourg, on behalf of the Luxembourg Presidency of the European Union

Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director General, DG Environment, European Commission

Molly Scott Cato, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

Reactions:

Katharina Reuter, Managing Director, UnternehmensGrün e.V. and co-founder of ecopreneur.eu

Barbara Helfferich, Director of the European Anti-Poverty Network and Vice-President of Social Platform

Jos Dings, Director, European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E)

11.00 – 11.20: Tea/coffee

11.20 – 12.30: The roles of better regulation, governance for sustainability and the rule of law in creating a more sustainable Europe [Studio 1]

This plenary session will hear the views of influential speakers on three key horizontal themes that will be explored in greater depth in the afternoon breakout sessions.

Moderator: Jacki Davis, Journalist, Editor and Senior Adviser to the European Policy Centre

Better regulation: Silvia Albrizio, Economics Department, OECD

Governance for Sustainability: Karl Falkenberg, Senior Adviser to the European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission

Rule of law: Jerzy Jendroska, President, Polish Environmental Law Centre

12.30 – 13.30: Lunch [Foyer 1]

Afternoon

13.30 – 16.00: Parallel break-out session: Better regulation [Studio 1]

Moderator: Pieter de Pous, EU Policy Director, EEB

Rapporteur: Laurens Ankersmit, Lawyer, EU Trade and Environment, Client Earth

Speakers:

Riccardo Maggi, Member of the Cabinet of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, European Commission

Joost Mulder, Head of Public Affairs, Finance Watch

Joined by Silvia Albrizio, Economics Department, OECD

Better Regulation has been the ideological mainstay of the Juncker Commission and the driving force behind its vigorous application of the principle of 'political discontinuity'. In May, this agenda was given further momentum with the publication of a new Better Regulation Package. Although the Commission maintains that the package has no deregulatory purpose, concerns have been raised that the actual proposals for new bodies and procedures seem designed to reduce regulatory activities at EU level and to reduce overall regulatory costs. Central to this 'better regulation' package is a proposal for a revised Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Lawmaking on which a deal is expected to be reached by the end of 2015. If left unchanged, this would bind the European Parliament and Council not only to the political priorities of President Juncker, but also to its overall approach to better regulation. Concerns have also been raised about the impact of the proposed transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP) on the EU's ability to set ambitious binding standards for the protection of, amongst others, the environment, health and working conditions. The purpose of this session is to have a frank and open debate about the implications of these developments for the ability of Europe to embark on a comprehensive and sustainable reform agenda and in particular on anticipated proposals for a circular economy and sound management of chemicals, and the ongoing review of the Birds and Habitats Directive.

13.30 – 16.00: Parallel break-out session: Governance for Sustainability [Studio 5]

Moderator: Leida Rijnhout, Director of Global Policies and Sustainability, EEB

Rapporteur: Ingeborg Niestroy, Associate of the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Speakers:

Philipp Schönrock, Director, Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional (CEPEI)

Gerald Berger, Operating officer at European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) – Vienna; Senior fellow and project manager at the Institute for Managing Sustainability

Joined by Karl Falkenberg, Senior Adviser to the European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission

In September 2015 a new global Framework for Sustainable Development Agenda was adopted at the UN General Assembly in New York. This framework includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. As this agenda is explicitly universal, the EU and its Member States are committed to achieve those goals in Europe. It is therefore very timely to start to discuss how the EU will organise the implementation process and what the possible engagement will be for civil society organisations. For Europe, a logical framework for this would be a renewed Strategy for Sustainable Development, based inter alia on the SDG commitments and building on existing experiences of Sustainable Development strategies and councils, including those from other parts of the world.

13.30 – 16.00: Parallel break-out session: Rule of law [Foyer VIP]

Moderator: Stephen Stec, Adjunct Professor, Central European University

Rapporteur: Ana Barreira, President, Instituto Internacional de Derecho y Medio Ambiente / International Institute for Law and the Environment (IIDMA)

Speakers:

Liam Cashman, Senior legal expert, DG Environment, European Commission

Olivier Hoedeman, Research and Campaign Coordinator, Corporate Europe Observatory

Joined by Jerzy Jendroska, President, Polish Environmental Law Centre

The rule of law is a defining characteristic of any civilised democratic society, and effective implementation and enforcement of the laws that exist is a fundamental aspect of the rule of law. Few will dispute this, and indeed the broad consensus among political leaders on the importance of better implementation and enforcement is well reflected in the Seventh Environmental Action Programme which commits to giving top priority to improved implementation of the EU's environmental acquis by Member States through a number of specific actions. The EU has an impressive body of environmental law and fully implementing it would not only help to protect the environment, but would also restore citizens' trust in the EU. Despite this, there is a general reluctance to take the concrete steps which would bring about better implementation, for example

by increasing enforcement capacity, putting in place more transparent monitoring mechanisms and coming forward with long-awaited legislative proposals on access to justice and environmental inspections. As a result, the enforcement record in the environmental sector remains poor. The rule of law also implies greater transparency and accountability of the EU institutions, with the rights of access to information, participation and access to justice being underpinned by effective laws. Unfortunately the failure to address public concerns in this area tend to reinforce the perception that the EU is more about creating a corporate Europe than a citizens' Europe and to add weight to the rise of Euroscepticism.

16.15 – 17.30: Wrapping up: How to live well within the limits of the planet [Studio 1]

The concluding plenary session will hear reports back from the break-out sessions on better regulation, governance for sustainability and the rule of law, a closing keynote speech making the link to the EU's agreed environmental commitments, and closing remarks.

Moderator: Jeremy Wates, EEB Secretary General

Reports back from the break-out sessions by the Rapporteurs, additional comments

Closing keynote speech: Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries: "Delivering better lives within planetary boundaries – hand in hand"

Q&A with the Commissioner

Closing remarks from the EEB Secretary General

Evening

17.30 – 19.30: Reception [Foyer 1]

About the European Environmental Bureau

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) is the voice of environmentally conscious citizens in Europe, standing for environmental justice, sustainable development and participatory democracy. We want the EU to ensure all people a healthy environment and rich biodiversity, in and outside Europe. Established in 1974, the EEB works in close cooperation with the over 140 member organisations present in more than 30 countries, to advance ambitious environmental and sustainability policies in Europe.



Supply Cha!nge project : Make supermarkets Fair ! Photo exhibition at the EEB Annual Conference

The EEB is a partner of the Supply Cha!nge project that aims to put pressure on European supermarkets to address social and environmental issues in their supply chains. The supermarkets' share of the retail market has increased and the sub-section of their private labels already represents 40% of the EU market. This has given them increased power over suppliers – but with power comes responsibility and accountability. Within the project, that takes place during the European Year for

Development (EYD2015), a Europe-wide photo exhibition was organised asking consumers to share their vision of a better and more sustainable food system. An exhibition with some of the photos from the competition can be seen in Flagey Foyer 1 during the EEB Conference. For more information, check out the project website: www.supplychainge.org

THE EEB GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING

