



Conference agenda

Delivering a Net-Zero World

Charlemagne building



Tuesday 6 June: Policy debates

8.00 Registration opens

Welcome coffee

— **9.00 Opening of the Conference. Welcome by Katrina Sichel, conference master of ceremony**

— **9.10 Welcome message from Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission**
(recorded message)

— **9.15 Delivering a Net-Zero World – Opening debate**
(available languages: EN, FR, DE, UKR)

For the EU to succeed in delivering a clean tech revolution, it must ensure that the net-zero ambition is sustained by a wider ecological transition, restoring nature as our primary ally, and bringing an end to pollution.

Green Week 2023 makes the case for persistent ambition in environmental policies, whatever the economic and political weather. It argues that restoring healthy ecosystems is the foundation of long-term sustainability, jobs and business opportunities, while at the same time increasing the resilience and fairness of European societies.

In this opening session, panellists will take stock of recent and upcoming environmental legislative proposals, and debate their potential to increase resilience and create jobs and business opportunities across the economy, while considering the question: what would our reality look like without those policies?

Speakers:

Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Teresa Ribera Rodríguez, Third Deputy Prime Minister of the Spanish Government and Minister for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge

Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca and chair of the European Committee of the Regions' Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER)

Isabelle Guyader, Chief Sustainability Officer, Decathlon

Johan Rockström, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (on-line participation)

Moderator:

Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director General, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

— **10.30 The impact of war: environmental damage in Ukraine, priority challenges and plans for restoration** (available languages: EN, FR, DE, UKR)

The panel discussion will focus on the impact of the war on the environment and plans for restoration, including the PHOENIX reconstruction project.

Speakers:

Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Ruslan Strilets, Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine

Oleh Bondarenko, Head of the Committee on Environmental Policy and Nature Management of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Moderator:

Patrick Child, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

— 11.00 – 11.30

Coffee break. Opening of the exhibition “Environment and war through the eyes of children in Ukraine”

— 11.30 **Restoring biodiversity: Can societies and ecosystems live in a healthy relationship?** (available languages: EN, ES)

Our society depends on nature's products for food, materials and medicines, and on nature's life-sustaining services for air and water quality regulation, soil formation, pollination, climate change mitigation and adaptation, health and well-being – and much more.

Currently Europe's nature is in decline, with more than 80% of protected habitats in poor condition. Our challenging, but essential task is to preserve, restore and manage ecosystems in a sustainable way and benefit from their services, while avoiding conflicts and trade-offs and fostering social and economic opportunities. This imperative is at the core of the Commission's ground-breaking proposal for a Nature Restoration Law, as well as ongoing work to propose legislation on forest monitoring and soil health.

This session will highlight ways in which healthy ecosystems underpin societal resilience, on the example of two key areas: adaptation to climate change and food security. We will reflect on common interests and win-win solutions for nature and people, and the potential of the proposed EU Nature Restoration Law to encourage such approaches. The session will also explore competing social, environmental and economic objectives, short- and long-term perspectives, and feasible approaches to evaluate values and minimise trade-offs between them.

Speakers:

César Luena, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Olivier De Schutter, UN OHCHR | Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, expert on social and economic rights and on economic globalization and human rights

Delphine Dupeux, Director- EU Affairs, European Landowners Organisation

Victoria Gutierrez, Head of Global Policy at Commonland

Sabien Leemans, Senior Biodiversity Policy Officer, WWF

Jacopo Goracci, Organic Farm Manager, Slow Food

Moderator:

Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director for Biodiversity, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

— 12.30 – Lunch / Exhibition area

— 13.45 **Fireside chat with Bertrand Piccard**, Chairman of the Solar Impulse Foundation and **Florika Fink-Hooijer**, Director General, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission (available languages: EN)

— 14.10 **Circular Economy: Squaring the Circle: Can we afford to buy circular products? Can we afford not to?** (available languages: EN)

What happens to Circular Economy thinking when economic times are hard? Can producers square the circle, and deliver products that are circular, sustainable, and affordable to all, or will the temptation to deliver low cost at any cost win the day? Can products be inclusive, affordable and accessible, whilst also being durable, efficient, repairable and safe?

Consumers often say they want to buy green, but even if they have the right information to make their choices, it is often perceived as an exclusive option – a luxury available only to those who buy organic produce and drive electric cars. With inflation at a twenty-year high, is it reasonable to force €10 jeans off the market because they are too cheap? Can we expect consumers to make decisions based on life-time costs, not purchase price? Buying a reusable straw or cup might not break the bank, but what about the vulnerable consumer who needs a new washing machine or car? And does moving away from consumer ownership to sharing and servitisation offer answers?

As the EU moves towards broader mandatory Ecodesign requirements, the right to repair and to regulate green claims, this session takes a close look at the social consequences of sustainable products, zeroing in on potential impacts on the vulnerable, asking – what does it mean to leave no one behind? What will be the real consequences for workers and consumers, and particularly the

vulnerable, in the transition to a circular economy.

The panellists take a deep dive into these perceptions, looking at product efficiency, performance and durability, and ways of generating benefits and cost savings for all, irrespective of their place on the earnings ladder.

Speakers:

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation

Bert van Son, Founder & CEO, MUD Jeans International BV

Jean-Pierre Schweitzer, Deputy Manager for Circular Economy at the European Environmental Bureau

Moderator:

Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director for Circular Economy, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

15.15 Fireside chat with **Katherine Richardson**, Professor in Biological Oceanography, Globe Institute & Leader Sustainability Science Centre, University of Copenhagen and **Patrick Child**, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission (available languages: EN)

15.45-16.15 Coffee break

16.15 Zero Pollution: Can we achieve a Net-Zero World without it? (available languages: EN)

One of the goals of zero pollution is to support the transition to a clean, climate-neutral and circular economy. As part of this movement towards a net zero transition, can we deploy innovative technologies and practices where pollution prevention and reduction goes hand in hand with reducing greenhouse gases? How can we move towards zero pollution that will benefit citizen's health and the quality of life as well as reduce inequalities as the most vulnerable are often most affected by pollution?

The target 7 under the new Global Biodiversity Framework sets out, for the first time, a 'zero pollution objective' at global level. Climate change can make pollution challenges more complex, as the 2022 Oder river ecological disaster showed. Can we increase the resilience of our nature and biodiversity as pollution is one of the main threats to ecosystem health?

To help achieve the zero pollution objective, a number of important enablers are needed, financing, enforcement but also research and innovation. The recent Commission legislative proposals linked to the zero pollution agenda will drive innovation and needs for cleaner solutions in the area of industrial emissions and urban wastewater. How can we secure the necessary investments and offer new business opportunities for such innovative technologies?

The environment goods and services sector has been very resilient during crises and outperforms the wider economy. The clean water, waste and remediation sector alone employs about 1 million people and is increasingly looking for new talent. How can we ensure that green education and skills are developed so that Europe can sustain its leading role in clean technologies?

The panel discussion will focus on benefits, challenges and on the enablers for achieving zero pollution as part of delivering a net zero world.

Speakers:

Dr Jemilah Mahmood, Executive Director, Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, Sunway University Malaysia, tbc (recorded message)

Nicole Couder, Vice President Public Affairs Europe SUEZ

Prisco Piscitelli, Vice President of the Italian Society of Environmental Medicine (SIMA)

Hlib Mikhno, Climate Pact Ambassador

Moderator:

Veronica Manfredi, Director for Zero Pollution, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

17.45 LIFE Awards ceremony with Commissioner Sinkevičius

19.00 Cocktail reception



Wednesday 7 June: Expert workshops

8.00 Registration opens

Welcome coffee

9.15 Road tripping to net-zero – new Euronews magazine. Fireside chat with **Jeremy Wilks**, space, science and climate correspondent at Euronews and **Emil Andersen**, Head of Communication & IT Solutions, DG Environment (De GASPERI room, available languages: EN)

In this introductory session for the second day, Euronews will present a new TV magazine, the Road to Green. Produced in collaboration with the European Commission, the magazine aims to explore how various aspects of the European Green Deal are taking shape on the ground, covering Europe's continuing transformation to a circular, net-zero, nature-positive and clean economy.

Travelling around different locations in Europe to explore successful projects and talk to people behind the changes, the series seeks to position environmental policies as part of the solution to wider societal challenges and current crises.

In the first episode, to be aired on 16 May, Euronews takes you to Germany and Spain, exploring solutions to the next big topic as summer approaches: the water crisis.

9.45 – 11.00 parallel expert workshops

Unlocking financing for biodiversity: Green Assist and the key role of technical assistance (JENKINS room, available languages: EN)

Green Assist is a new advisory initiative funded from the LIFE programme which will contribute to unlocking at least €20 billion a year for spending on nature, as set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030. It will build up a pipeline for green investment projects that have a high impact on environmental priorities. More specifically, it will focus on key environmental sectors, mainly protection and enhancement of natural capital, the transition to circular economy, water and air, and on improving the greening and the integration of environmental considerations into other non-environmental sectors such as transport, energy and infrastructures.

Private and public project promoters, financial institutions or other project partners will have access to customised, demand-based advisory services. Those service will address projects or help in setting investment support i.e. by providing expertise, building pipeline of projects, trainings, carrying out environmental audits to improve the performance of SMEs.

The session will first address the investments gaps Green Assist will tackle, and then explain how this initiative stands out in the technical assistance panorama.

Speakers:

Zsolt Miskolczi, Green Finance & Investments unit, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

Andrea Bianchini, Policy officer, Green Finance & Investments unit, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

Marc Vanderhaegen, Head of Programme support, coordination & communication unit, CINEA

Andreas Pauer, Principal consultant, deputy Green Assist project coordinator, Ecorys

Moderator:

Kevin Flowers, Deputy Head of Green Finance & Investments Unit, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

OR

Environmental fairness – how do we “fairness proof” EU climate and nature policies?

(De GASPERI room, available languages: EN)

Many poorer households and vulnerable people live in neighbourhoods that suffer from higher levels of environmental pollution, in particular air pollution, and contain fewer green spaces. This is unfair as it aggravates existing inequalities in terms of health outcomes and life chances.

The transformation of society must therefore be rooted in fairness – not only because the poorest communities are least responsible for these crises and usually the worst affected, but because unless action to restore nature and decarbonise the economy is rooted in social and economic justice, it is unlikely to succeed.

Tackling the climate and nature crises with the necessary speed and ambition must tackle economic and social inequalities (and thereby promote fairness) at the same time. Protecting the environment and social justice are interlinked and should be pursued together.

This session will explore how we can “fairness proof” environment policy, by exploring good examples of applying a fairness perspective to policies that promote a circular economy, zero pollution and thriving biodiversity. It will highlight win-win solutions for ecosystem health and human health and wellbeing, while creating employment opportunities and supporting vulnerable stakeholders through the green transition. The aim is to discuss how future policymaking can protect nature in a socially just way.

Speakers:

Jana Žůrková, Deputy Director, RREUSE

Ingrid Stegeman, Programme Manager, EuroHealthNet

Elle-Merete Omma, Head of the EU Unit, Saami Council

Sotiria Theodoropoulou, head of European economic, employment and social policies unit at the European Trade Union Institute in Brussels

Moderator:

Frank Siebern, Head of Fair Green and Digital Transitions, Research Unit, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

11.15 – 12.30 Parallel sessions

Human dimension of the Green Deal: skills and mind-set needed for the sustainability transition

(De GASPERI room, available languages: EN)

There is growing awareness that we need something beyond technology, legislation and finance to make the just green transition happen: namely the right mind-set and skills, as well as reconnection to nature.

GreenComp, the European Sustainability Competence Framework acknowledges the interdependence of life and species, and that restoring and regenerating healthy and resilient ecosystems will require developing empathy towards the planet and showing care for other species. Knowledge about nature can encourage us to connect more closely with nature, which in turn can motivate further learning for sustainability. Promoting nature fosters a healthy relationship with the natural environment and can ignite in people a feeling of connectedness to the world's vast web of life. This can help contrast the psychological distress and negative emotions that children and young people worldwide experience because of climate change, and rather turn the distress into focused action.

This session will explore the human dimension of policy-making: how we can use reconnection, learning from nature, community building and promotion of the right skills and mind-sets to accelerate the just green transition.

Speakers:

Carlos Alvarez Pereira, Vice President of The Club of Rome

Jeroen Janss, Co-Founder & Co-Director of Inner Green Deal non-profit organisation

Kenneth Abraham Barrientos, Team Leader & Programme Officer, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for TVET (on-line participation)

Penelope Cain, artist with a research science background, NaturArchy, JRC SciArt project (on-line participation)

Satish Kumar Founder and Director of Schumacher college, a former monk and long-term peace and environment activist (recorded message)

Moderator:

Monica Pisani, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

OR

Strengthening environmental rule of law through effective fight against environmental crime

(JENKINS room, available languages: EN)

Environmental crime causes significant damage to the environment, human health and economy within and beyond the EU. It seriously undermines rules and efforts aimed at safeguarding biodiversity and curbing pollution.

Combating environmental crime is an aspect of what the United Nations Environmental Programme calls the 'environmental rule of law', i.e. a situation in which laws are widely understood, respected and enforced and the benefits of environmental protection are enjoyed by people and the planet.

To improve compliance with EU environmental law through the means of criminal law, the European Commission tabled a landmark initiative for a new Environmental Crime Directive. This new Directive will ensure that the most serious environmental infringements are tackled as criminal offences and that a strong enforcement and sanctioning regime is put in place. Strengthening the role of individual citizens and the civil society in fighting environmental crimes is another key enabler to strengthen the environmental rule of law. The proposed directive provides for specific provisions to protect citizens who report environmental crimes and support public enforcement.

The session will show that a strong and clear criminal-law legislative framework is necessary but not sufficient for success. Effective systems of law enforcement, a holistic strategic approach and the mobilisation of all relevant actors are also needed. Awareness will be raised on the different categories of environmental crime and their devastating impacts as well as on what is necessary to effectively tackle them. The global scale of environmental crime and the links to organised crime will also be discussed.

Speakers:

Luc Lavrysen, Emeritus Professor Environmental Law Ghent University, President of the Belgian Constitutional Court, President of the EU Forum Judges for the Environment

Prof. Dr. Michael G. Faure, LL.M., Academic Director METRO Institute, Maastricht University

Marianna Bolshakova, Environmental Law and Governance Coordinator at the Europe Office of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

Frederik Hafen, Environmental Democracy Policy Officer at European Environmental Bureau

Moderator:

Vita Jukne, Head of Environmental Rule of Law & Governance unit, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission

12.30 Lunch

14.00

Conference ends

