



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU  
2016 Annual Conference

European Environmental Bureau  
Boulevard de Waterloo 34  
BE - 1000 Brussels  
Tel. +32-(0)2-2790 8810  
[conferencemanager@eeb.org](mailto:conferencemanager@eeb.org)  
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**EEB 2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**“FROM SUSTAINABILITY TALK TO POLICY WALK:**  
**Stepping up EU action on climate, biodiversity and circular economy”**  
**Monday 26 September 2016**  
**MAK Museum for Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria**

**About the conference**

After the adoption in 2015 of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the historic Paris climate deal, 2016 and the coming years must be years of delivery – delivery of more ambitious EU climate and energy policies, and, more generally, of policies that mainstream sustainability and reduce Europe’s environmental footprint. This requires the systematic and comprehensive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals - both at EU and Member State level - as well as concrete progress in developing and implementing specific policies aimed at protecting biodiversity, greening agriculture, promoting a genuine circular economy and eliminating environmentally harmful subsidies to mention a few. In short, the EU needs to undergo fundamental reform.

Reform has been high on the EU agenda, in particular since the start of 2016 triggered by the UK’s demands linked to its referendum on EU membership. However, sustainability was notably absent from that debate and the result of the referendum shows clearly that the UK’s renegotiation package, and its focus on improving competitiveness through deregulation, failed to convince a majority of the UK public to vote to remain in the EU.

The EEB conference will be one of the first opportunities for those concerned about the environment across Europe to come together and take stock of this development and its implications for the environment and sustainability. We will debate how the EU needs to now embark on an agenda of transformational change that puts the interests of people and planet first. The EU has long promoted more globalization, open societies and open economies. The challenge for the EU now is to transform itself into a global leader that is capable of managing the social and environmental impacts of this. Within this framework, the conference will dig deeper into three issues that are high on the agenda this autumn:

- **Climate and Energy:** the conference will assess the EU’s response to the Paris outcome and seek to inject more ambition into that response, with particular regard to the targets for GHG reduction, energy efficiency and renewables, ETS reform and carbon pricing.
- **Biodiversity:** the European Commission is expected to conclude its evaluation of the Birds and Habitats Directive through a Fitness Check by December. This is later than expected, but given the continuing loss of biodiversity in the EU, there is no time to waste and experts at the conference will discuss the best ways of reaching Europe’s existing biodiversity goals and safeguarding Europe’s ecosystems.



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- **Circular Economy:** the conference will provide an opportunity to send targeted messages into the political debate on new waste laws and the re-issued circular economy package which now needs further implementation.

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

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2016

#### *Morning*

**9.00 - 9.45**      **Welcome coffee and registration**

**9.45 – 10.00**      **Message of welcome:** Franz Maier, President, Umweltdachverband  
**Setting the scene:** Mikael Karlsson, EEB President

**10.00 – 10.20**      **Keynote speech:**  
Andrä Rupprechter, Austrian Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management  
Short Q&A

**10.20-11.40**      **Overcoming the political obstacles to a sustainable Europe**  
**High-level panel discussion**  
This session will address the following:

- The state of the Union after the UK referendum
- Is the EU and its Member States ready to implement a global agenda of transformational change?
- Challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement at the EU, national and local levels.
- Sustainability, environment and the Juncker priorities

**Moderator:** Rosa Lyon, Journalist, ORF – Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, Vienna

**Speakers:**

Ann Mettler, Head, European Political Strategy Centre

Gabriela Fischerova, Acting Director General for Climate and Air division, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia



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Petros Fassoulas, Secretary General, European Movement International  
Helga Kromp-Kolb, Head of Center for Global Change and Sustainability, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna  
Benedek Jávor, Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

**11.40-12.00**     **Tea/coffee**

**12.00-13.00**     **Plenary discussion: Translating sustainability principles into concrete policies**

This plenary session will hear the views of three leading experts on what a European commitment to sustainability should mean for policies on the three conference themes – Climate and Energy, Biodiversity and the Circular Economy. The themes will be explored in greater depth in the afternoon breakout sessions.

**Moderator:** Rosa Lyon, Journalist, ORF – Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, Vienna

**Speakers:**

**Climate and Energy:** What has Paris changed? Implementation and financing at the EU and national level

Ulriikka Aarnio, International Climate Policy Coordinator, Climate Action Network Europe

**Biodiversity:** Will Europe's nature be more or less safe after the Fitness Check of the Nature Directives?

Andreas Beckmann, Managing Director of the WWF-International Danube-Carpathian Programme

**Circular Economy:** From incremental measures to an economic transition that respects planetary boundaries

Walter R. Stahel, Founder-Director of The Product-Life Institute

Discussion

Explanation of breakout sessions

**13.00 – 14.00:     Lunch**

*Afternoon*

**Parallel break-out sessions**

Three parallel breakout sessions will provide the opportunity to explore in greater depth the three policy areas discussed in the morning plenary session. Each session will be invited to consider to what extent the SDGs and the Paris climate deal can be used to leverage progress. Each session should aim to produce a short set of commonly agreed recommendations, as well as to identify areas where there are different opinions, and to report back to the plenary.



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**14.00 – 15.50: Parallel break-out session: Climate and Energy**

Last year's Paris climate agreement was generally heralded as a landmark moment, in particular the ambition to "pursue efforts" to keep global warming below 1.5 Degrees C above pre-industrial levels. However, the honeymoon period is now over and the world needs to decide how to bring the deal into force. G7 leaders have agreed that they will aim to make this happen before the end of the year, but delegates at the first UN meeting since the agreement suggested it could take two years for a set of rules to be negotiated. This session will look at the EU's role in all this: what needs to happen in Europe for it to reduce its emissions in line with its Paris commitments; how can its policies speed up a transition to an energy system based on renewables and energy efficiency; and how can the leading EU member states share best practice with those that remain most reliant on fossil fuels. Indeed, a key point of the debate will be whether the EU can, with its current proposals, remain a global climate leader or whether it needs to massively increase its ambition and influence.

This break-out session will address the following questions:

- How will Europe's new raft of climate and energy policies speed up the transition to a clean and sustainable energy system?
- Can Europe remain a global climate leader without increasing its own ambition till 2030?
- How will the Energy Efficiency First Principle shape Europe's Energy Union?
- How to spread best practices across Europe?
- How to ramp up financing to enable the implementation of the Paris Agreement in Europe?

**Moderator:** Philippa Nuttall Jones, EEB Communications Manager

**Rapporteur:** Jonathan Gaventa, Director, E3G

**Speakers:**

Veronika Galeková, Director, Slovak Association of Photovoltaic Industry

Matthias Buck, Senior Associate EU Energy Policy, Agora Energiewende

Angela Köppl, Researcher, Austrian Institute of Economic Research

Joined by the Climate and Energy plenary speaker Ulriikka Aarnio, International Climate Policy Coordinator, Climate Action Network Europe

**14.00 – 15.50: Parallel break-out session: Biodiversity**

This session will focus on issues such as better enforcement and implementation of the EU Nature Directives, the scaling up of financing for Natura 2000 management and restoration, and ways to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Particular attention will be paid to the role of agriculture and the challenge to develop a future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post-2020 that will stop farming being the main driver of biodiversity loss and would justify the spending of taxpayers' money. It will debate the concrete steps that the EU now needs to take to implement better nature protection in these areas. The panel and participants will also have an opportunity to react to and discuss the main outcomes of the EEB's Biodiversity Conference which will have



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taken place mid-September in Brussels. In that conference, NGO proposals for measures relating to the issues will have been presented and discussed with policy-makers.

This break-out session will address the following questions:

- How to achieve Europe's biodiversity goals, following the Fitness Check of Natura 2000 and the Mid Term Review of the EU biodiversity strategy?
- Everybody wants better implementation and enforcement, but how to make it happen on the ground? What role for new technologies?
- How to roll out a Europe-wide ambitious restoration agenda?
- How can we ensure that farming becomes part of the solution to conservation and safeguarding biodiversity?

**Moderator:** Pieter de Pous, EEB EU Policy Director

**Rapporteur:** Luc Bas, Director, IUCN European Union Representative Office

**Speakers:**

Wolfgang Suske, Head of the office, Suske Consulting

Irene Lucius, Regional Conservation Director, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme

Mohammad Abdel-Razek, Project Manager, GRAS – Global Risk Assessment Services

Joined by the Biodiversity plenary speaker Andreas Beckmann, Managing Director of the WWF-International Danube-Carpathian Programme

**14.00 – 15.50: Parallel break-out session: Circular Economy**

This session will present why embracing the circular economy is necessary to live within planetary boundaries and show how related practices could help to “do more with less”. From the local to worldwide scale, speakers will explain how circular patterns can be deployed and open up a discussion on how different levels of action could be best combined for the greatest impact. To that end, the speakers will consider the most crucial steps the EU should take to turn its rhetoric on the circular economy into reality. They will also examine ways to reconcile economic development with the EU's environmental commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals. Thirdly, the panel will discuss how revised waste laws could be a key opportunity to set some clear framework conditions that will enable the EU to be more coherent on waste and recycling, reduce the gaps between the most and least advanced member states, and set in motion a more inclusive way forward.

This break-out session will address the following questions:

- What are the most urgent and crucial next steps in the roll out of the EU's Circular Economy Action Plan?
- Will Europe's revised waste laws bring Europe's waste problem full circle?
- Can the Circular Economy Action Plan put Europe on track to living within planetary boundaries?



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- Given the poor levels of implementation of Europe's waste legislation e.g. in Southern and Eastern Europe, what needs to be done to make sure that it will be effectively enforced?

**Moderator:** Friedrich Hinterberger, Founding President, Sustainable Europe Research Institute (SERI), Austria

**Rapporteur:** Iain Gulland, Chief Executive, Zero Waste Scotland

**Speakers:**

Monique Lempers, Value Chain and Commercial Director, Fairphone

Clarissa Morawski, Managing Director, Reloop

Stephane Arditi, EEB Policy Manager for Products and Waste

Joined by the Circular Economy plenary speaker Walter R. Stahel, Founder-Director of The Product-Life Institute

**15.50-16.10**     **Tea/coffee**

**16.10 – 17.30: Conclusions and the way forward**

The concluding plenary session will hear reports back from the break-out sessions, a closing keynote speech and closing remarks.

**Moderator:** Jeremy Wates, EEB Secretary General

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

**A sustainable Europe in a sustainable world: strengthening the environmental voice in global governance**

**Keynote speech (video address):** Erik Solheim, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme

**Respondents:**

Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler, Head of Department – EU Environmental Affairs, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria and Chair of the EEA Management Board

Céline Charveriat, Executive Director, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)

Q&A

**Closing remarks** from the EEB Secretary General

*Evening*

**17.30 – 19.30: Reception**



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### About the European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

The EEB is Europe's largest federation of environmental NGOs, bringing together over 150 civil society organisations from around 30 European countries with a combined membership of an estimated 15 million people. The EEB stands for social and environmental justice, participatory democracy and sustainability. We promote the principles of prevention, precaution and polluters' accountability, and seek systemic change for our current economic model. For over 40 years, the EEB has been the voice of its members and environmentally concerned citizens, leading the fight for a strong environmental and sustainability policy inside the EU and at the global level.

### About Umweltdachverband

Umweltdachverband is an umbrella organisation for 37 Austrian environmental NGOs in the fields of nature and alpine conservation, environmental protection and renewable energy. Located in Vienna, it has about 1.4 million members. The organisation focuses on comprehensive environmental protection and on maintaining the diversity of genes, species and ecosystems (biodiversity) as well as on the sustainable expansion of renewable energy and conservation of resources in order to address the challenges of climate change. Other core issues are the sustainable conservation of the resource water, the strengthening of rural development, the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the protection of the Alps. The Umweltdachverband is also home to the EU Environmental Bureau (EU Umweltbüro), which serves as an interface and central information platform on European and national environmental policies. Umweltdachverband is a long-standing member of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and also serves as the Austrian member on the EEB Board.

**Organizers:** European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and Umweltdachverband



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