



EEL News Service

Issue 2015/10 of 7 July 2015

Dear members of the EEL Network,

The Hague District Court [decided](#) that the Netherlands must take more ambitious action to reduce their emission levels (by at least 25% by 2020). Read more about this landmark case in the "Case Law" section below.

The case is about the future we choose. That's also the motto of our Summer School in The Hague on International and European Law. You can still [join](#) the participants from a wide variety of countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America that have already signed up. Find the full programme [here](#).

This News Service also includes cases decided in Ireland and at the ECHR.

Kind regards,

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Case Law



Initiated Proceedings (1) Air quality

European Commission Press Release: [Commission refers Belgium and Bulgaria to Court and gives Sweden a final warning over poor air quality](#) (18/06/2015)

EurActiv Article: [EU takes Belgium and Bulgaria to court over air quality](#) (19/06/2015)

Bulgaria persistently failed to comply with legal limits on levels for PM10, or tiny particles, produced by traffic and industry. Belgium's track record has improved, but not sufficiently, with excessive levels of PM10 and nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. A final warning was issued to Sweden. Commission data shows about 400,000 premature deaths per year linked to air pollution in the European Union, but member states have systematically missed targets to reduce levels of harmful emissions and dust particles associated with respiratory disease and some forms of cancer.

Initiated Proceedings (2) Energy Efficiency Directive

European Commission Press Release: [Commission refers Greece to Court and gives Germany a final warning regarding the transposition of the Energy Efficiency Directive](#) (18/06/2015)

Initiated Proceedings (3) German road toll

European Commission Press Release: [Commission launches infringement case on the application of the German Minimum Wage law to the transport sector](#) (19/06/2015)

EurActiv Article: [Dobrindt: Commission should not interfere with German toll](#) (16/06/2015)

EurActiv Article: [Germany defiant as Brussels thwarts motorway toll plan](#) (18/06/2015)

The European Commission challenged Germany's planned road toll. Federal Minister of Transport Alexander Dobrindt defended the proposal, saying it was a matter of national sovereignty. The toll would charge foreign drivers up to 130 euros a year to use Germany motorways. German drivers would also pay the toll but they would receive a corresponding reduction in automobile taxes. Critics say that contravenes EU rules on equal treatment.

Domestic Proceedings (1)

The Hague District Court: [The Urgenda Foundation v State of the Netherlands](#) (24/06/2015)

[The Urgenda Foundation](#) (Urgenda) brought this claim against the Netherlands, alleging that it has a legal obligation to take more ambitious measures to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Urgenda argued that the State has a duty of care towards Urgenda itself, the 886 individuals that Urgenda represented and Dutch society. It argued that the State had breached national and international obligations. Urgenda furthermore argued that the State had exposed, through its greenhouse gas emissions, the international community and future generations to the risk of dangerous climate change. Urgenda asked the Court to declare that the State should limit its greenhouse gases by at least 25% in 2020; alternatively, by 40% in 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

The Court held that, whether or not Urgenda could bring its claim on behalf of persons beyond national borders or future generations depended on its by-laws, which had to reflect the position of its claim before the Court. The Court interpreted Urgenda's reference to 'sustainable society' in its by-laws in a noteworthy and progressive manner. It reasoned that 'sustainable society' has 'an inherent international (and global) dimension' and that it has an intergenerational dimension, in light of the Brundtland Report's definition of 'sustainable development' ('development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'). Thus, Urgenda could base its claim in part on the fact that Dutch emissions have

consequences for persons outside Dutch national borders and on future generations.

The Court found that Urgenda could not rely on Article 21 of the Dutch Constitution, in which the authorities are told that it is their concern to keep the country habitable and to protect and improve the environment (by virtue of the State's discretionary powers), and that it could not rely on the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, the transboundary harm principle or the TFEU, because those obligations were not binding on the State vis-à-vis individuals. Moreover, Articles 2 and 8 of the ECHR could not found a claim because Urgenda was no victim within the meaning of Article 34 ECHR. The Court then turned to the question whether the State had breached a duty of care towards Urgenda by not taking adequate emission reduction measures (i.e. national tort law; Dutch Civil Code). It noted that the abovementioned international and regional legal bases would inform the scope of the Dutch standard of care. Moreover, the Court observed that the State's discretionary powers were not unlimited; the State has an obligation to protect its citizens from the dangerous consequences that climate change entails.

The State's relatively low level of emissions (ca. 0.5% global emissions) did not affect its duty to take mitigation measures. The Court noted that all emissions contribute to an increase of CO₂ in the atmosphere, that global accountability was necessary, and that Dutch per capita emissions were in any case among the highest in the world. The Dutch policy of 17% reduction by 2020 was insufficient to meet the required 2° target. Thus, the State had acted negligently and unlawfully, by setting its reduction targets at less than 25%. The State's argument concerning the separation of powers was rejected. The Court found that its role was to offer legal protection, also against the State.

The Court rejected the 886 individuals' claims, believing that Urgenda had in any case successfully subsumed those claims. It opted for Urgenda's first proposed ruling (deeming that severe consequences would follow if increased mitigation was postponed until 2030) and ordered the State to reduce its emissions by at least 25% at the end of 2020 compared to 1990 levels.

Commentary:

Urgenda Foundation Press Release: [Urgenda wins the case for better Dutch climate policies](#) (24/06/2015)

This is the first time that a judge has legally required a State to take precautions against climate change. This verdict will provide support to all the other climate cases around the world.

The Hague District Court Press Release: [State ordered to further limit](#)

[greenhouse gas emissions](#) (24/06/2015)

Diplomat's Magazine: [Hague Court orders Dutch State to reduce greenhouse gas emissions](#) (06/07/2015)

Steffen van der Velde (researcher EU law, T.M.C. Asser Instituut) discusses the case and the initial reaction by the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs.

EurActiv Article: [Dutch court orders state to slash greenhouse emissions](#) (25/06/2015)

Domestic Proceedings (2)

Irish Supreme Court: [National Asset Management Agency v Commissioner for Environmental Information](#) (23/06/2015)

This case concerned a request for environmental information by Mr Sheridan to the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) in Ireland, desiring a considerable amount of information relating to assets, loans and properties. NAMA was established in 2009 as part of Ireland's response to the financial crisis that engulfed it. Its function involves the acquisition of bank assets from participating institutions and managing the value of these acquired assets. It responded to Sheridan's request, arguing that it was not a 'public authority' within the meaning of the Irish Regulations that had transposed Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information into Irish law. The directive had rendered the information provisions of the Aarhus Convention part of European law.

A lengthy process ensued, involving many exchanges between NAMA, Sheridan and the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information. The Irish Regulations had transposed the Directive's definition word for word, but had also added a list of entity types, after the phrase 'and includes'. The Commissioner interpreted 'public authority' widely, taking an expansive approach and finding that NAMA was a public authority because it did conform to one of the listed entity types; it was a board or other body established by or under statute. The Commissioner did not deem it necessary to assess, in addition, whether NAMA satisfied the three conditions that had been copied word for word from the Directive's definition, and considered that the Directive in any case permitted Member States to expand the notion of public authority.

The Supreme Court judge did not agree with the High Court's approach, which relied on a presumption of faithful transposition and argued that NAMA had not rebutted said presumption. He criticised the judges for taking a narrow approach and thus failing to assess the bigger question, i.e. whether NAMA falls within the Directive's definition. Moreover, the Supreme Court judge questioned, *obiter dictum*, whether the request was really a request for 'environmental' information

at all.

Ultimately, a Grand Chamber case was decided during the appeals process, which shed further light on the definition of 'public authority', namely Case C-279/12 *Fish Legal and Emily Shirely v Information Commissioner et al.* In that case, the CJEU held that public authorities should be taken to mean administrative authorities, which are either part of the State's public administration and can be dissolved by it, or which exercise administrative functions, i.e. are governed by private or public law, perform certain services and 'are, for this purpose, vested with special powers beyond those which result from normal rules applicable in relations between persons governed by private law'. In offering this definition, the Grand Chamber resolved the Irish domestic legal issue; NAMA clearly falls within it.

Court of Justice of the European Union

General Court (Second Chamber): Case T-57/11, Castelnou Energía, SL v European Commission (03/12/2014)

This ruling concerns the Commission's approval of a Spanish state aid measure which benefits the production of electricity from domestic coal. The General Court dismissed the applicant's request for annulment of the Commission decision. Greenpeace España - intervener in the case - complained that the approval by the European Commission insufficiently considered the negative environmental effects and whether the objectives of the Spanish government - particularly ensuring stable electricity supply - could be achieved in a more environmentally friendly way. In its judgment the General Court found that where the Commission assesses an aid measure which does not pursue an environmental objective, it is not required to take into account EU rules on the protection of the environment, in spite of the integration principle of Art. 11 TFEU demanding that "[e]nvironmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and activities". The General Court limits the verification of compliance with the rules, other than those relating to State aid, to rules capable of having a negative impact on the internal market. Environmental rules seem not to fall within this category because, according to the General Court, environmental protection, strictly speaking, does not form a part of the internal market (para 189 of the judgment). Consequently, the General Court found that the Commission was not required to examine the compatibility of the measure with environmental protection provisions. A breach of environmental rules can be the subject of a separate investigation concerning non-compliance, but according to the General Court it does not need to be taken into consideration within the context of the state aid investigation.

European Court of Human Rights

Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights: [Case 6987/07 of Guseva v Bulgaria](#) (17/02/2015)

This judgment concerned Bulgarian stray dogs and the right to access to information of animal welfare NGOs. The applicant requested information regarding the collection of dogs from the streets: statistics, number of cases, as well as the agreements of the Municipality with the companies providing the services in a specific municipality. The latter refused to provide information even after a judicial court ordered it to do so. After several complaints and legal procedures without real results, the applicants appealed to the European Court of Human Rights, claiming that her right to information was infringed. The Court concludes that there had indeed been an infringement by the State of Bulgaria of Article 10 (freedom of expression) European Convention on Human Rights. The Court based its judgment on the fact that information regarding the management of stray animals by the public authorities is of general interest, meaning that anyone should be able to have access to this information.

General



EurActiv: [Infographic: What are the Sustainable Development Goals about?](#)
(23/06/2015)

EurActiv Interview: [Green capital mayor on energy efficiency, air pollution and EU environmental laws](#) (23/06/2015)

Listen to the interview [here](#).

European Parliament Press Release: [Better Regulation: kick-off meeting on Interinstitutional Agreement](#) (25/06/2015)

Negotiations on proposals to revise the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Regulation kicked off with a meeting in the European Parliament between EP President Martin Schulz, Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, Latvia's Prime Minister, representing the current Council Presidency and Luxembourg's Prime Minister for the incoming Council Presidency. Following the meeting, President Schulz stated: "it is essential that we do not compromise on standards. Better Regulation should not mean deregulation and should not result in weaker social, environmental, health or safety standards".

Air



EurActiv Article: [Environment ministers want flexible air pollution targets](#) (15/06/2015)

Environment ministers on Monday 15 June demanded flexibility in meeting EU air quality targets, after dropping a cap on methane emissions from draft pollution rules.

European Parliament Press Release: [Medium combustion plants emissions: informal deal with Council](#) (23/06/2015)

Draft plans to set sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emission limits for medium-sized combustion plants, such as electricity generators or heating systems for domestic, residential or industrial use, were informally agreed by MEPs and the Latvian Presidency of the Council. EU Member states will have to assess whether to introduce stricter limits in areas where these emissions breach EU air quality standards.

As originally proposed by the European Commission, the maximum emission values, listed in annexes, of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and dust from existing combustion plants with a thermal input above 5MW, would come into force from 2025. The smallest plants, with a thermal input from 1 to 5 MW, which are usually operated by SMEs, will have to comply with emission limit values from 2030.

Council of the European Union Press Release: [Emissions from medium combustion plants: Council and Parliament agree on new rules to improve air quality](#) (23/06/2015)

Chemicals



EurActiv Special Report: [REACH: Aviation hopes to streamline approval for 'mission critical' chemicals](#) (15/06/2015)

Aircraft producers and airlines are struggling with the regulatory requirements of what would become know as the REACH regulation, which obliges companies to replace chemicals deemed a risk to human health and the environment or to seek regulatory authorisation for exemptions. Aviation representatives say the law has created a costly and complicated process for a range of substances, including those used to prevent corrosion in critical parts, while identifying alternatives could take years.

EurActiv Article: [TTIP a threat to EU chemical safety standards, German NGO says](#) (25/06/2015)

Friends of the Earth Germany ([BUND](#)) sees the transatlantic trade agreement TTIP as a threat to standards protecting against chemicals that may be harmful to humans and the environment. The chemicals industry “vehemently” objected to the NGO’s claim.

[Bund Study](#) (N.B. German text)

Climate Change



EurActiv Article: [Higher international ambition needed on climate change](#) (15/06/2015)

In order to stand a good chance of limiting the global temperature increase to less than 2 degrees Celsius , the international community needs to follow Scotland’s lead and show the highest possible ambition on climate change., writes Aileen McLeod, Scotland’s Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform. Scotland’s target is for a 80 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050. By 2020, the target is to reduce emissions by 42 percent and to be generating 100 per cent of gross annual electricity demand from renewables.

EurActiv Article: [Lancet study: Climate change can destroy 50 years of health and development](#) (23/06/2015)

Climate change poses a threat so serious that it could reverse the last 50 years of progress in global health and development, a report published in The Lancet has warned. At the same time, the potential health benefits of fighting climate change mean that tackling the problem presents one of the greatest opportunities to improve health this century, the 2015 Lancet Commission said.

The Lancet report can be accessed [here](#) (free access but registration is required).

Energy



EurActiv Article: [IEA: Energy emissions can peak 10 years early, if fossil fuels targeted](#) (15/06/2015)

Global energy emissions could peak as early as 2020 but only if governments worldwide phase out fossil fuels subsidies and ban the building of new coal power stations, a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) has said. The peak – ten years ahead of schedule - would be a major climate milestone. But research on the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), made or hinted at by governments before the COP21, shows energy emissions slowing but not peaking by 2030. Countries accounting for two thirds of emissions have either formally submitted their promises to cut emissions, or signalled their likely content. The IEA's Report 'Energy and Climate Change': [Full Report/Executive Summary](#)

EurActiv Article: [Member states on track to meet renewable energy targets, EU report finds](#) (16/06/2015)

While most EU member countries are on track to meet the EU's binding 2020 targets on renewable energy, France, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and the UK all need to step up their efforts, according to the Commission's [Progress Report](#). The Renewable Energy Directive ([Directive 2009/28/EC](#)) sets a legally binding target for the European Union to fulfill 20% of its energy requirements from renewable sources by 2020. This includes a 10% target for renewable energy use in transport, the Commission recalls.

energypost Article: [Europe's energy revolution marches on: one-third of power supply now renewable](#) (17/06/2015)

ully one-third of electricity produced in Europe last year came from renewable energy, reports ENTSO-E ([the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity](#)). Four years ago this was just 24%. The increased share of renewables has come at the expense of fossil fuels. "There is a revolution taking place", says Susanne Nies, Corporate Affairs Manager at ENTSO-E. ENTSO-E's annual overview of the European electricity market: [Electricity in Europe 2014](#).

energypost Article: [Danish offshore wind: it's getting better all the time](#) (16/06/2015)

Denmark continues to set the pace in driving down the cost of offshore wind. In its latest tender for 350 MW of near-shore wind farms the maximum price has again been reduced. Danish offshore wind now costs roughly half of what the new nuclear plant at Hinkley in the UK will cost.

EurActiv Article: [Renovating Europe, gaining more energy independence](#) (18/06/2015)

Investing in energy efficiency in buildings is the cheapest, fastest and most effective way to decrease our energy dependency by reducing our energy demand, writes Adrian Joyce, secretary general of the European Alliance of Companies for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (EuroACE), and Renovate Europe campaign director. On the 18 June, the EU became 100% dependent on energy imports for this year. This energy dependency occurs at high cost, as the EU is spending more than €1 billion every day to import the energy it needs. But there is a solution! By renovating the EU building stock, we could push the EU Energy Dependence Day back to 26 October.

EurActiv Article: [Šefčovič: More enforcement, stricter rules to come on energy efficiency](#) (18/06/2015)

Stricter EU energy efficiency and performance laws will be rolled out by the European Commission next year, and enforcement of existing regulation will be further stepped up, said Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič. But he conceded there was little chance of national governments agreeing to revise upwards their target of increasing their energy efficiency by 27% by 2030

See Also:

energypost Article: [Dimitri Pescia, Agora Energiewende: "No more baseload in 2030, no case for new nuclear in Europe" \(23/06/2015\)](#)

EurActiv Article: [Private sector to invest in Africa's energy potential \(24/06/2015\)](#)

energypost Article: [The grid will not be disrupted: why Tesla's Powerwall won't catalyze a solar revolution \(25/06/2015\)](#)

Nature & Agriculture



EuroparITV: [Cloned animals - would you eat them? \(15/06/2015\)](#)

In Europe, cloned animals haven't made their way into the food supply chain - yet - but they're not banned from it either. EU legislation on cloning is proving a hard nut to crack.

European Parliament Press Release: [Ban not just animal cloning, but cloned food, feed and imports too, say MEPs \(17/06/2015\)](#)

A draft law to ban the cloning of all farm animals, their descendants and products derived from them, including imports, in the EU was voted on by the Environment and Agriculture committees on Wednesday. MEPs beefed up the European Commission's initial proposal, citing high mortality rates at all development stages of cloning and EU citizens' animal welfare and ethical concerns. The committees' text, approved by 82 votes to 8 with 8 abstentions, changes the form of the legal act from a directive, which EU countries would have had to transpose into their national laws, into a regulation, which would apply directly in all of them. MEPs also extended the ban's scope to cover all species of animals kept and reproduced for farming purposes.

EurActiv Article: [Parliament demands moratorium on cloned animal products](#)
(19/06/2015)

MEPs have taken a harder line than the one proposed by the Commission on cloned animals, refusing to authorise food products from clones and their descendants. Italian rapporteur Guilia Moi said, 'We hope for a complete ban' until a scientific consensus is reached on the safety of cloned animal products.

European Parliament: [Novel Foods: food safety MEPs back deal with Council](#)
(25/06/2015)

The draft rules, which still need to be approved by Parliament as a whole and the Council of Ministers, would subject novel foods to safety evaluation and authorization via a fully harmonized EU-wide procedure.

As requested by MEPs in negotiations, the agreed text explicitly covers foods from cloned animals. The scope also includes food consisting of, isolated from or produced from cell or tissue cultures derived from animals, plants, micro-organisms, fungi or algae.

When deciding whether to authorise a novel food, the European Commission will have to apply the precautionary principle if its safety cannot be assessed or in the event of scientific uncertainty. The text stipulates that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), should carry out an assessment in every case where a food is liable to have an effect on human health.

European Parliament Press Release: [MEPs close deal with Council on seal products](#) (25/06/2015)

Trading in seal products from hunts hitherto conducted to protect fishing stocks will be banned in the EU in the future but the exemption for the trade in products derived from seal hunts carried out by the Inuit community will remain, under the preliminary deal struck by internal market MEPs and the Latvian Presidency of the Council. MEPs backed a Commission proposal to align the EU rules with the WTO ruling by renouncing the MRM exception and keeping a reinforced Inuit exception, as seal hunting is an integral part of the Inuit community's culture and identity. The provisionally agreed text still needs to be formally approved by the Council's Committee of Permanent Representatives and Parliament's Internal Market Committee.

Transport



EurActiv Article: [Fuel efficiency standards benefit economy and environment, NGO claims](#) (15/06/2015)

Ambitious new vehicle emissions targets could save European drivers €350 per year, and pay back the cost of the technology within three years, according to a new study by Transport & Environment, a green campaign group. Transport is Europe's second most carbon intensive sector after energy. It produces almost a quarter of the EU's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. More than 70% of these emissions are produced by road vehicles.

EurActiv Special Report: [While airlines pay for pollution, airports fly in a different class](#) (16/06/2015)

Today's passenger aircraft are becoming ever more efficient, driven by regulations like the EU's emissions trading scheme and airlines looking to squeeze profit out of every drop of fuel saved. Yet on the ground, airports operate in a different class. New findings from a European Union-funded research project show that commercial airports use as much energy as a small city, and up to one-fifth of that may be wasted.

EurActiv Special Report: [Aviation industry looks for more than hot air on emissions talks](#) (17/06/2015)

With steady growth projected for decades to come, the aviation industry is banking on a global regulatory framework for curtailing carbon output to avoid a mishmash of regional policies like Europe's emissions trading scheme. "This industry is more proactive than any other industry in reducing emissions," Bob Lange, a senior vice president at Airbus, told EurActiv at the Paris Air Show.

European Commission Press Release: [Commission updates the EU air safety list](#) (25/06/2015)

The European Commission has updated the EU Air Safety List, the list of airlines that are subject to an operating ban or operational restrictions within the European Union. All airlines from the Philippines, banned since 2010, have been released from the List and are therefore allowed to operate in the European airspace. No new bans have been imposed with this update.

EurActiv Article: [Decarbonising Europe: Fossil fuel subsidies must go](#) (17/06/2015)

The Commission is organising a huge conference on decarbonising European transport this week, but remains unwilling to discuss government support for fossil fuels, writes Wendel Trio, Director of Climate Action Network Europe. It seems the Commission will continue its efforts to hide one of the main drivers of an increase of the use of cars, vans and trucks: fossil fuel subsidies. A recent report from the IMF estimates global fossil fuel subsidies to reach €4.7 trillion in 2015, with Europe's transport sector benefitting from approximately €18 billion in subsidies in 2015. According to the IMF, phasing out fossil fuel subsidies could reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by a staggering 20%.

Moreover, the European Commission's DG for Economic and Financial Affairs has indicated that fossil fuel subsidies are costly for taxpayers. See the Analysis [here](#).

European Commission Press Release: [Keynote speech by Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete at the "Driving road decarbonisation forwards" conference](#) (18/06/2015)

EurActiv Article: [What is the formula for electrifying the EU's transport sector?](#)
(24/06/2015)

On the 25 June, Parliament's Environment Committee debated reducing air pollution from cars. Member states should draw lessons from Norway, writes Teodora Serafimova, advisor at Bellona Europa, an environmental NGO dedicated to providing technological solutions to climate change. The Norwegian government has successfully rendered the purchase of EVs a real 'cost-saving' option for households by implementing a package of financial incentives, including exemptions from purchase tax and VAT; more affordable insurance; exemptions from road and ferry tolls; free parking and re-charging in public charging spots; and the ability to drive in bus lanes – all of which are in accordance with EU state aid.

energypost Article: [On the road: EU goes for efficient and electric, ponders biofuels](#) (26/06/2015)

The European Commission's strategy for decarbonising the road transport sector is finally taking shape: Brussels wants efficiency first, electrification second but it is less clear about biofuels.

Waste



European Parliament Press Release: [Circular economy: “systemic change” needed to address resource scarcity](#) (17/06/2015)

Binding waste-reduction targets, revamped ecodesign legislation and measures to break the link between growth and the use of natural resources are the chief demands set out in a resolution passed by environment MEPs, who call on the Commission to table new legislation by the end of 2015. “It is a vital step for the EU to use resources more efficiently and to reduce our resource dependency and also to bring savings in material costs. Smart ecodesign of products also bears in mind repairing, reusing and recycling products,” said the lead MEP, Sirpa Pietikäinen, after her resolution was adopted by the environment committee by 56 votes to 5, with 5 abstentions.

EurActiv Article: [EU's circular economy to use power of tech innovation like Uber](#) (26/06/2015)

European Commission Press Release: [Commission sends statement of objections to suspected participants in car battery recycling cartel](#) (24/06/2015)

The European Commission has informed five lead recycling companies that it suspects them of having participated in a purchasing cartel for scrap lead-acid batteries, in breach of EU antitrust rules. Concerns are that, from 2009 to 2012, five lead recycling companies participated in a cartel aimed at fixing the purchase prices for scrap lead-acid batteries in Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands. If established, this behaviour would violate EU rules that prohibit anticompetitive business practices such as collusion on prices and market sharing (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

Water



European Parliament Infographic: [Potential benefits of EU water legislation559477_EN.pdf](#) (16/06/2015)

The Water Framework Directive set an ambitious target of achieving ‘good’ ecological status for all Europe’s rivers by 2015. Today however, 50% of European surface water is of poor ecological status and the chemical status of 40% is ‘unknown’. With better implementation of the legislation, and reaching the target of good ecological status for all European water bodies, the benefits would be at least €2.8 billion a year.

European Parliament Press Release: [Right2water citizens’ initiative: Commission must act, say MEPs](#) (25/06/2015)

The European Commission’s weak response to the first EU citizens’ initiative (ECI) petition, on the “Right2Water”, could discredit the ECI system, warn Environment Committee MEPs in a resolution. ECIs enable citizens to ask the Commission to propose laws in areas within its competence, if they can muster at least one million signatures from at least a quarter of EU member states. “Almost 2 million citizens signed this ECI and the Commission’s response was simply not good enough. Citizens have serious and legitimate concerns regarding the privatisation of water services which I have highlighted in my report. Water is a human right, not a commodity and should not be treated as such”, said lead MEP Lynn Boylan, whose report was approved by 38 votes to 22, with 6 abstentions.

European Environment Agency Press Release: [Europe’s seas: productive, but not healthy or clean](#) (29/06/2015)

A new report published by the European Environment Agency (EEA) shows that, despite some improvements, the way we use our seas remains unsustainable and threatens not only the productivity of our seas, but also our wellbeing. Human activities and climate change are increasingly putting a number of pressures on Europe’s seas, the cumulative effects of which threaten the functioning and resilience of marine ecosystems.

The EEA’s Report can be accessed [here](#).

Events



1 May-31 October

Event: EXPO 2015

Topic/Title: Feeding the planet: energy for life

Organisation: Bureau International des Expositions ([BIE](#))

Venue: Milan, Italy

[More information/EU at EXPO Milano website](#)

14 July

Event: Live Panel Debate

Topic/Title: GMOs: on or off the menu?

Organisation: www.vieuws.no, sponsored by [COCERAL](#), [FEDIOL](#) and [FEFAC](#)

Venue: [online](#)

24-28 August

Event: Summer Programme on International and European Environmental Law

Topic/Title: International & European Environmental Law: The Future We Choose

Organisation: [T.M.C. Asser Institute](#)

Venue: T.M.C Asser Instituut, R.J. Schimmelpennincklaan 20-22, The Hague, the Netherlands

[More information/Draft programme \(.PDF\)](#)

2-4 September

Event: Conference

Topic/Title: Effectiveness of Environmental Law

Organisation: European Environmental Law Forum ([EELF](#))

Venue: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales et Communautaires ([CERIC](#)), University of Aix/Marseille, Aix en Provence, France

[More information/Programme \(.PDF\)](#)

Colofon

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