



Better implementation of EU environmental rules protects human health and supports economic growth

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Today, the Commission published the fourth [Environmental Implementation Review](#). It supports environmental enforcement and raises awareness about the importance of EU environmental rules to ensure prosperity, competitiveness and environmental security in the European Union.

The costs of non-implementation of EU environmental laws through air and water pollution, nature degradation and waste are estimated at €180 billion per year for the EU. That is approximately 1% of the EU Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Environmental implementation can reduce these costs while ensuring a level playing field for companies across the EU single market.

This [Review](#) identifies common trends at EU level, based on the individual country reports [of the 27 EU Member States](#). The review includes a wide range of information about how well the Member States are protecting the quality of the air citizens breathe, the water they drink and the nature they enjoy. Furthermore, the review spells out concrete priority actions for improvement in each Member State.

State of implementation

The report shows a pressing need to improve the implementation of EU environmental law implementation.

- **Circular economy:** while some Member States are making good progress in using resources as effectively as possible when producing goods and services, many are still at risk of missing the 2025 recycling targets. For example, the report finds that several Member States should improve waste prevention and rehabilitate substandard landfills.
- **Water:** urgent action is needed to meet EU goals on freshwater quality and quantity and to mitigate the growing risk of water scarcity and drought. Member States need to make better use of available EU funds to collect and treat urban wastewater.
- **Biodiversity:** loss of biodiversity continues to prevail over recovery. This is mainly due to the change of land use for agricultural purposes and agricultural intensification. Member States need to improve the mainstreaming of nature protection across other policies and speed up the implementation of nature legislation.
- **Air pollution:** despite considerable progress, the level of air pollutants is still too high in many Member States. This poses serious concern to citizens' health. Air quality can be improved by switching to sustainable mobility powered by renewables, improving energy efficiency, introducing low-emission agricultural techniques, including for livestock, manure and fertiliser management.
- **Climate:** adaptation efforts in each Member State need to be intensified to cope with the increasing climate change impacts. While the EU has managed to decouple emissions of greenhouse gases from economic growth, several Member States have difficulties with the implementation of emission trading system for buildings, road transport and small industry.

Investments, human capital and good governance

The Commission has made several EU funds available for Member States to cover their investment needs, amounting to roughly €122 billion per year, across environmental objectives and priorities. Most of the Member States need to make further use of these funds to reinforce Member States' capacity to deliver effective implementation. In terms of **environmental governance**, there is still room for most Member States to further improve the public's access to courts to challenge decisions,

acts or omissions, particularly in the areas of planning relating to water, nature and/or air quality.

Background

The Commission has consistently pursued the monitoring and implementation of environmental legislation. The first Environmental Implementation Review was adopted in February 2017, and it was followed by the [2019](#) and the [2022 editions](#). These reviews work alongside the [Commission's Better Regulation policy](#) which focuses on improving implementation of existing legislation and policies. Since the outset, many Member States have organised national EIR dialogues on the priority themes identified in their reports. Regional and local authorities and key stakeholders have also been mobilised in many cases.

For More Information

- [Fourth Environmental Implementation Review](#)
- [Country reports](#)
- [Interactive map and dashboard](#) on environmental infringements per Member State and topic
- [Overview of the costs of not implementing EU environmental law](#)
- Information on the environmental investments needs and gaps is available on an [interactive map](#).

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Quote(s):

"Investing in the implementation of environmental law is very good value for money. This is a timely reminder that implementation and competitiveness go hand in hand to protect our environment and the resources we need for the transition and for future generations."

Jessika Roswall, Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy - 07/07/2025

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