Governing climate change in a new era of polycentricity:

Perspectives from the European Environment Agency

European Environment Agency

Outline

1. EEA's role in the environment and climate governance
2. The five propositions on polycentric governance:
   - EU's role in the transition to a more polycentric approach?
   - Opportunities and challenges for EU from greater policentricity
3. Conclusions

The European Environment Agency (EEA)

The EEA is:

- an independent EU agency
- analysing, assessing and providing information
- an interface between science and policy
- dependent upon strong country networks to carry out its work

The EEA is not:

- an environmental regulator checking compliance with environmental laws
- developing or proposing new legislation
- a funding body

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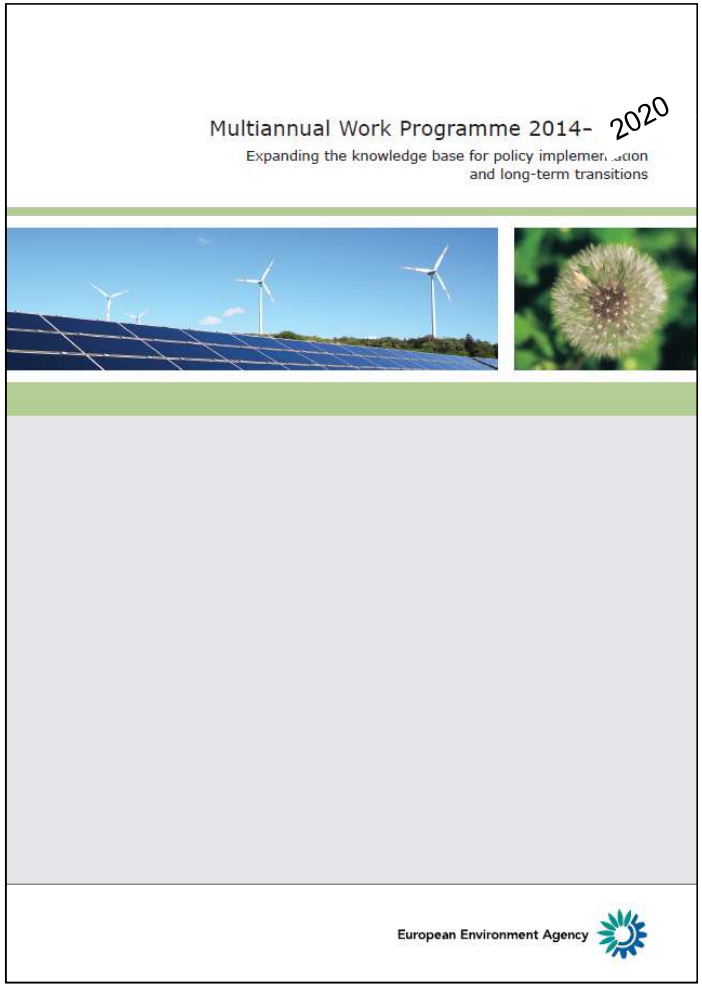
Multiannual work programme 2014-2020



Supporting the developing policy framework

Strategic areas

1. Informing policy implementation
2. Assessing systemic challenges
3. Knowledge co-creation, sharing and use
4. EEA management

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1. Informing policy implementation

Air pollution, transport and noise

Industrial Pollution

Climate change mitigation and energy

Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation

Water management, resources and ecosystems

Marine and maritime, fisheries and coastal

Biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture and forests

Urban, land use and soil

Waste and material resources

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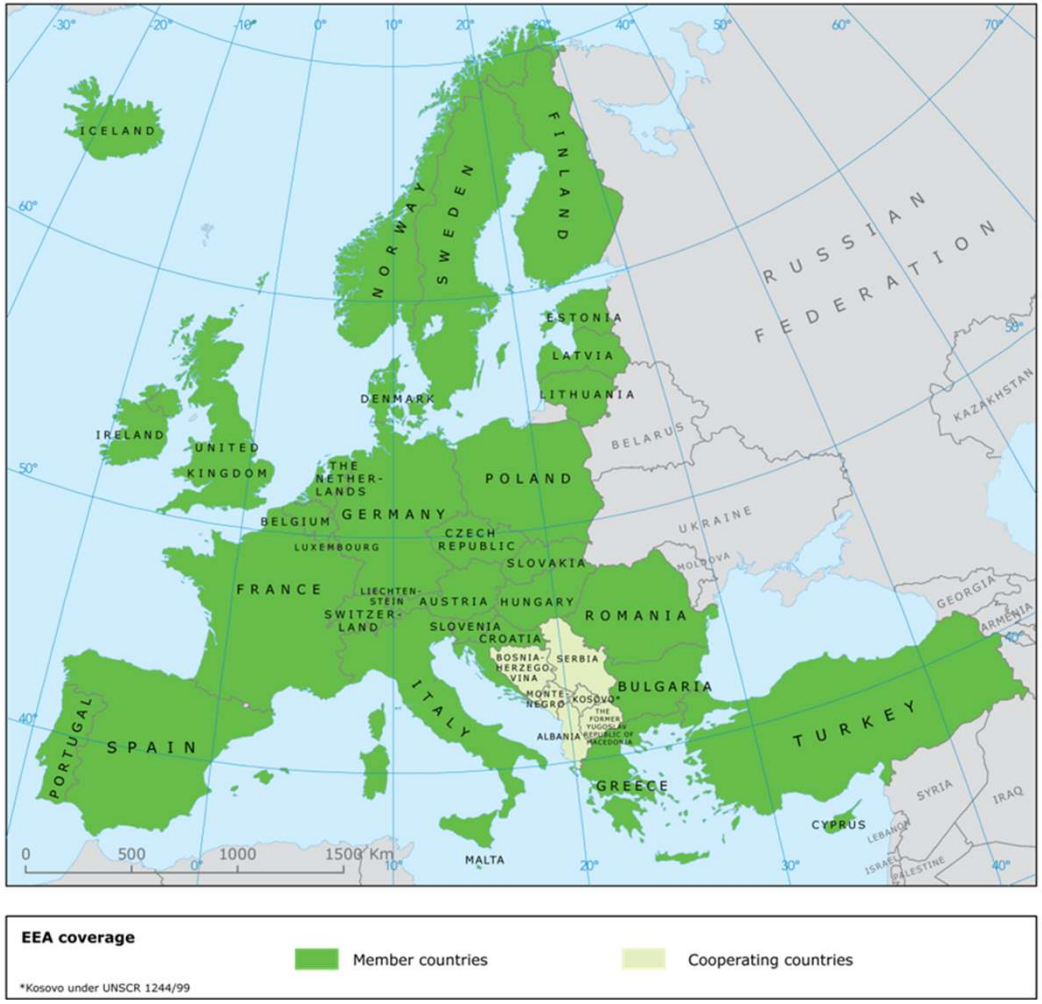
The EEA member and cooperating countries



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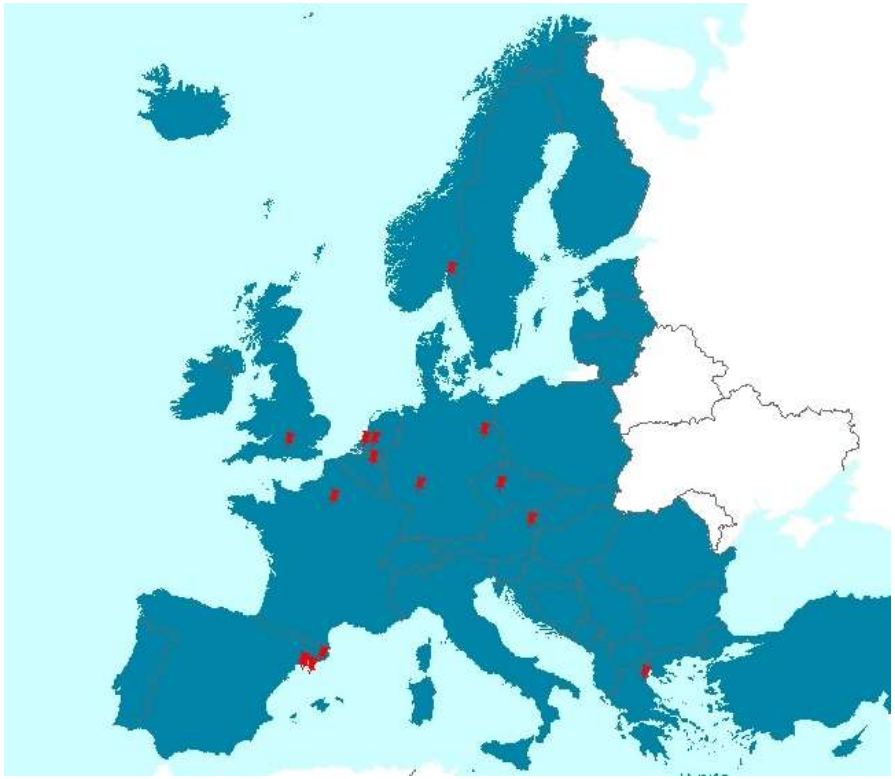
Eionet National Reference Centres (NRCs)

Environment and agriculture	Air quality
Biodiversity data and information	Biodiversity and ecosystems indicators and assessment
Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation	Communication
Environment and energy	Environmental information systems
Forward looking information and services	Environment and health
Industrial pollution	Land cover
Land use and spatial planning	Marine, coastal and maritime
Mitigation of air pollution and climate change	Noise
Resource-efficient economy and the environment	State of environment
Soil	Environment and transport
Waste	Water emissions
Water quality and ecological status	Water quantity

European Topic Centre on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation (ETC/ACM)

A consortium of 14 European organisations, under contract with EEA



- Netherlands Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) **– lead organisation**
- Norwegian Institute for Air Research (NILU)
- Umweltbundesamt Wien (UBA-V)
- Czech Hydrometeorological Institute (CHMI)
- Öko-Institute
- Öko-Recherche
- Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)
- Aether
- Emisia
- Institut National de l'Environnement Industriel et des Risques (INERIS)
- Institute of Environmental Assessment and Water Research (CSIC/IDAEA)
- 4sfera Innova
- Universitat Autónoma de Barcalona (UAB)
- VITO

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1. Local action

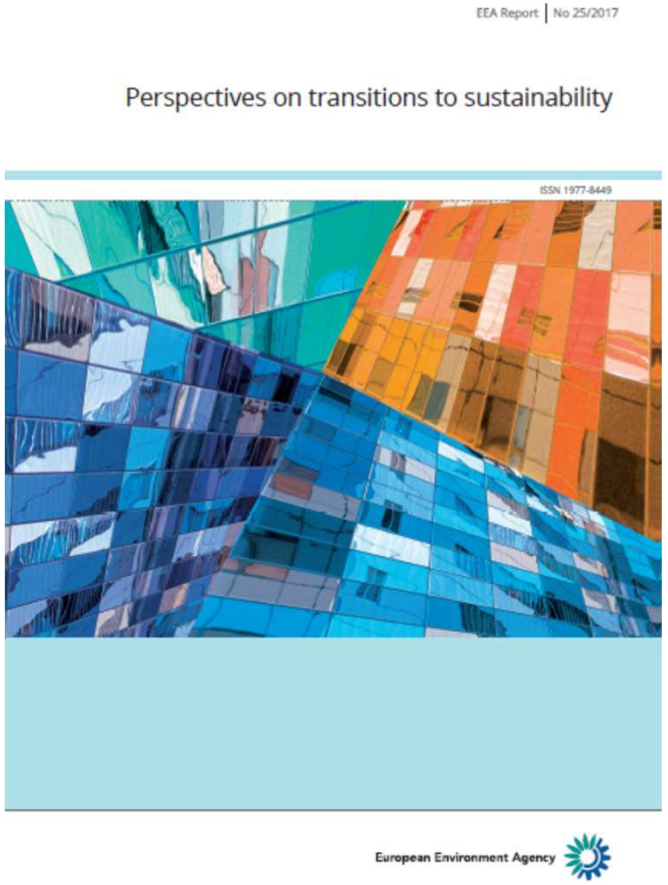
Governance initiatives are likely to take off and prosper at local level, through processes of self-organisation

- Inherent to a systemic approach to sustainability transitions
- Deep decarbonisation requires fundamental changes, including behaviour
- Self-organisation sufficient or could be enhanced by 'drivers'?
- Positive or negative *effects or side effects* on climate change

1. Local action – EU's contribution

Governance initiatives are likely to take off and prosper at local level, through processes of self-organisation

- Highlight scale of social, economic and political efforts needed to meet EU commitments under the Paris Agreement
- Support to certain local governance initiatives (Covenant of Mayors, CDP)
- Awareness raising campaigns / communication
- Analysing behavioural change



1. Local action – opportunities and challenges

Governance initiatives are likely to take off and prosper at local level, through processes of self-organisation

- Can enhance the effects of EU/national level action - mitigation potential?
- Need for (further) public intervention?
  - Motivations and triggers of local action?
    Need/possibility to "activate" them? Who? At which level (subsidiarity)?
    What types of incentives?
  - Awareness: communicate simply on complex issues?
    Reactions against behavioural prescription
- Evaluating positive/negative (side) effects of local action:
  need for a monitoring system? Should local action be accountable?

2. Mutual adjustment

Constituent units are likely to spontaneously develop collaborations with one another, producing more trusting interrelationships

- Shared goals
- Double benefits of public debate/consultation: improving acceptability and making plans more effective (e.g. long-term low emission strategies)
- Are governance actors always aware of each other? How do they communicate and interact?

2. Mutual adjustment – EU's contribution

Constituent units are likely to spontaneously develop collaborations with one another, producing more trusting interrelationships

- "Better regulation" to improve decision making: stakeholder consultations on policy proposals
- Push for action at ICAO and IMO to fill UNFCCC gaps
- Sharing of experiences on national policy implementation between Member States (technical working groups)
- Capacity building activities on climate change, within / outside EU
- EEA as a *networking* organisation to foster exchanges across EU

2. Mutual adjustment – opportunities and challenges

Constituent units are likely to spontaneously develop collaborations with one another, producing more trusting interrelationships

- Energy Union: towards a more optimised energy system through regional / transboundary cooperation, e.g. peer review of draft national energy and climate plans before adjustments of final plans
- To what extent do local/regional actors adjust to EU/national action? And to what extent do EU policies account for local action (subsidiarity)?
- Do we know well the types of interactions between EU and certain types of actors, e.g. NGOs, businesses, cities, etc.?
- Need for monitoring?

3. Experimentation

The willingness and capacity to experiment is likely to facilitate governance innovation and learning about what works

- National policy = experiment?
- Dynamism of local-level experiments (e.g. urban transport)
- Transparency/reporting on experiments and their results
- Limited attractiveness of ex-post evaluation activities by politicians – too much focus on summative evaluation?
- Risk of failure: is there an ideal level for experimenting (acceptability of failure vs lower accountability)?

3. Experimentation – EU's contribution

The willingness and capacity to experiment is likely to facilitate governance innovation and learning about what works

- Monitoring Mechanism: national policies and measures
  - Key features (objectives, status, implementation period, etc.)
  - Type of implementing entities
  - Ex-post, ex-ante, costs and benefits, indicators
  - Few insights on subnational experiences
- Promotion of exchanges of experiences
- Support to innovation projects (NER 300)

3. Experimentation – Opportunities and challenges

The willingness and capacity to experiment is likely to facilitate governance innovation and learning about what works

- Better learning through:
  - Improved **transparency** of national reporting → communication platforms
  - Improved evaluation methodologies
  - Proper dissemination of results, e.g. inventories of policy evaluations
- Insufficient identification of intervention logic on which formative evaluation can be based
- Which conditions for upscaling/replication ('national circumstances')?
- Which governance of policy evaluation?

4. The importance of trust

Trust is likely to build up more quickly when units can self-organise, thus increasing collective ambitions

- Failure of Copenhagen COP15, success of Paris COP21: trust a key success factor, built in and out of UNFCCC process

4. The importance of trust – EU contribution

Trust is likely to build up more quickly when units can self-organise, thus increasing collective ambitions

- Robust and transparent monitoring, reporting and verification system implemented within the EU and **reviewed** by international experts
- At international level, vis-à-vis UNFCCC Parties: (over)achievement of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol (2008-2012) and 2020

4. The importance of trust – Opportunities & ch.

Trust is likely to build up more quickly when units can self-organise, thus increasing collective ambitions

- International level: Talanoa Dialogue for raising ambition
- Energy Union Governance:
  - no pre-determined national-level ambition for renewable and energy efficiency 2030 targets → shift to a more bottom-up approach to determining national objectives and relevant policies
  - Encourages cross-Member State cooperation
  - Will this approach prove sufficient? Robust centralised monitoring needed to ensure collective goals are met
    → need for robust monitoring and transparency rules

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5. Overarching rules

Local initiatives are likely to work best when they are bound by a set of overarching rules that enshrine the goals to be achieved and/or allow conflicts to be resolved

- Not central authority in polycentric systems, but…
  climate change mitigation objectives are guided by science
- Overall clarity at international level:
  - UNFCCC and Paris Agreement objectives and principles
  - Monitoring rules GHG emissions (IPCC)
- Hierarchy of norms: UNFCCC > EU/countries > …
- Although the global goal is clear, a *fair* burden-sharing is not necessarily (between countries, sectors, actors)

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5. Overarching rules – EU contribution

Local initiatives are likely to work best when they are bound by a set of overarching rules that enshrine the goals to be achieved and/or allow conflicts to be resolved

- Full adherence to, and implementation of, UNFCCC rules and principles
- Translation of global objectives given by UNFCCC or IPCC into EU objectives (2050) and laws (2020, 2030)

5. Overarching rules – Opportunities and challenges

Local initiatives are likely to work best when they are bound by a set of overarching rules that enshrine the goals to be achieved and/or allow conflicts to be resolved

- Paris Agreement rulebook still to be determined, essential for proper implementation by countries – but how relevant or applicable will these be for local action?
- Broad principles might be difficult to translate or implement in a meaningful way at local level, e.g. to settle disputes
  → To which further extent should EU normalise?
- Compliance system at national level not applicable at local level?

Conclusions – further challenges for the EU

1. **Local action**: clarify need for *driving* local action and better understand push and pull factors which EU could activate
2. **Mutual adjustment**: analyse how Member States will *effectively* collaborate and improve each other's national climate and energy plans
3. **Experimentation**: further facilitate cooperation and learning through better and more transparent *dissemination* of policies and outcomes
4. **Trust**: assess effectiveness of the shift to a more bottom-up approach at EU level (Energy Union Governance)
5. **Overarching rules**: translate Paris rulebook into meaningful principles at EU level

Conclusions – polycentric approaches for EEA

- A rigorous analysis of evolving climate governance
- A useful tool to understand (description / explanation) current evolutions of climate governance
- Feeds into EEA's current thinking and approach to long-term sustainability transitions and their complexity (systems)
- A pointer towards further action needs (prescription) at EU, EEA, MS and academic level

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