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Recommendations for a holistic 7th EAP

Lessons learned from 6th EAP

As the comprehensive assessment of the 6th EAP points out, the most important shortcoming of the 6th EAP was that it paid limited attention to comprehensive, cross-sectoral policy integration and thus improved mutual coherence between the environment and other sectors only to a very small extent. This is also true for the links among the four thematic areas (climate change, nature and biodiversity, natural resources and waste, and environment and health), which were not sufficiently explored.

At the same time progress towards the objectives in the four thematic areas and the added value of 6th EAP was variable due to various internal and external factors and opportunity structures, including in particular shifting political priorities and inadequate implementation of EU environmental legislation.

These shortcomings lead to the conclusions that the 6th EAP did not take the right approach to develop holistic policies that can make significant progress towards environmental and socio-economic goals at the same time. In this regard it is also highly questionable if the main challenge lies in the enforcement of the EU environmental (and other) legislation when reaching the environmental targets, or if this legislation provides appropriate tools at all to achieve them.

All in all, the 7th EAP needs to build upon new foundations to avoid these mistakes.

New approach for a new EAP

As a starting point, the 7th EAP shall rigorously review all EU legislation from sustainability point of view, also including the environmental acquis.

The 7th EAP shall apply a flexible framework to address the main pressures on the environment. While **continuously decreasing the total environmental pressure** as the bottomline, flexibility is required to always set ambitious and realistic objectives in order to respond to the changing ecological and social conditions and new scientific results.

The new EAP shall focus on **all elements of the DPSIR framework** (drivers, pressures, state, impacts and responses) in order to be effective and apply long term solutions instead of short term fixes. The CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020 can be considered as an example of building upon the DPSIR framework.

Consequently the EAP shall develop **responses on all elements of the DPSIR framework:**

- Drivers
 - on cultural level: awareness raising and public debate about wellbeing and development;
 - on institutional level: governance for sustainability,
 - on structural level: developing integrated policy tools that can address environmental issues and contribute to social objectives as well, incentives for changing the production and consumption patterns)
- Pressures (focusing on space use, resource use, pollution including the spreading of

- alien genotypes)
- State (conservation and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, remediation)
- Impact (enhancing benefits to all from ecosystem services, strengthening livelihoods, sharing benefits on national, European and global levels)
- Effectiveness of responses (monitoring, knowledge management, capacity building, etc.)

As the bottomline of future European environmental policy, efforts shall ensure that the total environmental pressure decreases on European level and the EU's global ecological footprint is reduced year by year. This requires a holistic approach, where all human activities related to resource and space use are considered and the shifting of environmental pressure is prevented.

This shall stop the current landscape polarisation, where site protection and Natura 2000 network goes parallel with further intensification of land use elsewhere. The growing intensification and space use creates growing pressure on protected areas as well, which cannot be tackled through the targeted biodiversity policies.

Also, a holistic resource policy shall aim the absolute reduction of resource use, instead of focusing on efficiency improvement, which at the end increases resource use (rebound effect on macroeconomic level) and extends environmental problems instead of preventing them. Fragmented environmental policies also shift environmental pressures in space or time if they do not address the drivers. The target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions instead of reducing energy and in particular fossil energy resource use creates conflicts with other sectors through the promotion of biomass and biofuels (or questionable technologies, such as carbon capture and storage). By this the environmental pressure is shifted from the atmosphere to the ecosystems, with serious social consequences through indirect land use change.

In conclusion the new EAP shall propose policies, which can address space use and resource use in an integrated manner (e.g. quota schemes for non-renewable energy use and land use). Such policies will not lose their relevance under changing political circumstances and public attention, as it happened with some thematic focus areas of the 6th EAP.

The applied integrated policy tools for a sustainable economy shall not only address the environmental objectives, but also contribute to the social aims and identify economic benefits:

- Increase employment through favouring human labour to machine labour/increased resource use
- Revive the countryside through promoting extensive land use with higher human labour need
- Ensure access to resources to the poor and reduce inequities in resource use within Europe and globally
- Increase the competitiveness of European businesses through early adaptation in view of increasing resource scarcity
- Decrease EU's resource dependency through decreased resource use
- Improve the EU's credibility in international discussions about a transition to a global green economy, fighting climate change and biodiversity loss

If the new EAP is able to address not only environmental, but social aims as well, while identifying economic benefits, it can provide a basis for engaging other sectors and stakeholders. This should be done through **integrated tools** aiming at environmental and social aims at the same time **and not by additional measures**, which create inconsistency and incoherence and dilutes the focus! The EAP shall create a neutral policy platform for stakeholders to discuss and develop broader consensus on the integrated tools, thus depoliticising the issues.

CEEweb for Biodiversity is a network of non-governmental organizations in the Central and Eastern European region. Our mission is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.