



Annual Activity Report 2025



Directorate-General for Environment



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DG ENVIRONMENT IN BRIEF

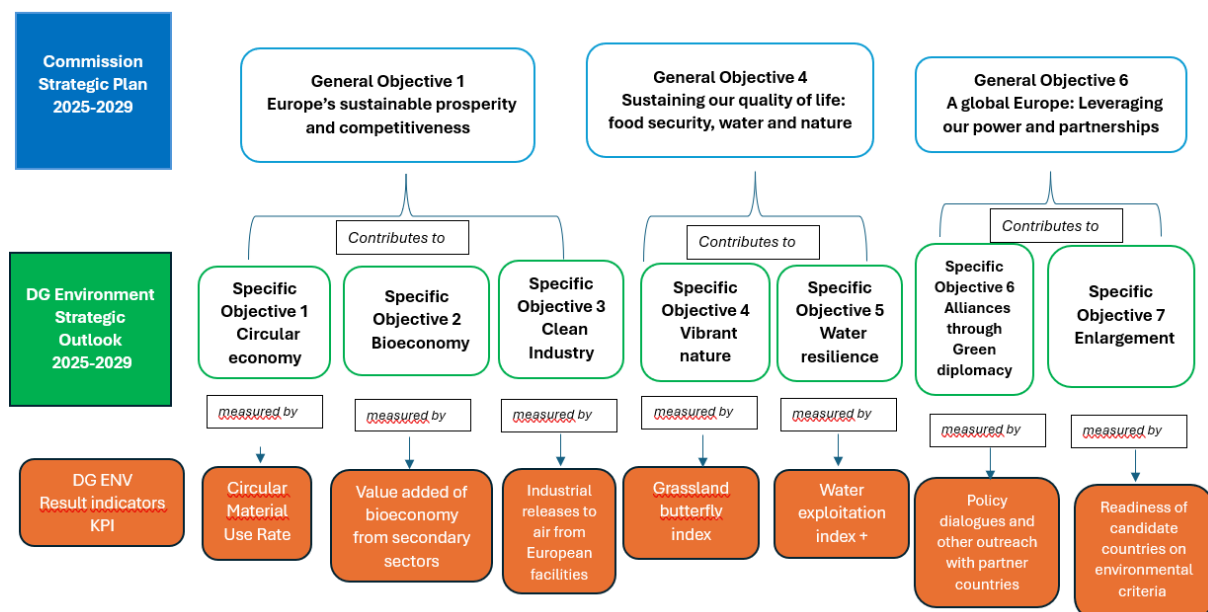
The EU Treaties establish that Union policy on the environment shall aim to preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment, protect human health and promote prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources. They mandate that environmental protection is integrated in other EU policies and activities and give the Commission the role to coordinate and represent the EU in international environmental agreements and institutions. They also entrust the Commission with ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of EU law.

In line with the above, the key mission of DG Environment (DG ENV) is to contribute to a fair clean transition that enables EU citizens to live well, within the planet's ecological limits, based on a resilient, competitive circular economy, where biodiversity and natural ecosystems are protected and restored, pollution and environment-related health risks are minimised. DG ENV also defends environmental objectives in international fora.

Environmental policy is an area of shared competence between the EU and the Member States, underpinned by the subsidiarity, precautionary and polluter pays principles. The DG uses a variety of instruments to achieve its objectives, from legislation to market-based instruments, finance, awareness raising and other incentives. Global action is increasingly relevant including for an economic and regulatory level playing field.

Beyond the LIFE programme funding environmental policy projects, DG ENV helps mobilise financing for environmental policy priorities from EU Structural Funds, the Common Agricultural Policy, Horizon Europe, and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, Recovery and Resilience Facility. The DG works in close collaboration with other Commission departments and decentralised agencies, in particular the European Environment Agency and the European Chemicals Agency. As per February 2026, there were 630 members of staff working in DG ENV in total, in six directorates.

The framework below, defined by DG ENV's strategic outlook for 2025-2029 ([2025 Management Plan](#)), has been used for performance reporting in this Annual Activity Report.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Key results and progress towards achieving the Commission's general objectives and department's specific objectives

During the first full year of the 2024-2029 Commission mandate, DG Environment set out to advance the Commission's general objectives of sustainable prosperity and competitiveness, quality of life, and a global Europe, focusing on further developing the circular economy, implementing recent and established legislation, and simplifying the environmental acquis.

DG ENV continued its groundwork of boosting the circular economy, which contributes to long-term competitiveness and economic security by promoting efficient resource use, decarbonisation and clean transition. In the work plan for the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, the Commission set out the priority product groups for which concrete rules will be defined from 2026. A circular economy package was adopted in December 2025 aiming to boost investment and global competitiveness of Europe's plastic recycling sector, while preparations of the 2026 Circular Economy Act have intensified, involving wide stakeholder and Member States consultation. The New European Bauhaus Communication and the related Council Recommendation proposal contributed to the Commission's emergent workstream on affordable and circular housing. DG ENV prepared the entry into force of the revised Waste Framework Directive and the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, which will further harmonise rules across the single market, among others on extended producer responsibility, recycled content in plastic packaging, and recyclability. Delegated and implementing acts, notably on packaging and batteries advanced policy implementation and investment certainty in the circular economy, thereby also strengthening market demand for recyclates.

DG ENV prepared a new EU Bioeconomy Strategy adopted by the College in November 2025 with the aim to fulfil the growth potential and competitive edge of this sector. The measures outlined in the strategy will continue to be rolled out in 2026 to scale up investment, develop bioeconomy lead markets, secure the sustainability of biomass supply, and foster global partnerships and value chains.

To advance DG ENV's objective "clean industry", the 2025 Mid-term Review of the Zero Pollution Action Plan highlight the need for effective implementation of the recently adopted legislation. In 2025, implementing and delegated acts made the revised Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) more effective, accompanied by conclusions on best available techniques providing industry with more planning certainty in chemicals, mining, and materials processing. DG ENV contributed to the Chemical Omnibus package led by DG Single Market and Industry (GROW), while the Chemical Industry Action Plan adopted by the College in July 2025 aimed to support the transition of Europe's chemical industry to a clean and circular economy model. The Action Plan also sets out the next steps on perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Wider but targeted restrictions on PFAS will be prepared to tackle their release into the environment while ensuring

their continued and safe deployment in essential use applications. A restriction of all PFAS in firefighting foams was adopted in 2025, addressing one of the main PFAS emission sources. The One Substance, One Assessment legislative package (OSOA) was adopted by the co-legislators in 2025. Its implementation will support the protection of environment and human health with improved governance, predictability and transparency for industry. The Regulation on preventing plastic pellets losses entered into force on 17 December. It sets requirements on handling, transport and risk management, thus reducing microplastic pollution.

Nature and biodiversity protection was another area where DG ENV deployed its resources primarily on implementation. This included preparation of secondary legislation under the Nature Restoration Law and close dialogue with Member State to support implementation and the preparation of National Restoration Plans. The Soil Monitoring Directive was adopted in 2025, for which DG ENV is supporting implementation. DG ENV also contributed to the simplification package of the Common Agricultural Policy. A Roadmap for Nature Credits was adopted by the College in July 2025, setting a framework to develop new private investment sources for nature protection. To fulfil the EU's international biodiversity obligations, DG ENV prepared the 7th national report to the Convention on Biodiversity, being the first Party to do so. Furthermore, the College in spring 2025 adopted a proposal for a directive to implement the international agreement on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The Water Resilience Strategy adopted by the College in June 2025 sets out a comprehensive framework to restore and protect the water cycle, ensure access to clean and affordable water, and create a sustainable water-smart economy in Europe. Structured Water Dialogues with Member States on the implementation of the water acquis were launched to support the roll-out of the strategy and will continue into 2026. The Water Resilience Forum of December 2025 gave an opportunity to discuss water resilience challenges with a range of stakeholders. In 2025, DG ENV facilitated the successful negotiation of the co-legislators on the revised Water Framework, Groundwater, and Environmental Quality Standards Directives. The conclusions of the evaluation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive led to the start of its revision aimed to improve maritime spatial planning, reduce administrative complexity, and strengthen pollution protection e.g. of the seafloor. The adoption of the implementing Regulation under the Nitrates Directive on Recovered Nitrogen from manure (RENURE) will help reduce costs for farmers and lower the EU's dependence on imported fertilisers.






At the international level, DG Environment contributed to the EU's efforts to uphold constructive and efficient global and multilateral governance, such as in UN institutions and the G7 and G20. DG ENV represented the EU in numerous conferences of parties to international agreements, among others the Minamata Convention that banned the manufacture and trade of mercury in dental amalgam, and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law, the first internationally binding instrument of its kind. DG ENV fostered and led coalitions of like-minded partner countries, notably on biodiversity financing under the Global Biodiversity Framework or on the negotiations on a global plastics treaty. The co-legislators adopted a revised EU Deforestation Regulation in December 2025 to further simplify and facilitate its effective implementation, while continuing outreach with global partners to prepare the entry into force. DG Environment also contributed to the Commission's enlargement policy by supporting accession candidates in preparing for new policy area like circular economy or water resilience. This includes Ukraine, which DG ENV also

assisted in view of the environmental damages caused by Russia's war of aggression and by helping implement the Ukraine Facility.

In December, the Commission presented a comprehensive environmental omnibus package to simplify legislation in the area of industrial emissions, circular economy, environmental assessments and digital geospatial data. Beyond the omnibus, DG Environment developed and started to unroll a systematic approach to stress-testing environmental law. It continued the preparatory work on digital tools such as the Digital Product Passport to make policy implementation and compliance easier and more effective, as well as on the Green Deal Data Space to boost data usability in support of sustainable business models. The DG continued its strategic enforcement approach, including with the aim to strengthen integrity of the single market.

Many of these activities have been achieved in 2025 through an active and dynamic engagement of DG Environment with the co-legislators in a complex and rapidly evolving environment for our policies, including important institutional changes in both the European Parliament and the Commission.

B. Key performance indicators

KPI #	KPI Title	Baseline (2024)	2025		Interim milestone (2027)	Target (2029)
Specific Objective 1.1: Circular Economy						
1.1	Circular material use rate	12.1%	12.2%		Increase	24.0%
Specific Objective 1.2: Bioeconomy						
1.2	Value added of bioeconomy from secondary sectors	542 billion euro	583 billion euro		Increase	Increase
Specific Objective 1.3: Clean Industry						
1.3	Industrial releases to air from European facilities	55% PAHs, -34% NMVOC, -39% Hg, -53% Cd, -76% Pb, -57% Ni	-61% PAHs, -41% NMVOC, -60% Hg, -61% Cd, -83% Pb, -		Decrease	Decrease
Specific Objective 4.1: Nature restoration and protection						
4.1	Grassland butterfly index	68.42	63.49		Increase	Increase
Specific Objective 4.2: Water Resilience						
4.2	Water Exploitation Index +	5.76%	5.15%		Decrease	Decrease
Specific Objective 6.1: Coalitions with like-minded countries through global leadership						
6.1	Commission policy dialogues and other outreach activities with partner countries on global environmental issues and EU environmental policy	High level of outreach activities	Kept up outreach level, targeted most effective interlocutor level and most relevant partner countries		Keep stable and targeted	Keep stable and targeted
Specific Objective 6.1: Supporting candidate countries on environmental acquis						
6.2	Consultations with candidate countries on environmental acquis	High level of regular consultations	Kept up high level of effective regular consultations		Keep stable	Keep stable

The colour-coded (left-right) bar visually represents the evolution of the indicator in comparison with the interim milestone. Green (bar on the right) indicates that the indicator is moving in the correct direction, whereas red (bar on the left) shows that the indicator needs to change course. The baseline of KPI 4.1 differs from the baseline shown in the 2025 Management Plan due to a change in methodology in 2025, which necessitated recalculation of the index. The unfavourable evolution of KPI 4.1 predates the new policy measures under this specific objective (as latest available data is from 2024), whose impact can be expected to unfold over time.

C. Key conclusions on internal control and financial management

DG Environment has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, including those from supervised entities to which it has entrusted budget implementation tasks, as well as the observations and recommendations issued by the internal auditor and the European Court of Auditors.

The transition in 2025 to the Commission's new accounting system, SUMMA, has required the adjustment to a new system and has impacted budget implementation tasks, processes and financial management activities, particularly during the first part of the year. This has required careful management to ensure the same data quality and monitoring as in previous years.

All the above elements have been assessed to determine their impact on management's assurance about the achievement of the control objectives. Please refer for further details to section 2 on Internal Control and Financial Management.

In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated. The Director-General, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation, has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

D. Provision of information to the Commissioner

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the Directorate-General for Environment and the Commissioner on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration have been brought to the attention of Commissioner Roswall, responsible for environment, water resilience and a competitive circular economy.

1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT

General Objective 1: Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

DG Specific Objective 1: The EU circular economy optimises the value of resources thanks to a well-functioning single market for waste and secondary raw materials, increasingly sustainable products and services

The implementation of circular economy policies aim to optimise and maximise the use of materials and assets through three key levers: (i) improve resource efficiency, (ii) increase recycling and reduce landfilling and incineration, and (iii) reduce resource flows, including through higher durability and re-use of products. It is a means of boosting the Union's economic security, including access to critical minerals, improving competitiveness and mitigating climate change, which is emphasised by the 2025 Competitiveness Compass and the Clean Industrial Deal.

On 2 July 2025, Commissioner Roswall held a Clean Industrial Dialogue on Circularity and on 29 October 2025 a High-Level Policy Dialogue on boosting the circularity of plastics. The **Circular Economy Package** adopted on 23 December 2025 focuses on the circular transition in the plastics sector. It sets up concrete short-term actions to relieve pressure on the plastics sector and encourages investment and innovation more broadly. The three main measures include a draft implementing act laying down the Union-wide end-of-waste criteria for plastic waste, a draft implementing act on recycled content, including rules for chemical recycling, and the development of a pilot on Trans-Regional Circularity Hubs under the Competitiveness Coordination Tool.

DG Environment (together with DG GROW) launched preparatory work for the **Circular Economy Act** to accelerate the EU's transition towards a circular economy. The public consultation and call for evidence were conducted between 1 August and 6 November 2025 with roughly 1 000 companies, associations and citizens providing inputs. A targeted stakeholder consultation was also conducted between 6 November and 4 December 2025, to which roughly 200 respondents provided detailed inputs. An SME panel to cater for the specificities that SMEs face is running until 16 March 2026, and there will be future structured dialogues.

The **review of the Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)** will be one of the key pillars in the Circular Economy Act, taking into account the [evaluation of the WEEE Directive](#) published on 2 July 2025. The evaluation highlighted, among others, the

importance of the collection of WEEE, recovery of critical raw materials, and harmonisation of treatment standards as challenges.

After political agreement was reached in February 2025, the **targeted revision of the Waste Framework Directive** entered into force on 16 October 2025. It introduces common rules for extended producer responsibility (EPR) for textiles and sets binding food waste reduction targets for Member States. The revised Directive should be transposed into national laws by 17 June 2027.

DG Environment successfully facilitated the co-legislators' political agreement on the **End-of-Life Vehicles Regulation** in December 2025. The new regulation will help the transition of the automotive (and associated) industries to a circular economy, through new requirements on recycled content for plastics, steel and aluminium in vehicles, the establishment of extended producer responsibility schemes in the automotive sector, better treatment of waste fractions from end-of-life vehicles, and stricter rules on the export of non-roadworthy used vehicles.

The Commission adopted additional **implementing and delegated acts related to the circular economy** in the area of batteries and waste batteries (updating list of battery-related waste, methodology to calculate recycling efficiency and recovery of materials rates, batteries' data reporting format for Member States), Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) in electronics (certain time-limited RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances) exemptions for lead and cadmium, request to CENELEC for harmonised RoHS standard), and waste shipment (on the digitalisation of waste shipment procedures), as well as a guideline for laying down criteria for costs of cleaning up litter (Single Use Plastics). In the area of packaging, preparatory work started on key implementing and delegated acts, notably on recycled content, which will be adopted in 2026.

The [Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation](#) entered into force in 2025. It drives circularity by establishing binding requirements covering **all stages of the packaging life cycle**, from design and production to reuse, recycling and waste management. DG ENV will accompany its implementation through the adoption of implementing and delegated acts by the end of 2026, notably on recycled content, while striving to keep implementation simple.

As part of the **implementation of the waste shipment regulation** adopted in 2024, DG ENV is establishing by November 2026 a list of non-OECD countries to which exports of waste from the EU would be authorised after May 2027. The Commission received requests from 32 non-OECD countries and territories wishing to import waste from the EU, which DG ENV is assessing.

DG ENV, together with DGs GROW and ENER, is implementing the Regulation on the Ecodesign of Sustainable Products (ESPR), following the [working plan for the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and Energy Labelling](#) adopted in April 2025. The work plan defines priorities for products and horizontal requirements to be regulated through Delegated Acts and, where relevant, Implementing Acts on public procurement criteria. A complementary part of sustainable product policy are the [revised EU Ecolabel criteria for paints and varnishes](#) and the [prolongation of the validity of the EU Ecolabel criteria for several product groups](#), which the Commission adopted in December 2025.

The December 2025 [Communication “New European Bauhaus: From vision to implementation”](#) and its accompanying proposal for a Council Recommendation outlined the key actions to scale up the initiative and strengthen its role in driving clean transition and innovation in the building sector, in Europe and beyond. The New European Bauhaus was also the focus of DG ENV presence at the EU pavilion during the World Expo in Osaka, showcasing EU Green Cities as a concrete expression of the sustainable green transition.

The Enforcement action of the DG focused on ensuring correct transposition of EU waste management legislation into national law, in particular the transposition of the Waste Framework Directive, the revised Landfill Directive and the Single Use Plastic Directive. Particular attention was given to cases of persistent non-compliance, as it undermines the functioning of the EU’s secondary materials market. The Commission took additional legal action against Member States who failed to close and rehabilitate their illegal and/or substandard landfills, as well as those failing to ensure the treatment of mixed municipal waste and biowaste before landfilling. Such practices pose significant risks for human health and the environment while obstructing the development of a circular economy. Following rulings by the Court of Justice of the European Union, financial penalties totalling EUR 20 518 750 were collected from several Member States in 2025. Finally, the closure of nine infringement cases demonstrated the effectiveness of these measures in addressing identified breaches and securing compliance.

The **Key Performance Indicator** for this specific objective, the **circular material use rate**, increased from 11.8% to 12.2% in 2024. This slow improvement, still far away from the 23.2% target for 2030, underlines the policy need for new initiatives such as the Circular Economy Act, and for effective implementation of recently agreed legislation such as the End-of-Life Vehicles Regulation, the revised Waste Framework Directive, or the Ecodesign of Sustainable Products Regulation.

The annual **Green Week** conference on 3-5 June 2025 hosted debates on the circular economy. Co-organised with the European Economic and Social Committee and DG Research and Innovation (RTD), the event saw robust attendance, with around 1000 participants on-site, at least 2500 daily participants online and a dedicated journalist seminar resulting in strong coverage across European, national and local media. The Brussels conference was accompanied by hundreds of local partner events and a joint ENV/EEAS awareness-raising campaign, **ForOurPlanet**, that mobilised communities across the EU and beyond in circularity activities: collections, clothes swaps, repair shops, etc.

DG Specific Objective 2: A more circular bioeconomy enhances resource efficiency and resilience in the EU by leveraging the potential of innovation, secondary bio-based materials, and the sustainable production of primary resources.

The rate of growth of the European bioeconomy sector has outpaced that of the overall economy in the last decade (18% 2022-2021). It valorises biological resources through a strong industrial base and innovation capacity, providing solutions that advance decarbonisation, circularity, and livelihoods.

To sustain the sector’s growth and innovation potential, DG Environment led preparatory work on the new [Bioeconomy Strategy](#) adopted in November 2025. It focuses on four aspects:

scaling up innovation and investments, developing lead markets for bio-based materials and technologies, preserving ecosystems' capacity to supply biomass for the sectors' value chains, and pursuing global partnerships on standards, supply and market access for a sustainable bioeconomy. By reducing dependence on primary resources from outside the EU, such as fertilisers or their production inputs, strengthening the EU's bioeconomy sector also fosters Europe's economic security.

Commissioner Roswall convened a **stakeholder dialogue** on 16 May 2025 to support the preparation of the strategy. Stakeholders gave valuable input in particular on barriers to innovation in bioeconomy, and on how to promote sustainable supply of biomass.

DG ENV worked closely with other services on **communication activities accompanying the Bioeconomy strategy** that helped to raise awareness of the benefit of bio-based materials and products. Success stories and recorded interviews across platforms demonstrated, among others, the interconnectedness of circularity and bioeconomy principles.

The **KPI** for this specific objective, measuring the **value added from bio-based manufacturing industries**, was 583 billion euros in 2023. This represents a 6% increase of from the 2022 baseline.

DG Specific Objective 3: Industrial emissions into air, soil and water are reduced through the effective application of the EU environmental acquis, supported by innovation and investments for the use of best available techniques.

The key findings of the **second Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook** adopted on 3 March 2025 are that air pollution, the use of pesticides and risk, antimicrobial sales and plastic pollution at sea had been significantly reduced. For noise, nutrient pollution of waters, and waste, the trends are stable, whereas microplastics pollution has increased in recent years. This stocktaking fed into the preparation of the **Mid-Term Review of the Zero Pollution Action Plan** (published on 29 January 2026). It shows that Europe is firmly set on a trajectory to a cleaner environment, and implementation action now will focus on delivering clean air, oceans, freshwaters and soil, and in that course contribute to competitiveness and innovation.

DG Environment continued its support for implementing the revised **Directive on Industrial and livestock rearing Emissions** (IED), which entered into force on 4 August 2024. Work progressed on the development or update of best available techniques conclusions (BATc) and relevant BAT reference documents (BREFs) for the following sectors: ceramics, large volume inorganic chemicals, surface treatment of metals, mining, and landfills, as well as on uniform conditions for operating rules for pig and poultry farms. DG ENV engaged with Member States during the IED transposition period, notably by preparing a guidance document that addresses the most commonly raised questions concerning the revision of the IED (to be adopted in 2026). DG ENV worked on several implementing and delegated acts, including on reporting formats, assessment of compliance and data collection with minimal administrative burden. Finally, the Commission presented a set of **proposals for an environmental omnibus** that includes amendments to the Industrial Emissions Directive, the Medium Combustion Plants Directive and the Industrial Emissions Portal Regulation (see section on "simplification" below).

Together with DG GROW, DG ENV led preparations of the [Chemical Industry Action Plan](#) adopted in July 2025 which set out a pathway for this strategic sector towards a clean and circular economy model, embracing innovation, strengthening its global competitiveness and ensuring the protection of human health and environment. As part of this Action Plan, DG ENV continued work on analysing options **to simplify and modernise the REACH Regulation**, whilst continuing the **effective implementation of REACH** and the **Regulation on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Chemicals (CLP)** by further harmonising classifications, restrictions and authorisations. DG ENV also updated the [Regulation on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#) to comply with international commitments. In October 2025 the Commission adopted a [restriction on all PFAS in firefighting foams](#), one of the main emission sources of PFAS. To tackle pervasive PFAS pollution, DG ENV continued its collaboration with DG GROW and the European Chemicals Agency on wider but targeted restrictions under REACH. While those are the main tool to reduce PFAS pollution at source, IED implementation contributes to this objective by addressing PFAS emissions from certain industrial activities. With the adoption of the **One Substance, One Assessment** package at the end of 2025, a legal framework is now in place to further protect the environment and human health from hazardous chemicals at a significantly lower administrative burden for authorities, with improved governance, predictability and transparency for industry. The package consists of an act reattributing tasks between EU agencies (European Chemical and Environment Agencies and Food Safety and Medicines Authorities), a revision of the RoHS Directive, and a far better and consistent information basis for future action on chemicals due to the establishment of a common data platform on chemicals through a new regulation.

The [Regulation on preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution](#) was adopted on 12 November and entered into force on 17 December. It will help to prevent the release of plastic pellets into the environment across the entire supply chain by establishing requirements on handling, transport and risk management, while keeping the administrative burden for smaller operators limited.

The articulation between pollution and human health was an overarching theme in 2025 in DG ENV's external communication, including in the "[The Road to Green](#)" show produced with Euronews, e.g., with an episode on PFAS.

In 2025, **enforcement action** under this objective focused on tackling systemic non-compliance with key obligations designed to reduce risks for human health and the environment. On industrial installations, enforcement action focused on the transposition of the relevant Directives (on Industrial Emissions, on Medium Combustion plants as well as on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances): cases pursued against five Member States and cases closed against seven Member States. DG ENV also engaged with Member States to support their timely transposition and sound implementation of the revised Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) and continued implementation of the National Emission reduction Commitments Directive, alongside enforcement action on key pollutants (SO₂, NO_x, NMVOC, NH₃, and PM_{2.5}). It held a workshop on the implementation of the Directive and prepared an explanatory document in cooperation with the Ambient Air Quality Expert Group. The entry into force of an SO_x emissions control area in the Mediterranean in 2025 was the result of DG ENV's persistent work at the International Maritime Organization.

The [evaluation of the National Emission Reduction Commitments \(NEC\) Directive](#) was completed in late 2025. It found that the Directive is effectively reducing air pollution, with every euro spent for clean air generating at least four times that value in benefits. Accordingly, one of the results indicators for the specific objective “clean industry”, premature deaths due to PM2.5 particles exposure, continued its downward trend (57,000 fewer deaths in 2023 than 2022), further beyond the 2030 target of 55% compared to 2005.

The [Key Performance Index](#) for the “clean industry” objective tracks the evolution of a set of [substances’ emissions into air from industry facilities](#). Heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and non-methane volatile organic compounds all continued on a steady downward trend from 2010 in 2023 (latest data; down between 1 (nickel) and 21 (mercury) percentage points, respectively, from 2022).

Under the [Mercury Regulation](#), the Commission adopted implementing acts allowing the use of mercury in therapies to treat advanced cancer for a period of 5 years, prohibiting the use of relays and switches using mercury, and setting guidance on using mercury in cremation.

General Objective 4: Sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature

DG Specific Objective 4: Europe’s ecosystems and nature are restored and protected through efficient implementation of the EU environmental acquis, supported by incentives for nature-positive actions and private investment

After the entry into force of the [Nature Restoration Regulation \(NRR\)](#) in 2024, DG ENV worked closely with national authorities supporting them in developing their [National Restoration Plans](#). It also continued to engage with stakeholders and Member States. Input from those interactions were taken into account in [the implementing act](#) on the uniform format for Restoration Plans, the delegated act on pollinator monitoring, and the guidance on high diversity landscape features that provide further clarity for implementation on the ground while reducing administrative burden. In July 2025, the Commission presented a [Roadmap Towards Nature Credits](#) that outlines a way forward to incentivise private investments into actions that protect and preserve nature, and reward those who undertake these actions and invest in them. The [list of invasive alien species of Union concern](#) was updated (implementing act) in July 2025.

In parallel, DG ENV stepped up work to support and improve [implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives](#). This included technical support to Member States and stakeholders, as well as starting preparing the 6-yearly State of Nature report, which will also provide the baseline for the National Restoration Plans. Preparation to [stress-test](#) the two directives started in late 2025, which will also help identifying ways for leaner and more effective implementation (see simplification section below). The conclusion of interinstitutional negotiations on the [amendment of the Annexes of the Habitats Directive](#) in 2025 transposed the change in the wolf’s protection status under the Bern Convention into EU legislation.

Work to support the [effective management of Natura 2000 areas](#) continued with guidance documents on measures and activities in protected areas (e.g. fishing), implementation support events for Member States and stakeholders (e.g. on site-specific conservation objectives), and

bilateral nature dialogues with competent authorities in five Member States (as well as informal follow-up on earlier dialogues). The [Large Carnivores Platform](#) or the structured dialogue on managing cormorant conflicts are examples of DG ENV's implementation support for species protection provisions. Moreover, DG ENV assessed Member States' measures under the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) and provided recommendations on how to better protect marine biodiversity and habitats from human pressures. DG ENV promoted **compliance through exchanges at the Nature Directives Expert Group**, combined with enforcement action to ensure implementation of key legal obligations and protect species and habitats in decline.

The Co-legislators adopted the [Soil Monitoring Directive](#) in late 2025. It will improve knowledge on soil health, which is vital for effective policymaking. DG ENV has subsequently started preparation of implementing acts and other support tools to help Member States in implementing the Directive, among others setting up the soil health monitoring network. Taking into account the respective positions of the co-legislators, the Commission indicated its intention to withdraw its proposal on [Forest Monitoring](#) as part of the 2026 Commission Work Programme. DG ENV continued the implementation of the Forest Strategy for 2030 and launched its mid-term review together with DG AGRI and CLIMA. To strengthen engagement with Member States on forest biodiversity, a new sub-group to the Biodiversity Platform was established. Furthermore, DG ENV started the [development of a Communication on integrated wildfire prevention and risk management](#) co-led with DG Civil Protection (adopted on 25 March 2026). The DG contributed also to the simplification package of the Common Agricultural Policy to reduce the reporting burden on farmers.

On the international level, DG ENV prepared the [7th national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#), building on the EU GBF monitoring framework presented in July 2024. It was published on 12 February 2026, well ahead of the deadline for Parties' Communication on Progress. In April 2025, the Commission [proposed a directive implementing the 2023 Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction](#) and in follow-up has been facilitating co-legislators' work on their positions.

Enforcement actions have been pursued, including on failures to designate and protect Natura 2000 sites and prevent species harm from bycatch, while several other **cases were successfully closed**. This evolution confirms the effectiveness of enforcement action in resolving non-compliance.

External communication supported the biodiversity agenda through a **Natura 2000 campaign**, with local 'bioblitzes' organised across the EU involving over 5000 citizens and supported online by influencers from the outdoor and travel sectors. Efforts also continued to **build ownership among key stakeholders for the NRR** to facilitate its implementation.

The **Key Performance Indicator** for this specific objective, the **grassland butterfly index**, continued to deteriorate in 2024 (latest available data) to 63.49 from the 2022 baseline (68.42). While the impact on the indicator of the new policy measures described above can be expected to unfold over time, this trend underlines the importance of effective implementation of new and established policies in this area. The accompanying result indicators on **terrestrial**

and marine protected areas saw an expansion, of 0.3 and 1.4 percentage points respectively.

DG Specific Objective 5: Access to clean water is increasingly secured thanks to better water management practices and infrastructure, improved water efficiency and more sustainable water use.

The Commission's [European Water Resilience Strategy](#) was adopted by the College in June 2025, setting out a comprehensive framework to restore and protect the water cycle, ensure access to clean and affordable water, and create a water-smart economy in Europe. The Strategy sets out a long-term vision and identifies priority actions across policy areas. In December 2025, the first **Water Resilience Forum** was held, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders and civil society. The Forum, organised by DG ENV in collaboration with the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, established a structured platform for dialogue and exchange of best practices.

In February 2025, the Commission published its [assessment of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and of the Floods Directive](#), including country-specific recommendations. On this basis, as announced in the Water Resilience Strategy, DG ENV started to engage in **Structured Water Dialogues** with Member states in November 2025 to accelerate implementation and enforcement of the EU water acquis.

Revisions of the **Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive and the Environmental Quality Standards Directive** were politically agreed by the co-legislators in September 2025. In addition to updating the list of water pollutants and providing a definition of non-deterioration, the changes included simplification measures - such as streamlined reporting and additional flexibility for Member States including new exemptions. In parallel, the Surface Water Watch List was updated via an implementing measure, enhancing EU level monitoring of substances suspected of posing a risk to the aquatic environment. DG ENV contributed to the [RESourceEU Action Plan](#) adopted in December 2025, which announced a targeted revision of the Water Framework Directive to promote circularity and address potential bottlenecks in access to critical raw materials in the EU.

The [evaluation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive \(MSFD\)](#), published in March 2025, confirmed positive effects such as Europe-wide marine monitoring and good regional cooperation, as well as the cost-efficiency of the Directive. Specific implementation challenges remain and there was limited progress made towards achieving Good Environmental Status in EU marine waters. On this basis, DG Environment begun preparatory work for a revision of the directive, which is planned to be adopted with the Ocean Act. In November, limits for litter on the seafloor were agreed under the directive, to address one of the most serious environmental issues facing the ocean.

In the context of the recast **Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive** that entered into force in January 2025, the Commission supported Member States and industry in implementing the extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme for quaternary treatment, fostering numerous exchanges of information on the setting up of related national systems and promoting convergence. The Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) published a study updating the estimated costs of quaternary treatment in December. In addition, DG Environment initiated

work on 14 implementing and delegated acts under the directive including on defining criteria for exemptions from EPR for biodegradable substances and defining risk areas where quaternary treatment will be installed.

Under the **Drinking Water Directive**, preparatory work towards setting an EU threshold value for water leakages was started, as well as support to Member States, industry and conformity assessment bodies in implementing the delegated and implementing acts on materials in contact with drinking water. DG ENV worked with the World Health Organisation to develop recommendations for health-based threshold values for PFAS in drinking water.

The evaluation of the **Nitrates Directive** advanced during 2025, with a focus on reducing administrative burden and compliance costs for farmers and national authorities whilst maintaining environmental objectives. In September 2025, the Nitrates Committee endorsed the implementing regulation proposal to use “RENURE” fertilisers (Recovered Nitrogen from Manure) under specific conditions, to help, replace chemical fertilisers). This measure will support more efficient nutrient management, increase the resilience of the agriculture sector, reduce costs for farmers and help tackle pollution hotspots. The Commission also granted an extension of the derogation under the Nitrates Directive to Ireland.

The **evaluation of the Bathing Water Directive** was published in March 2025. It concluded that the legal framework remains fit for purpose, whilst emphasising the need for improved and more consistent implementation across Member States.

Enforcement action in the water sector has focused on structural or systemic shortcomings, such as the non-conform transposition of the revised Drinking Water Directive, the failure to ensure that controls of different types of water use are periodically reviewed and the lack of standards for the collection and treatment of urban wastewater. On the latter issue, penalty payments were also collected from three Member States following second judgments of the Court of Justice of the EU.

The **Key Performance Index** for this objective, the **Water Exploitation Index +**, was 5.15 in 2023, down from 6.78 in 2022 and 5.38 in 2021. While this represents a significant positive reduction, it does not yet reverse the longer-term trend slowly rising since at least 2010.

External communication accompanied the water resilience agenda at all stages, building on the WaterWiseEU campaign, and including press and digital engagement and a dedicated information stand during the Stockholm Marathon.

General Objective 6: A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships

DG Specific Objective 6: The EU builds coalitions with strategic partners and like-minded countries, through leading progress on global environmental issues and close cooperation with partner countries impacted by EU environmental policy

The **EU built international coalitions** in the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework where EU worked with partners to find consensus on resource mobilization, the financial mechanism, the monitoring framework, and the procedures for reviewing implementation at the COP in Rome in February 2025. The targeted amendment of the Deforestation Regulation was accompanied by intensive engagement with various critical

strategic partner countries, working towards strengthening trust and mutual benefits that can strengthen alliances. DG ENV also stepped-up preparation for external outreach on the implementation of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation.

The EU continued fostering the environmental aspects in the **relevant United Nations processes** such as in the UN General Assembly, the UN Environment Assembly, and ECOSOC, including implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals, confirming the EU's role as UN's leading actor on the environment and provider of related solutions to countries in need. At the 7th UN Environment Assembly (**UNEA-7**), the EU succeeded in setting up priorities for the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) by adopting a Mid-Term Strategy for 2026-2029, a Ministerial Declaration and a set of resolutions. DG ENV continued engaging in relevant **G7 and G20 negotiating tracks** to support ambitious outcomes on circular economy, sustainable products, biodiversity, deforestation, water resilience, and clean industrial production. G7 Environment Ministers adopted a workplan for the G7 Water Coalition and an action plan for the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency, and G20 Environment Ministers adopted declarations on air quality and on crimes affecting the environment.

Bilateral and regional cooperation supported the political priorities of the European Commission on global and EU environmental policy **with the United Kingdom and strategic partners** such as China, India, Brazil. The first-ever environmental ministerial with ASEAN was held in 2025. DG ENV contributed to the effective negotiation and implementation of relevant **trade and sustainable development chapters in EU Free Trade Agreements** to ensure that these uphold high standards of environmental protection.

Under the **Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD), the EU worked towards a successful conclusion of the resumed session of COP16 in February 2025, where the CBD parties took key decisions on biodiversity financing and the process for the Global Review of Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to be conducted at CBD COP17. DG ENV prepared the EU's 7th National Report to the CBD (published on 12 February 2026, see section on "vibrant nature") and supported EU Member States and other countries with capacity building and technical cooperation. The main vehicle for this support is the network of Regional and sub-regional Centres for Technical and Scientific Cooperation, where the EU Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity is leading for Europe. Throughout the year, DG ENV contributed to the implementation of CBD COP16 Decisions, e.g. through regular meetings with Member States and stakeholders to promote the Cali Fund for sharing the benefits of digital sequence information and helped addressing the challenges encountered. DG ENV participated in meetings of CBD Subsidiary Bodies to prepare draft decisions for adoption at CBD COP17 in Armenia, in 2026.

The 2025 Conference of the Parties to the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species** (CITES) offered the opportunity for the EU to further engage in protecting endangered species from excessive trade. In 2025, the EU reinforced its leadership in tackling wildlife crime through the **GUARD Wildlife programme** a €27 million partnership with the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime ("ICWC"). In April 2025, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive implementing the **2023 agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction** ("BBNJ Agreement")

into EU law, before it will enter into force internationally – showing the EU’s global leadership and ensuring harmonised implementation inside the EU.

The Commission also worked towards an ambitious agreement on a **global plastics treaty** during the negotiations round that took place in summer 2025. Although the negotiations have not concluded yet, the EU showed itself as a reliable partner listening to key third countries’ concerns, while staying steadfast on the core treaty obligations to address plastic pollution also at source. DG ENV contributed to the successful conclusions of negotiations in another track mandated by UNEA: the establishment of the **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution** (ISP-CWP). It will from now on complement the corresponding science-policy panels on Climate (IPPC) and Biodiversity (IPBES), in advising on policies tackling the triple planetary crisis.

As a major multilateral step towards the fight against environmental crime, the Commission signed, on behalf of the EU, the **Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law**. This is the first international legally binding instrument to address environmental crime, covering a broad range of criminal acts, which mirrors and externalises the landmark EU Directive on environmental crime adopted in May 2024. The Commission represented the EU at the **Meeting of the Parties of the Aarhus Convention**, together with the Member States, in November 2025. The MoP endorsed a number of findings and agreed on a process to modernise the Convention making its operation more efficient. This agreement helped ensure parties’ continued commitment to the Convention.

The Commission represented in May 2025 the EU at the **Conference of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions** on waste and chemicals, where new chemicals were listed and work on sustainability in global trade in textile waste was initiated. DG ENV also represented the European Union at the **sixth conference of the parties of the United Nations Minamata Convention on Mercury**, which banned the manufacture and trade of mercury-added dental amalgam at the global level.

Under the **UN Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD) the Commission represented the EU in a meeting of the Committee on Review of Implementation of the Convention, as well as in international meetings on the future strategic framework and on droughts.

DG ENV pursued also strengthening the **synergies between the three Rio “Conventions” (climate change, biodiversity and desertification)**. The 30th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 30) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change advanced discussions on these synergies and adopted decisions that recognised the role of nature, biodiversity, forests, circular economy and waste in the context of climate mitigation and adaptation. The COP30 Presidency launched work on a deforestation roadmap with a view to achieving the objective to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030.

In December 2025, co-legislators adopted an **amendment of the EU Deforestation Regulation**, introducing simplification measures, which will reduce administrative costs effort for companies covered by the Regulation. The Commission updated the Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents and ran a public feedback process in view of adopting a **delegated act amending Annex I of the EUDR** to simplify and address technical questions on the scope of products in April 2026. The Commission also published the **country**

benchmarking list in May 2025. The amendment and the implementing rules will alleviate administrative burden on stakeholders in the EU and in partner countries. **Intense outreach was underway with partner countries** and their business associations in the Multistakeholder Deforestation Platform and other venues to address concerns, discuss concrete solutions for implementation and strengthen our cooperation and support measures, including a dedicated budget of EUR 86 million (with Member States' contributions). Furthermore, the Commission represented the EU in forest-related environmental multilateral agreements, notably the 20th meeting of the UN Forum on Forests and the 61st International Tropical Timber Council.

The EU acted on its **commitments under the UN Water Action Agenda** and supported accession of new countries to the UN Water Convention to promote sustainable management of shared water resources, including conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The EU expanded **strategic partnerships on water** with partner countries and engaged intensively in promoting water resilience internationally, including in the context of the G7 Water Coalition, the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition, and the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action.

DG ENV furthermore represented the European Union at the ministerial meetings of various Regional Sea Conventions: **the Convention for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic** (OSPAR) in June and of the **Barcelona Convention** in December. On both occasions, ENV secured commitments to protect the marine environment while ensuring a sustainable use of the sea's resources. In collaboration with the Atlantic Member States, ENV secured a prohibition of discharges from ship exhaust gas cleaning equipment (scrubbers), a restriction of some types of plastic floating devices, and the extension of the maritime area covered by OSPAR by over 2.5 million km² to include Madeira and the Canary Islands. The Barcelona COP notably yielded an updated strategy for sustainable development; a strengthened ecosystem approach to protect marine ecosystems and an updated regional climate adaptation framework.

Furthermore, DG Environment co-organised with DG Maritime Affairs (MARE) the third edition of the **Our Baltic conference** in September 2025, bringing together the environment, agriculture, and fisheries ministers from EU Baltic Sea Member States, as well as members of the European Parliament and representatives of scientific and regional organisations.

External communication on international issues consisted in targeted support to the Commissioner's international engagements, including media preparation and coverage during missions, strategic social media communication, and proactive visibility around high-level events.

The **Key Performance Indicator** for this objective are the set of **policy dialogues and other outreach activities with partner countries**. In 2025, DG ENV sustained the level of those outreach activities, often in collaboration with the EEAS and Member States. The interactions were targeted at the most effective levels (technical, high-level executive or political) and most relevant international partners, which contributed significantly to achieving negotiation results aligned with the EU priorities, or to advancing dialogues towards converging positions.

DG Specific Objective 7: The EU supports the preparations of candidate countries to assume obligations under the environmental acquis

Reflecting the political priority accorded to enlargement in the President's political guidelines, DG Environment in 2025 engaged in continuous exchange and support with candidate countries on technical and political levels in the context of **accession negotiations in relation to chapter 27** of the acquis. Bilateral exchanges furthermore prepared enlargement candidates for **new initiatives on circular economy or water resilience**, among others. Based on these activities, DG Environment contributed to the Communication "An EU fit for enlargement: policy reviews and reforms" (adoption envisaged for 2026). **Countries and candidate countries associated to the LIFE programme** (Iceland, Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro and North Macedonia) continued to benefit from the development and implementation of LIFE projects.

Negotiations with Albania on Chapter 27 (Environment and Climate Action) were opened in 2025 and the screening of Chapter 27 was conducted for Ukraine and Moldova. In addition, a high number of technical consultations with candidate countries were held at all levels throughout 2025 through association sub-committees and technical support was provided through the TAIEX instrument.

DG ENV continued to provide enhanced assistance and **support in environmental matters to Ukraine** in view of the environmental damages caused by Russia's war of aggression and future reconstruction and recovery. In particular, work continued, together with other Commission services, on Ukraine's accession to the EU through the screening of Chapter 27 (Environment and Climate Action), the analysis of Ukraine's negotiating position and the development of the EU's Draft Common Position and associated chapter closing benchmarks. The DG continued to work closely with other Commission services on the Ukraine Plan and its implementation, and DG ENV **provided support to the implementation of the Ukraine Facility**.

DG ENV thus successfully kept the high level of regular consultations with candidate countries on EU environmental legislation, the Key Performance Indicator for this specific objective.

Cross-cutting work: Simplification, implementation, enforcement, investment

DG Environment continued stress testing the environmental acquis according to its stress-testing plan aimed at addressing the entire body of EU environmental law by the end of 2029. Commissioner Roswall led **two implementation dialogues** in 2025. The first in March, co-led with Executive Vice-President Séjourné addressed the **Chemicals** Industry Package, current implementation issues and ways to achieve impactful simplification. The second in April tackled environmental assessments and **permitting** aiming to accelerate procedures and reduce costs while maintaining a high level of environmental protection. A stakeholder roundtable and a call for evidence supported preparations of the Environmental Simplification Package. Several **evaluations** were completed and published on the waste electrical and electronic equipment Directive, the national emissions reduction commitments Directive, the bathing waters Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Others are now close to being finalised or finalised and pending publication (**environmental liability, polluter pays principle, protection of waters from nitrates, and seals protection**).

Stress-testing activities led to two substantial simplification proposals. At the end of October, the Commission proposed targeted solutions to take into account limitations in the IT systems and help companies, global stakeholders, third countries and Member States to implement the **EU Deforestation Regulation**. An amendment of the Regulation was adopted by the co-legislators on 19 December. Specifically, due diligence submission is now only required in the EUDR IT system once for the entire supply chain and where responsibility would be focused on the operators first placing products on the market (“upstream”), whereas the first operator “downstream” is only required to collect the Due Diligence Reference number from the first operator. Simpler obligations have been introduced for primary micro and small primary operators from low-risk countries globally. These do not have to provide a Due Diligence Statement but need to register in the IT system (one-time simplified declaration).

In December 2025, the Commission presented a comprehensive **package of ‘omnibus’ proposals** to simplify legislation in the area of industrial emissions, the circular economy, and digital georeferenced data. It is complemented by a self-standing **proposal on speeding-up environmental assessments** that intend to accelerate simplification of permitting procedures linked to environmental assessments.

In line with the Commission’s simplification agenda, DG Environment identified opportunities for reducing administrative burden and smart implementation through digitalising reporting processes, environmental impact assessments and permitting processes, including through the use of digital enablers (e.g. Digital Product Passport) and re-use of data. **The GreenData4All initiative**, promoting open access to environmental data, continued during 2025. Its legal component, the INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) directive underwent a revision as part of the omnibus package to simplify how spatial data is made available across the EU and to align it with the horizontal Open Data Directive. As part of the Commission’s ambition to create a coherent data ecosystem that maximises the utility of the data available, DG ENV continued development of the Green Deal Data Space. As captured by the recently launched **Green Data web page**, DG ENV launched the SAGE implementation project and organised several workshops in 2025 to discuss with stakeholders the wider data sharing and data re-use paradigm for sustainability and how to make environmental data ready for Artificial Intelligence. In addition, all new legislative initiatives in DG ENV have been analysed for their potential digital aspects (digital-ready policymaking), to make best use of digital tools and data technologies for developing, implementing and monitoring environmental policies.

EU environmental law and policy contribute to the EU's prosperity, competitiveness and security. It is essential that Member States fully and effectively implement environmental legislation to put it into effect on the ground. As reported in the **2025 Environmental Implementation Review (EIR)**, the EU incurs annual costs of approximately €180 billion from incomplete environmental policy implementation¹. Based on these findings the EIR 2025 recommends priority actions to be addressed by the EU together with Member States. They complement the European Semester’s Country-Specific Recommendations and inform the preparation for the future Multiannual Financial Framework. The results of the EIR were

¹ [Environmental Implementation Review - Environment - European Commission](#)

communicated widely, via press materials, web pages, a launch event and background briefings for journalists.

The first **Annual Progress Report on Simplification, Implementation and Enforcement** submitted by Commissioner Roswall to the European Parliament and the Council in autumn 2025 provided a concise and comprehensive overview of the progress made in simplifying, implementing and enforcing EU Environmental law. DG ENV is working together with Member States, civil society and business to promote a culture of compliance and cooperation and to proactively ensure that EU environmental law is implemented in a way that is both effective and efficient. The simplification work described above supports both goals. Where dialogue failed, **enforcement action** was taken to ensure equal treatment and a **level playing field**, and moreover **strengthen democratic legitimacy** of policy-making in citizens' perception. In line with the Commission-wide approach, DG ENV prioritised **enforcement of EU court rulings and timely transposition of directives**, as well as systemic cases of bad application of EU law.

To support implementing environmental policy and legislation as part of the Environmental Implementation Review, DG ENV supported peer to peer exchanges between Member States' national, regional and local authorities with the **TAIEX-EIR instrument**. It helps build capacity, improve skills at environmental authorities and spreads experience and good practices between Member States. Complementing those exchanges, DG ENV organised several TAIEX EIR Strategic Flagship Multi-country Workshops. They help public authorities to prepare the implementation of environmental legislation before its entry into force and also trigger demand for further peer to peer exchanges as follow-up.

To support implementation and improve the bankability of environmental investments, DG ENV has been offering **technical assistance and advisory support to project beneficiaries**. The support was provided within the framework of LIFE technical as well as through initiatives like **Green Assist** (80 projects supported in the domains of circular economy, nature restoration, water resilience) or the **LIFE top-up** to the InvestEU advisory hub (supporting investments on water and nature-based climate change adaptation). The LIFE Close-2-Market initiative facilitated market access for LIFE beneficiaries.

Together with the other competent DGs, DG ENV co-created the **2026-27 Horizon Europe Work Programme**, focusing on 6 (Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment), and mainstreaming environmental research priorities also throughout the programme. Those research calls represent a fundamental mid- and long-term investment in the scientific evidence base for policy innovation and its effective and efficient formulation and implementation.

The **green urban agenda** continued to advance implementation of environmental legislation in cities and regions by showcasing best in class. Vilnius won the 2025 European Green Capital Award Treviso and Viladecans the European Green Leaf Award. These cities demonstrate in an exemplary way how investing in the green transformation of their urban environment creates well-being and improves quality of life. The 125 signatories of the Green City Accord (up from 115 in 2024) committed themselves to becoming greener, cleaner and healthier places to live with concrete targets set for 2030.

A newly established **partnership with the OECD on measuring and managing environmental impacts for businesses** enabled DG ENV to advance the work on a European SME Sustainability Programme developed with several other services.

Contributing to the European Semester is another aspect of DG ENV's work on 'mainstreaming' environmental aspects into the broader socio-economic policy framework, aiming to reinforce the interlinkages between economic competitiveness and the environment. This narrative has been progressively strengthened and led to 18 Member States having received country specific recommendations (CSRs) related to environmental priorities in 2025. The European Semester CSRs will also form part of the starting point for the negotiation of the National and Regional Partnership Plans under the next MFF.

DG ENV was also one of the services **contributing to the preparation of the Commission proposal for the next MFF**, especially as regards the climate and environmental mainstreaming elements. The EU budget plays and will continue to play a crucial role in incentivising compliance and the green transition, helping to achieve the EU's environmental goals and targets. The proposed 35% spending target for climate and environment spending and the future DNSH guidance will be instrumental for this function.

Green Assist set up a **nature credits pilot programme** as part of the first steps to implement the Roadmap Towards Nature Credits (see specific objective 4) and a call targeted to SMEs innovating in the circular economy sector, in collaboration with DG GROW and its Enterprise Europe Network. Both will be launched in 2026. The LIFE top-up also fed, among others, into the preparation of the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) through joint studies with the European Investment Bank developing innovative financing solutions to fill the financing gap on nature, biodiversity and water resilience.

Throughout the year, beyond the larger campaigns, **external communication activities** supported the implementation of legislation, including through dissemination of success stories and replies to 744 written press queries. Across social media platforms, DG ENV gained 83,000 new followers and generated over 800,000 engagements, thanks in particular to its LinkedIn and Instagram accounts, which are among the highest performing across the Commission.

2. INTERNAL CONTROL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Management monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis and carries out an objective assessment of their efficiency and effectiveness. In annex 7, there is a list and details of the reports that have been considered. The results of the above assessment are explicitly documented and reported to the Director-General.

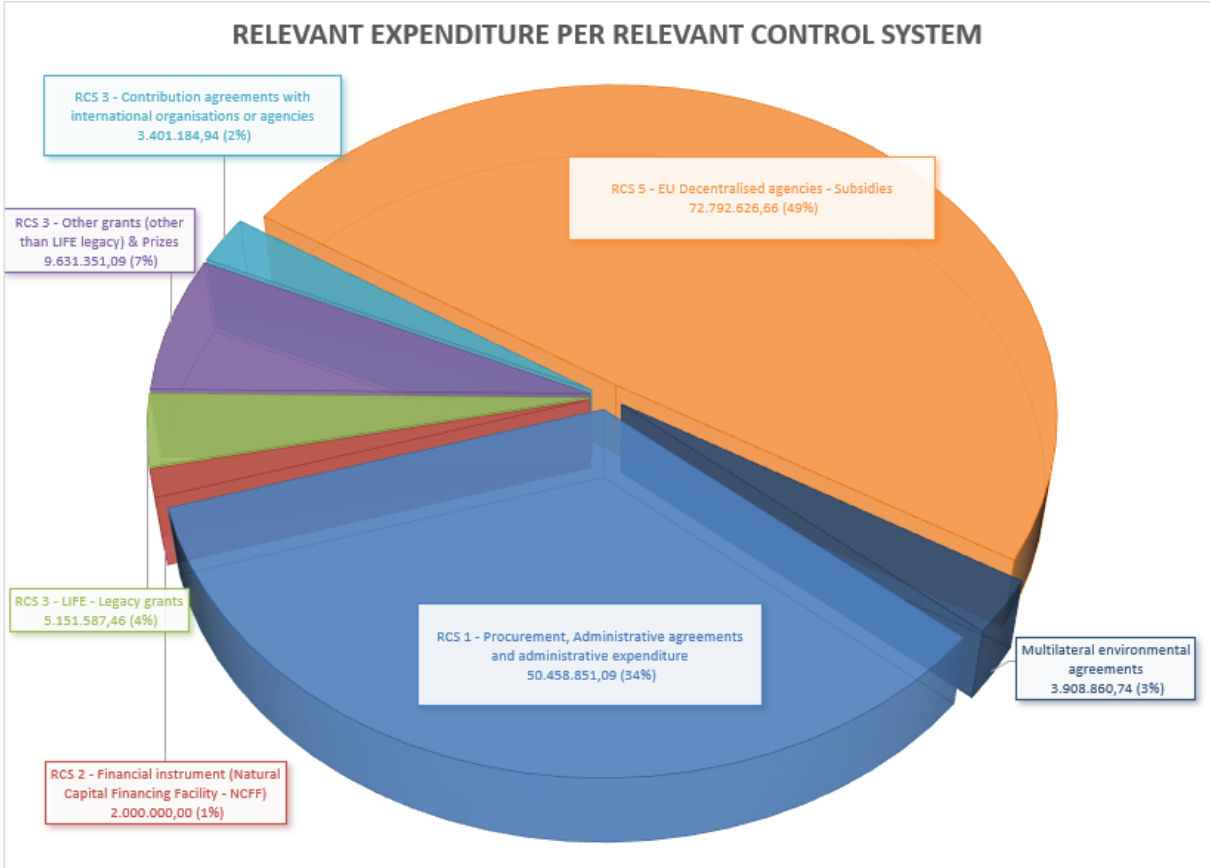
2.1. Control results

The management uses control results to support its assurance and reach a conclusion about the cost-effectiveness of these controls and whether the right balance between the following elements is achieved:

Effectiveness The level of error found, based on the controls carried out.

Efficiency The average time taken to inform or pay.

Economy The proportionality between the costs of controls and the funds managed.



2.1.1. Overview of the budget and relevant control systems

DG Environment is responsible for the implementation of the environment part of the LIFE programme. Other expenditure includes contributions to the budgets of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and contributions to multilateral international environmental agreements, pilot projects and preparatory actions, as well as regular administrative expenditure. Most of the LIFE budget implementation is delegated to the European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA).

The total commitments and payments made by DG Environment in 2025 amount to EUR 164 million and EUR 168 million respectively. The pie chart below gives an overview of the payments made in 2025.

The vast majority of DG Environment's spending is composed of procurement, grants, contribution agreements with international organisations and subsidies to EU decentralised agencies (to the European Environment Agency - EEA and European Chemicals Agency - ECHA). DG Environment implements its budget through direct and indirect management. The control strategies for all these expenditures are described in Annex 6 entitled 'Relevant Control System(s) for budget implementation (RCSs).

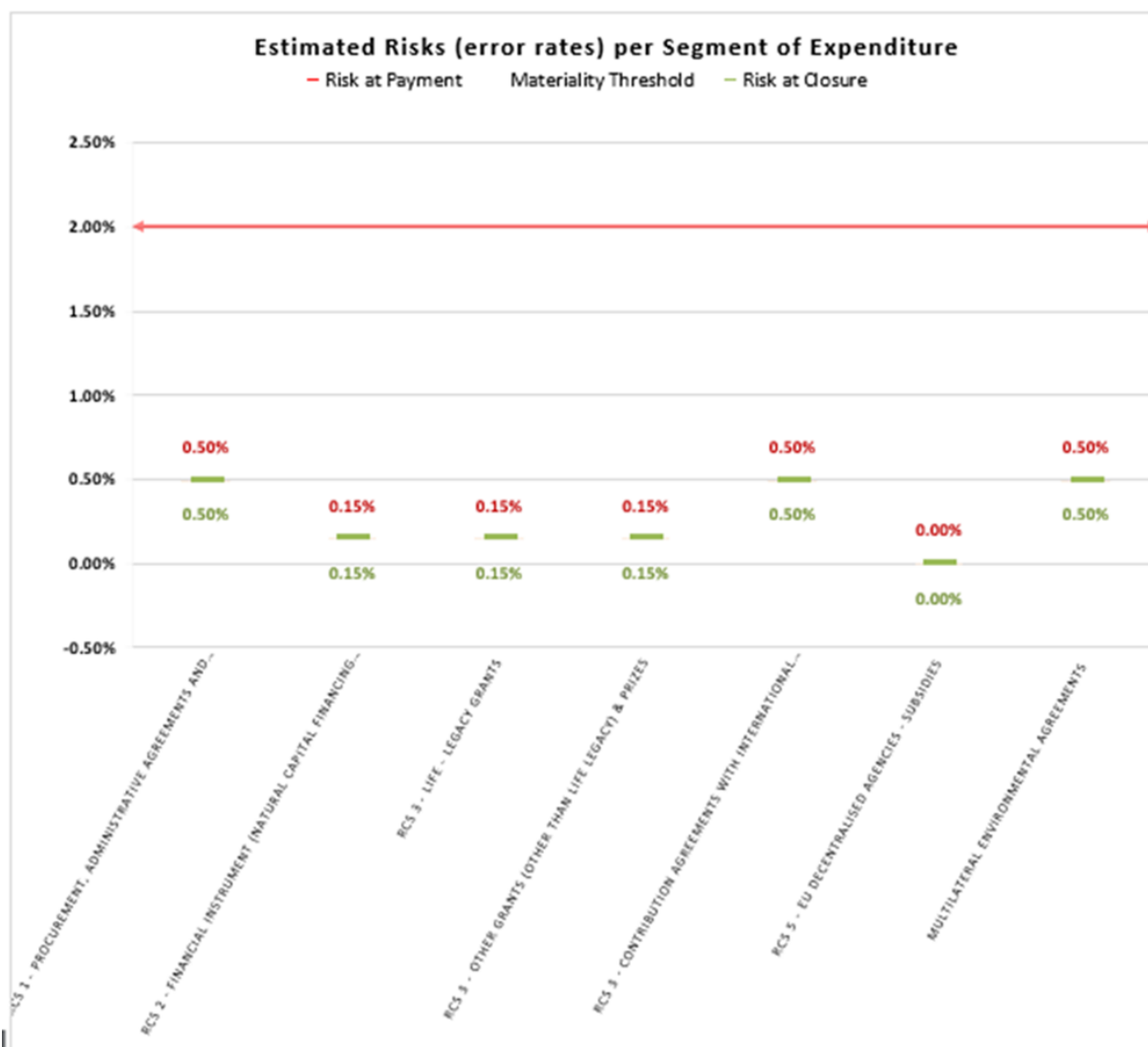
A short presentation of the bodies that collaborate with DG Environment for the implementation of the budget and/or as recipients of contributions from the budget are provided in Annex 7 'Specific annexes related to Financial Management', Annex 11 'implementation through non-EU entrusted entities' and Annex 13 'decentralised agencies and other EU bodies.' DG ENV's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in Annex

2.1.2 Effectiveness of controls

a) Assessment of control results per segment of expenditure

DG Environment's portfolio consists of segments with very low error rates. This is thanks to the inherent risk profile of the beneficiaries and funding modalities and the performance of the related control systems. The following has been estimated:

- 0% error rate for the subsidies to the EU decentralised agencies EEA and ECHA, as these are considered error-free types of expenditure;
- the Commissions' flat rate of 0,5% as a conservative estimate for low-risk type of expenditure such as procurement, administrative agreements, administrative expenditure and contribution agreements with pillar assed agencies and international organisations.
- for the very small number of legacy grants under the LIFE programme remaining under the responsibility of DG Environment (the rest being delegated to CINEA), a rate of 0.15% calculated on the basis of the average detected error rate (DER) observed in the last three audited years of ex-post controls (2020 to 2022). This applies to financial instruments and prizes.



Procurement

DG Environment applies rigorous controls of procurement-related transactions. In addition to the mandatory controls of all commitments and payments, the financial unit provides continuous advice and support the operating units. This applies to the whole lifecycle of a contract, from the terms of reference until the final payment or de-commitment. In case of partial delivery, the payments are adjusted accordingly. Technical and financial reports must be explicitly approved before proceeding to final payment.

The DG Environment Advisory Committee (ENVAC) for procurement performs ex ante verifications of all contracts above EUR 700,000 and all Framework contracts to be signed. The ENVAC reviews all procurement contracts corresponding to European Parliament's Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions. In addition, ENVAC examines a sample of contracts of lower value, covering different procurement options (negotiated procedures, specific contracts under Framework Contracts, etc.). The value and type of procedures are the basis of ENVAC's risk-based approach.

Grants and Contribution agreements with International Organisations

For grants under the LIFE programme, the estimation of the amount at risk is based on the average detected error rate (DER) observed in the last three audited years (2020 to 2022).

Given that a small number of legacy LIFE grants remain under the responsibility of DG Environment (the rest being delegated to CINEA), it was decided to discontinue its ex-post audit already in 2023. In the last three audited years 2020-2022 the average DER was 0,15%.

Contribution agreements are signed with 'pillar assessed' international organisations, i.e., entities that have undergone an ex-ante assessment that demonstrated a level of financial management and protection of the EU's financial interest equivalent to that of the Commission. In 2025, DG Environment signed agreements with United Nations bodies, OECD, IUCN and WHO. (see annex 11 "Implementation through non-EU entrusted entities and/or through EU Trust Funds" for more details).

Contributions to decentralised agencies

DG Environment collaborates closely with the EEA as its main parent DG and pays the EU's subsidy to the EEA's core budget. DG Environment works also with ECHA and contributes financially to its budget for the tasks related to environmental policies.

DG Environment is member of the Management Boards of these agencies. There are regular meetings between DG Environment and the agencies at management and operational levels to ensure coordination of activities. More details about the supervision arrangements can be found in Annex 6 – RCS n°5.

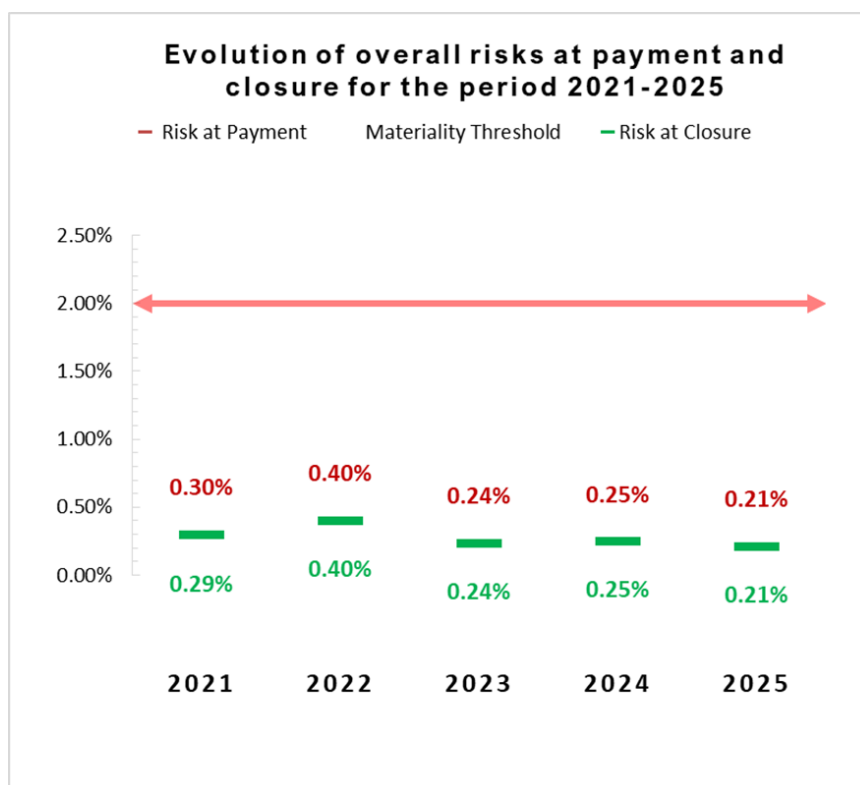
For both the EEA and ECHA, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) issued a positive opinion on the legality and regularity of payments for the year 2024. The comments made by the ECA do not put into question the reasonable assurance on the operating budget managed by the EU agencies. From its own monitoring and supervision work as the responsible DG, DG Environment did not identify any issue that would indicate control weaknesses concerning the legality and regularity of budget spending.

European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)

Since 2014, DG Environment delegates the implementation of the majority of the LIFE programme grants to an Executive Agency. Supervision arrangements are in place, based on memoranda of understanding and reporting obligations. DG Environment is member of the Steering Committee of CINEA; daily contacts and monthly technical meetings between both entities ensure good implementation of the LIFE programme and allow feedback from LIFE projects to policies.

During 2025, DG Environment, together with DG Climate Action and DG Energy, have in particular worked closely with CINEA for the implementation of the "Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy" issued in 2024, with specific attention given to operating grants to non-governmental organisations active in the area of the environment, climate action and energy transition. More details about the supervision arrangements can be found in annex 6 – RCS n°4. Further information on CINEA's activities under the LIFE programme is available in its Annual Activity Report.

b) Estimation of the overall risk at payment and risk at closure



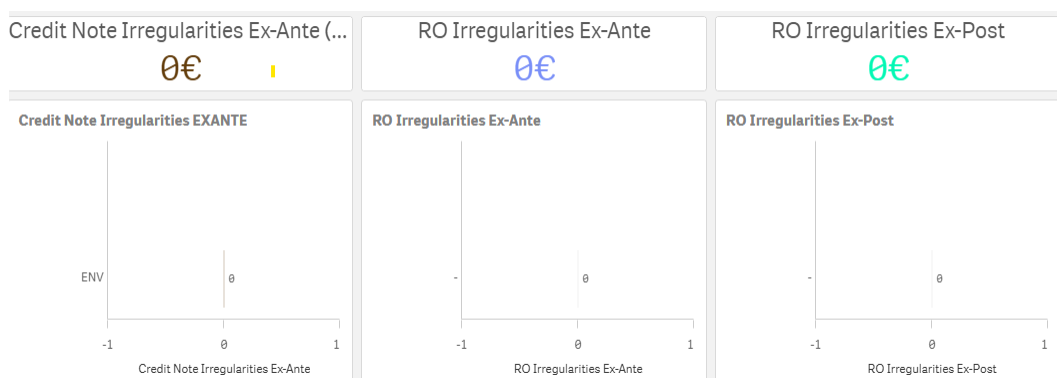
As DG Environment carries out only ex ante controls, it uses the following assumptions regarding error rates based on prior audits and/or Commission-wide standard values for the risk at payment and risk at closure:

- 0% error rate for the subsidies to the EU decentralised agencies EEA and ECHA, as these are considered error-free types of expenditure;
- the Commissions' flat rate of 0,5% as a conservative estimate for low-risk type of expenditure;
- for the very small number of legacy grants under the LIFE programme remaining under the responsibility of DG Environment (the rest being delegated to CINEA), a rate of 0.15% calculated on the basis of the average detected error rate (DER) observed in the last three audited years of ex-post controls (2020 to 2022).

c) Quantitative benefits of controls: Preventive and corrective measures

With its ex-ante controls, DG Environment has an effective mechanism in place for detecting and correcting errors.

Ex-ante controls resulted in no preventive measures in 2025, a decrease compared to 2024, with EUR 0,5 million. Please see details in annex 3.



Controls lead to a certain number of other benefits:

- improved value for money and better achievement of the policy objectives, resulting from the thorough checks of deliverables from procurement contracts.
- avoidance of reputational costs, damages, complains and legal actions;
- the deterrent effect of supervisory checks.

d) Fraud: prevention, detection, and correction

DG Environment has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy (AFS) since 2013 based on the methodology provided by OLAF. Its implementation is being monitored and reported to the management on a yearly basis.

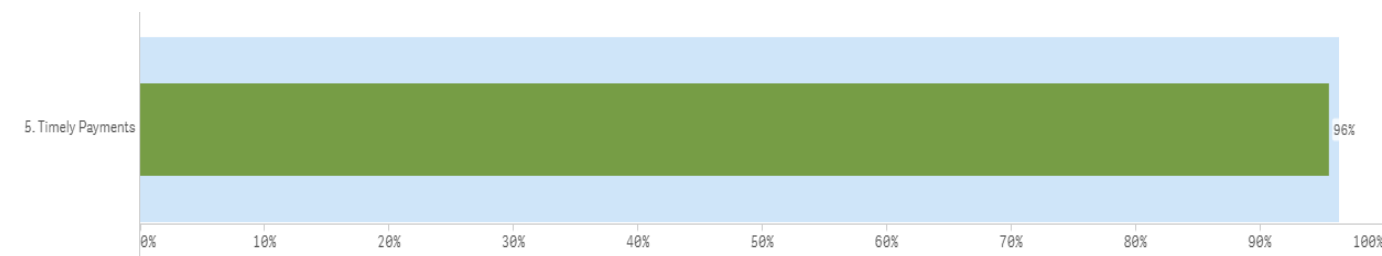
Anti-Fraud Strategies are updated every three years. DG Environment's AFS was last updated in November 2024, following a fraud risk assessment. It contains several actions to be implemented in particular, increasing fraud awareness and trainings, use of IT tools to avoid plagiarism, reinforcement of cooperation with CINEA on anti-fraud matters, further cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor, inclusion on anti-fraud issues in the recruitment policy and reinforcement of anti-fraud in indirect management. The last action concerns the mapping and development of a fully-fledged policy on conflict of interests.

In 2025, DG Environment conducted a survey on fraud awareness and, building on the results of the survey, it organised an internal training on zero tolerance towards fraud. It also increased cooperation and exchanges with CINEA on anti-fraud matters and included awareness raising measures in indirect management. The implementation of the other actions is in progress; their completion is expected in the coming years.

Corrective measures based on OLAF recommendations are reported on in the context of annual monitoring exercises conducted by OLAF, in accordance with Article 11 of Regulation 883/2013. However, in 2025, DG Environment did not have to implement any OLAF recommendation. On the basis of the available information, DG Environment has reasonable assurance that the anti-fraud measures in place are effective.

2.1.2. Efficiency of controls

Timely payments: DG Environment paid on time 96% of the total amount paid in 2025, which is in line with the Commission global performance and with DG Environment's score of last year (99%). The reasons behind the late payments vary, are not due to a systematic weakness, and the need to keep up with close monitoring of open invoices remains.



Time to inform the applicant and time to grant: In 2025, DG Environment concluded several grants and agreements under direct and indirect management. The average time to inform the applicant and to grant was 3.2 months (from the final date of submission of the complete proposals to the signature of the grant or agreement). The calculated indicator concerns direct grants without a call for proposals (under Article 198 FR) and contribution agreements to international organisations under indirect management. It does not cover calls for proposals, as there were none during 2025.

2.1.3. Economy of controls

The transition in 2025 to the Commission's new accounting system, SUMMA, has required the adjustment to a new system and has impacted budget implementation tasks, processes and financial management activities, particularly during the first part of the year. This has required careful management to ensure the same data quality as in previous years. [In some cases, this may have resulted in lower performance for some standard financial indicators such as the timely payments (see Annex 4)]

The total cost of controls, for procurement and grants, stands at **EUR 2.5 million (1.51% of the funds managed)**². It varies according to the type of expenditure, as the intensity of checks and the amounts at stake vary considerably:

- the subsidies to the EU decentralised agencies have a cost of control ratio of 0.38% only. The subsidies are directly voted by the Budgetary Authority (for tasks directly entrusted by the legislator) and each agency follows a framework financial regulation similar to the Commission's, thus reducing the need for extensive supervision and control.
- The payments to multilateral environmental agreements also require limited checks as the budgets are voted in the assemblies of the bodies concerned, thus leading to a cost of control ratio of 1.75%.

⁽²⁾ Cf. annex 7

Conversely, procurement and grants display a higher cost of control mostly due to the controls in the selection phase and the checks on the deliverables (and on the costs eligibility in the case of grants), leading to a cost of controls ratio of respectively 2.68% and 13.37%.

2.1.4. Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls

The control environment and control strategy remained stable during the reporting year compared to previous year. Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results reported above, DG Environment has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of its control system and reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of the controls for which it is responsible.

2.2. Audit observations and recommendations

This section sets out briefly the state of play for all audit observations and recommendations reported by auditors related to internal control and financial management. Further details for IAS and ECA audits can be found in Annex 8. Further details for IAS and ECA audits can be found in Annex 8.

Where an audit has detected weaknesses affecting an internal control principle or the department's assurance, a detailed analysis is provided further below in section 2.3 and, where applicable, the incidence on the AOD's assurance is presented in section 2.4, accordingly.

Internal Audit Service

There are no critical or very important recommendations by IAS targeting DG Environment. DG ENV as parent DG of CINEA is closely following up the implementation of the recommendations coming from the IAS audit related to the LIFE programme. The aim of this audit was to assess whether the Commission services responsible for the LIFE programme have taken effective measures to implement the corporate Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of Union legislation and policy, and whether the parent Directorates-General (DGs) have taken the necessary measures to ensure alignment with this guidance.

The audit started in April 2025, and the Internal Audit Service (IAS) submitted its final report in October 2025. The report includes two important recommendations:

- Consolidate and document lessons learned.
- Ensure the timely signing of declarations of confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest by evaluation committee members.

Both recommendations were addressed to CINEA, as the implementing body, and the action plan was agreed with the IAS in November 2025. DG ENV, together with the other parent DGs,

supervises the implementation of the agreed actions, which are expected to be completed during the first half of 2026. Internal Audit Service (IAS) recommendations status on 31 March:

Reported	Audit Title	Accepted Recommendations	State of play in 2025	Impact on the assurance for 2025
2021	Multi-DG audit on crisis communication		✓	✓
2021	Multi-DG audit on DG ENV and DG CLIMA relations with decentralised agencies		✓	✓
2022	Implementation of bilateral trade agreements (DGs TRADE, AGRI, ENV)	1) Handover notes	✓	✓
2023	LIFE implementation (at CINEA)	1) Preparation of the multi-annual work-programme	✓	✓
2025	Horizon Europe – Grant management phase 1 (from publication until signature of grant agreements) in CINEA	1) Management of conflicts of interest 2) Evaluation process.	✓	✓
2025	NGO funding under the LIFE programme in DG ENV, DG CLIMA, DG ENER and CINEA	1) Consolidate and document lessons learnt. 2) Ensure timely signing of declarations of confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest by evaluation committee members.	⌚	✓
2025	The European Topic Centres in the European Environment Agency (EEA)	The IAS concludes that, overall, the EEA has designed and put in place adequate arrangements (controls) efficient and effective for selecting and cooperating with the ETCs.	✓	✓
2025, Ongoing	NGO funding under the LIFE programme		⌚	⌚
2025, Ongoing	Management of requests for access to documents		⌚	⌚
2025, Ongoing	Use of procured experts and consultants in support of policy		⌚	⌚

European Court of Auditors






There are no recommendations by ECA related to Internal Control and Financial Management in DG Environment.

In its [annual report on the implementation of the 2024 budget](#), the European Court of Auditors (ECA) mentions that it has not found any quantifiable errors in direct management transactions under the LIFE programme for the environment and climate action, nor under the management of DG Environment ⁽³⁾. European Court of Auditors (ECA) recommendations status on 31 December 2025:

Reported	Audit Title	Accepted Recommendations	State of play in 2025	Impact on the assurance for 2025
2024	Statement of Assurance (DAS)	N/A	✓	✓
2018	SPECIAL REPORT No 33/2018 - Combating desertification in the EU a growing threat in need of more action	3	⌚	✓
2021	SPECIAL REPORT No 12/2021 - The Polluter Pays Principle: Inconsistent application across EU environmental policies and actions	4	⌚	✓
2021	SPECIAL REPORT No 20/2021 - Sustainable water use in agriculture: CAP funds more likely to promote greater rather than more efficient water use	1	⌚	✓
2023	SPECIAL REPORT No 19/2023 - EU efforts for sustainable soil management - Unambitious standards and limited targeting	2	⌚	✓
2023	SPECIAL REPORT No 22/2023 - Offshore renewable energy in the EU - Ambitious plans for growth but sustainability remains a challenge	1	⌚	✓
2024	SPECIAL REPORT No 16/2024 - EU revenue based on non-recycled plastic packaging waste A challenging start hindered by data that is not sufficiently comparable or reliable	2	⌚	✓
2025	SPECIAL REPORT No 02/2025 - Urban pollution in the EU	2	⌚	✓

⁽³⁾ These transactions are related to three LIFE projects managed by CINEA and one managed by DG Environment.

Reported	Audit Title	Accepted Recommendations	State of play in 2025	Impact on the assurance for 2025
2025	SPECIAL REPORT No 06/2025 - EU actions tackling sea pollution by ships Not yet out of troubled waters	1		
2025	SPECIAL REPORT No 16/2025 - EU funding to tackle forest fires – More preventive measures, but insufficient evidence of results and their long-term sustainability	1		
2025	SPECIAL REPORT No 25 2025 - LIFE strategic projects Bridge the gap between strategy and implementation, but impact not entirely clear	6		

State of play		Assurance	
	Action plan implemented		No impact on the assurance
	Action plan implementation is ongoing		Impact on the assurance
	Preparation of the action plan		

2.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems

The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework based on the highest international standards⁴.

DG Environment has adapted the Internal Control Framework to their specific characteristics and organisational structure. The internal control systems are suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives in accordance with the internal control principles, having due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

DG Environment has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective, and the components and principles are present and functioning as intended.

Based on the internal control indicators set out for 2025 and other sources of information (e.g., the Commission staff survey), the assessment of the state of internal control in DG Environment did not identify any major deficiencies. DG Environment is confident of having the necessary procedures, staff skills and experience to identify and manage the main operational, financial and legal/regulatory risks and successfully address any shortcomings during 2025.

⁴ The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission Internal Control Integrated Framework, the golden standard for internal control systems.

2.4. Conclusions on the assurance

In conclusion, based on the elements reported above, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, effective controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director-General, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

2.5. Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned,

Director-General of Environment

In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation.

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view⁵.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the institution.

Brussels, 31 March 2026

e-Signed

Eric MAMER

⁵ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the DG/Executive Agency.

3. A MODERN AND SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

3.1. Human resource management

In 2025, DG ENV continued to deliver on its legal obligations and political priorities in a context of sustained workload and limited possibilities for staff reinforcement. Strategic human resource management remained essential to ensure that available resources were aligned with the DG's priorities.

The HR Correspondent team closely monitored job quotas and oversaw staff allocation decisions to ensure efficient use of resources. A key focus in 2025 was the adaptation of internal recruitment procedures to the new model introduced by the European Personnel Selection Office. Revised internal workflows and strengthened coordination ensured timely recruitment of staff with the necessary expertise.

DG ENV continued to promote internal and external mobility, maintaining a balance between fostering cross-cutting experience within the DG and bringing in new skills. Job mobility was encouraged to enhance motivation and optimise the use of talents across policy areas.

Maintaining high levels of staff engagement remained a priority. Following the 76% staff engagement index level recorded in the 2023 staff survey (above the Commission average), DG ENV pursued actions under its local action plan addressing inclusion and fairness, wellbeing and work-life balance, working arrangements and learning and development. The 2-days-in-the-office policy was maintained to support flexibility and team cohesion at the same time.

To strengthen organisational culture, DG ENV organised directorate "away days", unit-level team-building events and coaching sessions. Regular all-staff "town hall" meetings were organised conveying top management guidance and reporting on progress with the DG's main policy priorities. At the same time, in 2025 DG ENV held two managers seminars and prepared a DG Away Day that took place in January 2026. Peer networking was further supported, including through consolidation of the ENV AST network.

DG ENV continued to offer targeted learning and development opportunities. The onboarding programme for newcomers was revamped, introducing twice-yearly welcome sessions, structured mentoring, and meetings with senior management and the HRC team to facilitate swift integration of new staff. DG ENV also maintained its commitment to gender balance and equal opportunities. The continued attention to gender balance in recruitment processes, especially for first appointments to management positions, resulted in 46% of managers being female on 1 December 2025.

3.2. Digital transformation and data management

Digital transformation and cybersecurity

In 2025, the Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENV) embarked on a programme focused on digital transformation and cybersecurity. Building upon progress made in previous years, our activities this year aimed at enhancing IT systems, expanding cloud usage, and strengthening data platforms, all while prioritising compliance and security.

The commitment **to digital transformation** remained a priority, with significant strides made. In 2025, 29% of DG ENV staff participated in IT training sessions, compared with 35% in 2024, reflecting ongoing efforts to equip its workforce to handle modern technologies. With concerted efforts, DG ENV has increased **cloud adoption from 14% to 23%**. Part of this effort was realised close to the end of 2025 and will appear even more in 2026 indicators. This expansion supports the migration of legacy systems to cloud platforms, thereby enhancing efficiency and adaptability for future technological evolutions, **including AI integration for data processing**. Continued investment in cloud platforms strengthened the DG's data and DECLARE platforms, improving information exchanges and analytical capabilities of the DG.

An additional key focus has been the delivery of the **Due Diligence Statements (DDS) system** for the **Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)**. The legislation was amended during 2025 with new requirements scheduled to apply from end-2026. The system is already deployed, and under extensive usage, but will require changes to comply with the legislative amendments. The Digital Waste Shipment System (**DIWASS**) pivotal for the **Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR)** also saw the development and delivery of a testing environment that provides the groundwork for interoperability with MS national systems, with all its associated documentation. Work on interconnection to CERTEX will start after rolling out the first version of the system mid-2026.

Concerning **compliance and monitoring**, DG ENV maintained its strong alignment with corporate **IT security rules**, with regular monitoring undertaken for each system and organisational processes.

In 2025, all new legislative proposals underwent a Digital Check, in line with the digital-ready policymaking framework under the Interoperable Europe Act. DG ENV also put in place an internal support structure on digital-ready policymaking to facilitate this process.

Data management

The data management approach in DG Environment covers the four dimensions management, ownership, quality, and skills. In 2025, questions stemming from the Management Plan exercise as well as an exercise on data management in the context of the Information Management Steering Board have been integrated into the existing DG data, information and knowledge governance.

DG ENV's practices are largely established for the dimensions data management, ownership and responsibilities and data quality. DG ENV systematically collected information on data sets,

including on the data owners and stewards, relevant for recurring corporate exercises such as the update of the EC Data Catalogue. The number of datasets for which metadata have been recorded increased slightly in 2025. DG ENV has actively engaged in the Commission-internal discussion of best practice solutions and exchanged best practices with other DGs, particularly DG CLIMA.

Data knowledge skills in DG ENV are robust and developing constantly. For example, the EU survey on AI usage in the Commission conducted in 2025 showed a slightly above average number of “interested basic users” in DG ENV (users who have a good basic knowledge and usage of COM AI tools and are interested in new AI tools). Staff is being encouraged to take corporate training on data management and AI.

Data Protection

In line with internal procedures, DG ENV’s Data Protection Coordinator was consulted for all new and potential data processes and the DG’s Controllers were asked to document their processing operations. DG Environment has reviewed and improved, in cooperation with the Data Protection Officer, the DG’s data protection records and privacy statements. About 67% of DG ENV’s records of processing have been reviewed⁶.

DG ENV took further steps to raise awareness and ensure full compliance with the Personal Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. The DG’s Data Protection Coordinator organised local training and coaching sessions on records management, personal data protection and information security, with particular attention to the use of the sensitive personal data flag in Ares and on how to handle personal data in access to document requests under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001. The DG is encouraging staff participation in the Commission’s centrally organised in-depth trainings. An inventory of external processors agreements has been established and kept up to date.

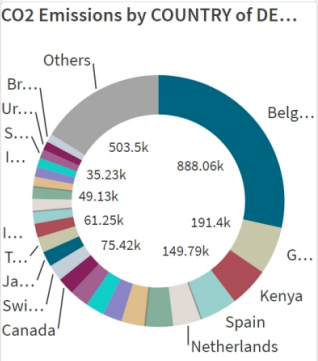
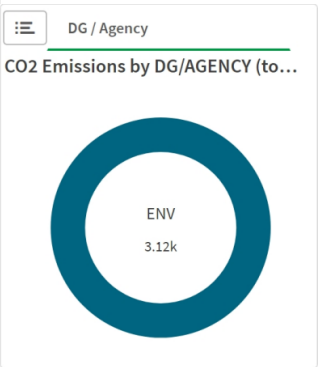
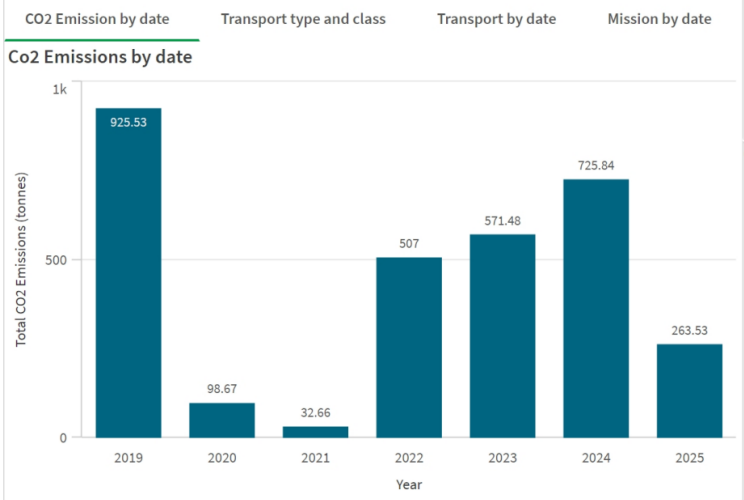
3.3. Sound environmental management

DG Environment is fully committed to the Commission’s objectives to reduce its environmental impact and to become climate-neutral by 2030. DG Environment has already achieved the target set by the Greening of the Commission Communication of reducing emissions from staff travel by half by 2030 compared to 2019. Following the Green Travel Pledge, ENV emissions, (data as of 16/03/2026), the total missions’ CO2 emissions (all travel modes incl.) amount to 411,26 tonnes in 2025 (compared to 915,71 tonnes in 2019), a reduction of 55%.

Since the creation of an online mission reporting tool, DG ENV can follow the CO2 consumption of missions throughout the year. Economy flights for long haul flights were also recommended. Many meetings were hybrid or totally virtual, thus significantly reducing GHG emissions from business travels for experts travel.

⁶ DG ENV is also the coordinating Service for the decentralised record [DPR-EC-03928 – Management of subscriptions to receive information] which is not part of the calculation.

Number of missions 4,952	Country from	Country to
Number of mission perfor... 582	Totals	
Number of legs 13,108	United States	Belgium
Total distance (km) 14,055,792	Belgium	Spain
Total Co2 emissions(tonnes) 3,125	Spain	Belgium
	Belgium	United States
	Kenya	Germany
	Belgium	Finland
	Finland	Belgium



DG Environment continues its effort to raise awareness and provide staff with adequate equipment to reduce their environmental footprint at work, in line with the local EMAS action plan adopted in 2019. The DG is committed to greener travel and is one of the DGs with the highest number of cycling commuters. Many DG ENV staff continue to participate in the annual VéloMai cycling competition. DG ENV will be actively promoting carpooling for 2026 in line with the 2026 EMAS greening Actions.

To achieve a greener workplace, action focused on three main working strands: 1) waste reduction and recycling, 2) a fully paperless office, and 3) promoting the use of tap water. To help reduce the Commission’s digital footprint, the number of documents exchanged internally by e-mail was further reduced, notably by promoting document sharing. Proactive support is provided regarding digital clean-ups and electronic archiving.

Based on the updated Public Procurement Vademecum of 2022, DG ENV continued promoting green procurement by including sustainability aspects in its procedures, while also looking to increase the number of procedures using green award criteria. In line with the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), event organisers and partners were encouraged to use environmentally friendly materials before and during the events, respecting the paperless and plastic-free guidance (see also the EMAS outputs defined in the performance tables in annex).

DG ENV is proactively participating with DG CLIMA in greening the courtyard of BRE2 with plants and trees and therefore enhancing the biodiversity of our working environment. DG ENV is also looking into a way of collecting rainwater for watering the outdoor plants.