

CHAIR'S WELCOME



Dear All,

The extraordinary ENVI meeting of 16 April will take place in Strasbourg and will be the last one of this legislature. We will fittingly wrap up business with a guest who will remind us of the need for urgency and ambition in our fight against climate change. Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old climate activist from Sweden, will be speaking in ENVI for an exchange of views open

to all members. Greta Thunberg came to prominence for starting the school strikes for climate in November last year. Thanks to her powerful, clear and simple call, she has since given renewed impetus to the climate change fight. The strikes she initiated have since spread all over the world to press us - policymakers and lawmakers in the EU and beyond, to make the fight against climate change not just "a" priority, but "the" priority in our daily work. The one-hour exchange will serve as an opportunity for a future-oriented debate: an occasion to think about the fate of the planet and also about those EU citizens who cannot yet vote in EU elections. It will be a reminder that, when it comes to climate change, the impact of our choices goes well beyond a 5-year parliamentary term.

The reasons for alarm are there for everyone to see. Climate change is irrefutable: data and scientific consensus cannot be papered over - no matter how many twitter followers one has. The planet's average surface temperature has risen about 0.9 °C since the late 19th century with most of the warming taking place in the past 35 years. The five warmest years on record have all occurred since 2010. Whether at the poles or from glaciers, ice is retreating at an increasingly fast pace. The number of extreme events, such as destructive floods, and high temperature peaks has intensified everywhere. The acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30 percent since the industrial revolution. Climate change is also contributing to an accelerating loss of biodiversity, along with deforestation and pollution; the loss of plants reduces the earth's capacity to absorb carbon, thus creating a vicious cycle.

ENVI members have acted in this legislature with these facts firmly in their minds. Whilst we should be alarmed, we should not panic: we should redouble our efforts and actions to accelerate the transition to a sustainable economy. ENVI's track-record in this legislature has shown that we largely share the call for urgency and ambition that Greta Thunberg has been hammering out in her speeches throughout Europe. There is absolutely no reason for complacency with the status quo, but we can look back at this legislature knowing that EU has embarked on an irreversible path when it comes to climate and environmental protection. But we are only walking on this path: we should be running.

Five years ago, there was no Paris Agreement to speak of. Thanks to EU leadership, the Paris Agreement is now the compass for climate action across the globe. It was thanks to the swift vote of the European Parliament in October 2016 that the EU ratified the agreement and that it came into force worldwide. For the next long-term EU budget, the European Parliament is also proposing a significant increase of climate-related spending across all EU programmes, that would reach 30 % of EU

expenditure as soon as possible and at the latest by 2027. Whether we look at the recent agreements on emission reductions from new cars, vans and heavy duty vehicles or the governance of the energy union; whether we look at the Effort Sharing or LULUCF Regulations or the successive reforms of the ETS system, whether we look at the adoption of the Waste Package or of the Single Use Plastics Directive, it is fair to say that the EU and the European Parliament have played a pioneering role in climate and environmental policy in this term and that the ENVI Committee was pivotal within the Parliament in raising the bar of ambition and urgency.

Yet there is no automaticity between pioneering and succeeding. We know all too well where the main hurdles for success lie. We know that sectors such as agriculture, aviation, maritime and road transport need to drastically step up their contribution to climate change reduction. We also know that we need greater effectiveness both below and above the EU level: we need to ensure that Member States perform better in implementing the policies they have signed up to; and we also need to ensure that our international partners step up - rather than backtrack - from their commitments.

Climate change should feature high on the agenda of the next European elections. It is not an easy issue to tackle: it will require tough political and personal choices; it will require the capacity to compromise and above all the capacity to cooperate. The politics of environmental protection and climate change are prime examples of the extent to which the cynic, nativist, navel-gazing slogans of some politicians - by undermining the instruments and will to cooperate, and by denying scientific facts - are a threat to our planet and our future. Backward-looking politics will do nothing to solve complex and global challenges such as climate change.

This is also an occasion to recall that in this term ENVI's contribution has gone well beyond climate policy. ENVI has also made strides in its other fields of competence. We have for example adopted legislation to reduce the impact of plastic products on the environment and on human health and to limit air pollution by establishing new national emission reduction commitments; we have revamped legislation on medical devices and reached agreement on veterinary medicine legislation - with the aim *inter alia* of reducing antimicrobial resistance.

On food security we have reached an agreement on the General Food Law, Novel Foods and official controls legislation to further increase the standards of transparency and safety for consumers. ENVI has also steadily kept the spotlight on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity targets. Throughout the term we have kept a close eye on the Commission's use of delegated and implementing acts - and objected or expressed our reservations when necessary. On a number of legislative files - such as on drinking water or health technology assessments - we worked speedily to be ready to start interinstitutional negotiations, but had to postpone them due to impasse among Member States in Council.

Being the Chair of ENVI has been a great honour and privilege and I could think of few things more rewarding than trying to pass on a more sustainable planet to future generations. I thank all those who helped me in this endeavour. I also take this opportunity to thank you all for your faithful readership throughout this legislature and I invite you to take part in the EP elections *en masse*, to get involved in the debate and to bring your family and friends in the discussion to shape the future of the EU.

Follow our discussions live and get involved in the debate at:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/envi/home.html>

Adina-Ioana Vălean,

Brussels – 12 April 2019

European Elections 2019



European Elections 2019 - "This time I'm voting.eu"

European elections will take place between 23 and 26 May across the EU. As elections are fast approaching, Parliament's services are using both traditional and

digital campaign tools to inform European citizens about past achievements and the challenges ahead, to allow for informed debate on what makes the EU valuable to them and where it needs change to deliver benefits for all - at local, regional, national and cross-border levels. A non-partisan platform ThisTimeImVoting.eu has been set up to encourage open public debate and motivate more people to get involved, get informed and make their voices heard in the May 2019 European elections. You can also find more information on the dedicated [European Elections](#) page on the EP website. ENVI invites you to join the project and spread the word.

MEETING ITEMS

Results of the votes of the last ENVI meeting are available [here](#).

Exchange of views with Greta Thunberg



On Tuesday 16 April 2019, the ENVI Committee is organising an exchange of views with Greta Thunberg, climate activist.

ENVI IN NEXT PLENARY

Draft agendas of the Plenary are available [here](#).

- Transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain
- CO2 emission performance standards for new heavy duty vehicles
- Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)
- Promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles
- Persistent organic pollutants

NEWS FROM THE POLICY DEPARTMENT

Recent Publications:

- Study on [Sampling points for air quality](#) – Representativeness and comparability of measurement in accordance with Directive 2008/50/EC ([Study in focus](#))
- Study on [The benefit of EU action in health policy: The record to date](#) (in cooperation with EPRS)
- Workshop proceedings on [Cardiovascular diseases and lifestyle](#)
- Briefing on [European energy and climate policies towards 2020, 2030 and 2050](#).
- Workshop proceedings on [Brain, A New Approach to Brain Diseases](#)
- Study on [International Climate Negotiations in view of COP24 in Katowice](#)

Upcoming Publications:

- Workshop proceedings on Robots in Healthcare: A Solution or a Problem?"

Upcoming:

The European Parliament will soon be launching a new Framework contract for the provision of external expertise for the ENVI committee. Please regularly check the European Parliament's Invitations to Tender website:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/tenders/invitations.htm>

NEWS FROM THE AGENCIES

European Environment Agency ([EEA](#))



Europe's urban air quality — re-assessing implementation challenges in cities. This report analyses the implementation of EU air quality legislation at the urban level and identifies some of the reasons behind persistent air quality problems in Europe's cities. It is produced in cooperation with 10 cities involved in a 2013 Air Implementation Pilot project: Antwerp (Belgium), Berlin (Germany), Dublin (Ireland), Madrid (Spain), Malmö (Sweden), Milan (Italy), Paris (France), Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Prague (Czechia) and Vienna (Austria). [More info.](#)

European Chemicals Agency ([ECHA](#))



Read ECHA's General Report 2018 This year marked the completion of the registration phase of REACH and the publication of the second Review of the REACH Regulation. A new Executive Director started working in ECHA and the Management Board adopted the Agency's

future Strategic Plan. Read about these and more in the [ECHA General Report 2018](#).

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ([ECDC](#))



Public consultation on HPV vaccines guidance. ECDC invites citizens, organisations and public authorities to contribute their views in a public consultation on new guidance for the introduction of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines in EU

countries. The guidance is the result of a systematic review and grading of the available evidence of the efficacy and effectiveness of the nine-valent HPV vaccine and also looks at the cost-effectiveness of adding boys to the girls-only HPV vaccination strategy. [More info.](#)

European Food Safety Authority ([EFSA](#))



EFSA has developed a harmonised framework to use across its scientific panels when evaluating the potential "combined effects" of chemical mixtures in food and feed. The approach gives EFSA's scientists the tools to follow a mixtures approach when needed, which complements the current EU regulatory requirements for assessing single substances. An EFSA research study from 2018, also published in March 2019, shows that overall in the EU awareness of chemical mixtures among the general public is quite low. EFSA has developed a new interactive multimedia tool to help people understand some of the main issues and concepts, such as "combined exposure" and "combined toxicity". [More info.](#)

European Medicines Agency ([EMA](#))



New EudraVigilance system improves reporting of side effects and detection of safety signals. The new and improved EudraVigilance, the European system for managing and analysing information on suspected adverse reactions to medicines received more than 2 million reports of suspected side effects in 2018. From 2018 onwards, national competent authorities and marketing authorisation holders are required to report non-serious cases of suspected adverse reactions in addition to serious cases. This was also a key driver for the increase in the number of reports received from European patients and consumers, which almost doubled between 2017 and 2018. Both EMA and national competent authorities have to continuously monitor the adverse drug reaction data reported to EudraVigilance to determine whether there are new or changed risks and whether they have an impact on a medicine's overall benefit-risk balance. With over 14.5 million individual case safety reports in total, Eudravigilance is one of the largest pharmacovigilance databases in the world and a powerful tool for regulators in the EU to monitor the safety of medicines. [More info.](#)

Next meetings of the ENVI Committee : 8 July, 15-18 July tbc (Strasbourg)
ENVI meetings: [2019 meeting dates](#).

Watch online the Committee meeting on the [EP web site](#) or on [Europarl TV](#).
Past meetings are available: [EP Live multimedia library](#) and you can also download the extracts of speeches.

More information: envi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu or [website](#) of the ENVI Committee.

Subscription: Please send an email to envi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu.
To sign up for ENVI committee press releases or for media enquiries, please write to envi-press@europarl.europa.eu

Further information sources: The EP Policy Departments [publish](#) studies, notes, information notes and workshop proceedings; To request a hard copy of any publication please contact Poldep-Economy-Science@europarl.europa.eu. The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) provides research publications in the area of environment, public health and food safety. You can find all the latest publications on the European Parliament website's [Think Tank](#) pages.

About the editor: European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union, Secretariat of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety - Responsible administrators: Giacomo Fassina, Ioana-Alice Postu. Responsible assistants: Elise Hancotte, Anna Pawlik, Isabelle Rihani

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