

CHAIR'S WELCOME



The next two ENVI meetings will take place on the 11th and 14th of March in Strasbourg.

On the 11th of March we will vote on the joint ENVI-ECON report on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment. The proposal aims to develop a clear EU classification system or "taxonomy" to determine what qualifies as "sustainable financial activities" and what does not. Finance needs to be part of our policy armoury in the fight against climate change: this draft report will instil further clarity and ambition in our pursuit of sustainability.

On Thursday, the 14th of March, ENVI Members are set to vote on the provisional agreement on the Persistent organic pollutants file (POPs). POPs are carbon-based chemical substances (for instance pesticides or industrial chemicals) that remain in the environment for long periods, and accumulate through the food chain in the fatty tissue of wildlife and humans. They are severely harmful for the environment and human health. In March last year, the Commission proposed to update the existing POPs Regulation, with a view to facilitate its implementation by the Member States and to align it with the general legislation on chemicals. The Parliament's amendments sought amongst others, to exploit ECHA's expertise in the Commission's work in the preparation of dossiers on substances, and to ensure that decisions made are based on scientific evidence. This update of the POPs Regulation will ensure clarity and consistency for all citizens and industries whose activities are affected by the changes.

On the 14th of March ENVI Members will also vote on objections to authorisations for the placing on the market of genetically modified soybean and maize products, as well as to authorisations for uses of DEHP. The latter chemical is used to make plastics more flexible; it is classified as toxic to reproduction under the REACH Regulation and is banned in numerous products. The Objectors consider that the Commission would exceed its powers by authorising several uses of DEHP, in particular taking into consideration the availability of safer alternative substances or technologies.

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

Adina-Ioana Vălean,
Strasbourg – 11 March 2019

MEETING ITEMS

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

11 March 2019:

Vote ECON/ENVI (joint committee procedure (Rule 55))

- Establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment

14 March 2019:

Votes:

- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on persistent organic pollutants (recast)
- Conclusion of the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community - *to be confirmed*
- Objections pursuant to Rule 106: placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified soybean MON 87751 (MON-87751-7), and placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize 1507 x NK603 (DAS-Ø15Ø7-1 x MON-ØØ6Ø3-6)
- Objections pursuant to Rule 106: authorisation for certain uses of bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) (Grupa Azoty Zakłady Azotowe Kędzierzyn S.A.), and authorisation for certain uses of bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) (DEZA A.S.)

Considerations:

- Objections pursuant to Rule 106: placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified soybean MON 87751 (MON-87751-7), and placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize 1507 x NK603 (DAS-Ø15Ø7-1 x MON-ØØ6Ø3-6)

ENVI IN NEXT PLENARY

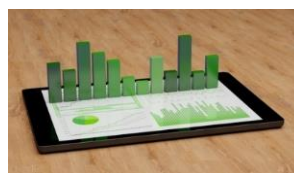
Draft agendas of the Plenary are available [here](#).

- Definition, presentation and labelling of spirit drinks and protection of geographical indications thereof
- Annual strategic report on the implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (DEVE-ENVI)

VOTE ECON/ENVI

Establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment

Vote on the draft report (Rule 55) ([see meeting documents](#))



The European Commission presented a proposal for a regulation on a future EU framework for determining environmentally sustainable financial activities in May 2018 along with a package of measures following up its action plan on financing sustainable growth. In June 2018, the Commission announced the creation of a technical expert group on

sustainable finance, which will develop an EU classification system or taxonomy, and support the establishment of a planned EU 'Green Bond Standard'. Preparatory work will be carried out once the taxonomy regulation has entered into force, and the Commission will establish a 'platform on sustainable finance composed of public and private sector stakeholders'.

The draft report (123 AMs) seeks to strengthen the future EU framework for determining environmentally sustainable financial activities. It includes a 'brown' taxonomy to be added over time, defined as "criteria for economic activities with a negative environmental impact". The draft report also provides that the taxonomy be based on a set of harmonised indicators, which should include "at least the circular economy indicators". These should capture the environmental impact on "CO₂ and other emissions, biodiversity, production of waste, the use of energy and renewable energy, raw materials, water, and direct and indirect land use".

539 Amendments have been tabled by ECON and ENVI Members and 70 compromise amendments have been negotiated.

Rapporteurs: [Pietikäinen](#) (ENVI, EPP), [Eickhout](#) (ECON, Greens/EFA),
Shadows ENVI: [Gentile](#) (S&D), [Dohrmann](#) (ECR), [Gerbrandy](#) (ALDE), [Eickhout](#) (Greens/EFA), [Eck](#) (GUE), [Pedicini](#) (EFDD)
Shadows ECON: [Pietikäinen](#) (EPP), [Bonafé](#) (S&D), [Swinburne](#) (ECR), [Wiernick](#) (ALDE), [Papadimoulis](#) (GUE), [Kappel](#) (ENF)

VOTES

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on persistent organic pollutants (recast)

Vote on the provisional agreement resulting from interinstitutional negotiations (see [meeting documents](#))

On 22 March 2018, the Commission adopted a legislative proposal for a regulation on persistent organic pollutants ('POPs'). The proposal is a recasting of Regulation (EC) 850/2004, which implements Union commitments under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants ('the Stockholm Convention') and under the Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants ('the POPs Protocol').

While keeping substantially unchanged the provisions in Regulation (EC) 850/2004, the proposed recast regulation aims at introducing into the Union legal system recent decisions taken within the framework of the Stockholm Convention and the POPs Protocol. In addition, the proposal envisages to attribute some new tasks to the European Chemicals Agency ('ECHA'), notably providing the Commission with administrative, technical and scientific support in the context of the implementation of the Regulation.

The Council and the Parliament succeeded in reaching a provisional agreement.

Rapporteur: [Girling](#) (ECR)
Shadows: [Paolucci](#) (S&D), [Piecha](#) (ECR), [Huitema](#) (ALDE), [Eickhout](#) (Greens/EFA), [Konečná](#) (GUE), [Pedicini](#) (EFDD)

Objections pursuant to Rule 106: placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified soybean MON 87751 (MON-87751-7) and from genetically modified maize 1507 x NK603 (DAS-Ø15Ø7-1 x MON-ØØ6Ø3-6)

Consideration and vote on draft motions for a resolution (see [meeting documents](#))



The objectors oppose the two draft measures on the grounds that they exceed the implementing powers provided for in the basic act and because they consider the authorisations could lead to unacceptable risks to food safety and

human health.

With regard to genetically modified soybean MON 87751, the objectors explain that GM soybean MON 87751 produces two insecticidal Bt toxins, Cry1A.105 and Cry2Ab2. Soybeans are a major allergenic food plant and Bt toxins are known for their potential to enhance immune responses to allergens. However, the immunogenic properties of the Cry toxins produced in the soybean were not sufficiently assessed, meaning that negative implications for food safety and therefore human health cannot be ruled out. With regard to genetically modified maize 1507 x NK603, the objectors state that maize 1507 x NK603 has been developed to provide protection against specific lepidopteran pests and tolerance to the herbicides glyphosate and glufosinate, whose use is no longer permitted in the EU due to its toxicity. Since the residues of these complementary herbicides are likely to be higher than on non-GM plants and since these residues and their metabolites on this GM maize assessed have not been analysed, negative food safety implications cannot be excluded.

Co-Rapporteurs: [Staes](#) (Greens/EFA), [Balas](#) (S&D), [Mazuronis](#) (ALDE), [Boylan](#) (GUE/NGL), [Evi](#) (EFDD), [Pietikäinen](#) (EPP)

Objections pursuant to rule 106: authorisation for certain uses of bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) - (Grupa Azoty Zakłady Azotowe Kędzierzyn S.A.) and (DEZA)

Vote on draft motions for a resolution (see [meeting documents](#))

The co-objectors oppose the draft measures on several grounds. They recall that the DEHP was added on the candidate list of substances of very high concern under the REACH Regulation in 2008 because of its classification as toxic to reproduction, and that in 2011 the substance was included in Annex XIV of the REACH Regulation due to these hazardous properties, its widespread use and high volume of production in the EU, with a sunset date of 21 February 2015. In addition, the co-objectors note that DEHP has been identified in 2014 as having endocrine disrupting properties for animals and humans, and that the candidate list was updated accordingly in 2014 regarding the environment and in 2017 regarding human health.

As regards the available alternatives, the Co-Objectors consider it surprising that the Draft Authorisations have failed to consider the availability of alternatives that is clearly documented in the restriction dossier.

The Co-Objectors consider that the draft Commission implementing decisions exceed the implementing powers provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006, and call on the Commission to withdraw its draft implementing decisions and to submit new drafts rejecting the applications for authorisation. They also call on the Commission to swiftly end the use of DEHP in all remaining applications, all the more so because safer alternatives to soft PVC and to DEHP are available.

Co-Rapporteurs: [Poc \(S&D\)](#), [Eickhout \(Greens/EFA\)](#), [Konečná \(GUE\)](#)

NEWS FROM THE POLICY DEPARTMENT

Recent Publications:

- 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:

- Study on Sampling points for air quality – Representativeness and comparability of measurements in accordance with Directive 2008/50/EC
- Workshop proceedings on Robots in Healthcare: A Solution or a Problem?"

Upcoming Events:

- Policy Hub on the measurement of outcomes in healthcare and for programming and managing public health services (22/03/2019).

EVENTS



High-level conference - "OCEANS: The Future of the Blue Planet"

On 19 March, the European Parliament jointly with the European Commission will host a High Level Conference titled "OCEANS - The Future of the Blue Planet", with panel discussions covering global ocean governance; sustainable blue economy; and healthy, clean seas and oceans. The conference will take place in the EP plenary chamber in Brussels. Oceans and seas are of crucial importance to the EU. Healthy oceans are home to a very rich biodiversity, act as climate-regulators, offer food security and contribute to the European economy, with a turnover of €566 billion, offering jobs for nearly 3.5 million people. Yet our knowledge about oceans, especially on the state of marine biodiversity, remains limited. We still have no information on 80% of marine species and habitats that need to be assessed under EU legislation. We do know, however, that oceans are impacted by past and present human activities. They are under increasing pressure from over-fishing, coastal eutrophication, marine litter and climate change. Oceans need to be managed sustainably in order to conserve the fragile marine ecosystems.

The High Level Conference will be hosted by President Tajani. All the [information on the conference](#) as well as the [registration page](#) can be found on the EP website.

NEWS FROM THE AGENCIES

European Environment Agency (EEA)



Mapping Europe's ecosystems. Mapping Europe's vast land and marine ecosystems is crucial to assessing the health of the continent's biodiversity and ensuring its future survival. That is why the European Environment Agency (EEA) is currently working on enhancing the data and knowledge of Europe's ecosystems which will support the European Union's work on the final evaluation of the EU biodiversity strategy in 2020. More info [here](#).

European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)



Annual evaluation report calls for increased REACH data compliance. ECHA released updated statistics on evaluated substances and registration dossiers and provided advice to registrants on how to improve the information they provide on chemicals. As in previous years, the report shows

that in the majority of registration dossiers that ECHA checks, important safety information is missing. After ECHA's request, most registrants update their dossiers with compliant information. More info [here](#).

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)



Gonorrhoea: drug resistance compromises recommended treatment in Europe. Gonorrhoea is the second most commonly notified sexually transmitted infection across the EU/EEA countries with almost 500 000 reported cases between 2007 and 2016. The infection is treatable but *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* keep showing high levels of azithromycin resistance according to latest results of the European Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Programme. ECDC will publish its revised

regional response plan to control multidrug-resistant gonorrhoea later this year. The plan outlines options to minimise the threat of drug-resistant gonorrhoea in Europe.

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)



Antimicrobial resistance shows no signs of slowing down. Data released on 26 February by the ECDC and EFSA reveal that antimicrobials used to treat diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans, such as campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis, are becoming less effective. Vytenis Andriukaitis, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: "The report released today should ring – again – alarm bells. It shows that we are entering into a world where more and more common infections become difficult – or even sometimes impossible – to treat. However, ambitious national policies in some countries limiting antimicrobial use have led to a decrease of antimicrobial resistance. More info [here](#)."

European Medicines Agency (EMA)



New booklet – from laboratory to patient.

EMA has just published a new booklet describing the journey of a medicine authorised through EMA, from initial research to discussions on patient access to medicines across the EU. The booklet describes in particular how EMA supports development of medicines for human use by providing scientific advice and how it assesses a medicine's benefits and risks once it receives an application for marketing authorisation. All the steps involved in these processes are outlined in layman's terms. More info [here](#).

Next meetings of the ENVI Committee : 21 March (Brussels)

Future 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.

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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.

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