



Climate change, environment and health

Citizens'
recommendations
and the EU context:
Panel 3 of the
Conference on the
Future of Europe

STUDY

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service
with the **Directorates-General for Internal Polices (IPOL)**
and **External Policies (EXPO)**

In the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe, four European Citizens' Panels have discussed the development of European integration in broad subject areas. For each of the **51 recommendations** put forward by **European Citizens' Panel 3: Climate change, environment and health**, the present paper sets out a selection of the most recent and relevant European Parliament resolutions on the matter and looks at existing EU legislation and other EU funding programmes, supporting and coordinating actions. However, this paper is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of all European Parliament resolutions and EU-level action in the area, but rather aims at feeding debate and discussion during the Conference plenary.

This paper has been produced at the request of Guy Verhofstadt, chair, on behalf of the European Parliament's delegation to the Conference on the Future of Europe.

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The authors would like to thank the colleagues of the Directorates-General for Internal Policies and for External Policies, for peer reviewing the document, and in particular those of the Policy Departments for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies and for Structural and Cohesion Policies for coordinating and contributing to the peer review.

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LINGUISTIC VERSIONS

Original: EN

Manuscript completed in February 2022.

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PE 698.940
ISBN: 978-92-846-9069-5
DOI:10.2861/796759
CAT: QA-01-22-120-EN-N

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Executive summary

Coming from all Member States, 800 randomly selected citizens have met in four European Citizens' Panels to debate and brainstorm about the future of the European project within the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe, from September 2021 to February 2022. In addition, citizens and organisations have been able to submit their ideas and contributions to the broader discussion via a multilingual digital platform, which provides information about events, seminars and conferences linked to the Conference taking place around Europe. By 31 January 2022, some 13 584 ideas and 19 180 comments had been submitted to the digital platform, and 5 005 events were organised in the framework of the Conference. The result of this giant exercise in participatory democracy is a set of many different recommendations from citizens. These will be further debated during the Conference plenary, which will elaborate the final proposals from the Conference.

The **800 citizens** were divided among **four panels**, each one covering a set of policy areas: Panel 1 dealt with stronger economy, social justice, jobs / education, youth, culture, sport / digital transformation; Panel 2 with European democracy / values, rights, rule of law and security; Panel 3 with climate change, environment and health; and Panel 4 with EU in the world / migration.

For **European Citizens' Panel 3: Climate change, environment and health**, the citizens' recommendations range from the future of farming and agricultural practices to food production and the link between agriculture and the Green Deal. Issues centred on climate change mitigation and adaptation feature prominently, as do environmental policies, including the circular economy, consumer aspects and taxation. Finally, the recommendations put forward include infrastructure issues, social policies, as well as health and healthcare.

Some recommendations could be implemented using the EU's existing legislative, executive and budgetary capacities, while others would require enhancing the instruments provided for in the Treaties. Some recommendations could be implemented by unlocking the 'untapped potential' of the existing Treaties, i.e. the existence of still unused or under-used possibilities for the EU institutions to deliver, while other recommendations would require revision of the current EU Treaties – with the accompanying hurdles of the ratification process.

History teaches us that sometimes the European project is a 'leap into the unknown', to quote a reply given by Robert Schuman in spring 1950. Despite the great variety in scope of these recommendations, they all underline a renewed interest among citizens in the European project.

For each of the **51 recommendations put forward by European Citizens' Panel 3**, this paper presents a selection of the most recent and relevant European Parliament resolutions on the matter and looks at existing EU legislation and other funding programmes, supporting and coordinating actions.

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1. Introduction

'Improving citizens' participation and transparency at EU level is key to bringing the Union closer to citizens and increasing citizens' trust and confidence in EU institutions, as well as achieving a real multi-level democracy'.

European Parliament Resolution of 7 July 2021 on Citizens' dialogues and Citizens' participation in EU decision-making ([2020/2201\(INI\)](#)).

In the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe, citizens' panels were designed and organised to give citizens a voice in the most inclusive way. For the EU, this has been the first time ever that citizens are involved in a consultative process at such a structural level.

European Citizens' Panels, an idea originally launched by the European Parliament in its resolution of January 2020, consist of four transnational forums of European citizens. While randomly selected, these citizens are nevertheless representative of the EU population according to set criteria, such as age, geographical origin, gender, socioeconomic background and/or level of education. One third of each citizens' panel is also composed of people younger than 25. Each of the four European Citizens' Panels cover a set of policy areas.

From September 2021 to February 2022, the four European citizens' panels met and debated about the future of the European project in three deliberative sessions that took place in Strasbourg (the first), in hybrid mode (the second) and in prestigious educational establishments around Europe (the third). Their task was to identify issues, discuss and propose recommendations for the institutions to follow up, while also taking account of the ideas provided by the broader public, submitted to the Conference's multilingual digital platform.

The Conference on the Future of Europe establishes a new innovative link between the participatory and the representative dimensions. Citizens' panels convey their recommendations to the Conference plenary and, at the same time, 20 selected 'ambassadors' from each European Citizens' Panel represent the four panels in the Conference plenary. These representatives of the European Citizens' Panels also sit in the Conference's working groups, to ensure a fair and inclusive discussion on the EU matters that interest citizens. In this way, the institutional component becomes permeable to the citizens' component of the Conference, and vice-versa.

At the Conference plenary of 21-22 January 2022, the 'ambassadors' of European Citizens' Panels 2 and 3 presented the recommendations of their respective panels and debated the results with the members of the plenary. The other two panels (1 and 4) will present their recommendations to the plenary on 11-12 March 2022. The Conference plenary, the institutional component of the Conference, has a very diverse composition. In addition to the 20 'ambassadors' per European Citizens' Panel, it comprises Members of the European Parliament, three European Commissioners, representatives of national parliaments, national governments, civil society, social partners, local and regional elected representatives, national citizens' panels, and consultative bodies (European Committee of the Regions and European Economic and Social Committee).

After this phase of mutual recognition, dialogue and exchange between citizens' panels and Conference plenary, the Conference's plenary and working groups are due to carry on their work with a view to elaborating the proposals to be submitted to the Executive Board. This is an important phase, because the plenary proposals should be adopted by consensus – to be reached, under the

rules of the Conference mandate – at least between representatives of the European Parliament, the Council, the European Commission, as well as representatives from national parliaments, on an equal footing. If representatives of citizens from national events and/or European or national citizens' panels present a clear, diverging position, this should be expressed in the report by the Executive Board.

The European Parliament has consistently supported citizens' participation and engagement in the European project. This support is reflected since 2017, in its resolution ([2014/2248\(INI\)](#)) looking at the possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union; up to a very recent resolution ([2020/2201\(INI\)](#)), which looked at citizens' dialogues and citizens' participation in EU decision-making. Parliament stressed the importance for the EU institutions to engage with citizens, and debate with them in an open, transparent, transnational and inclusive way. As the only directly elected EU institution, Parliament is a natural venue for political discussion and interaction. Parliament therefore encourages civic engagement through online fora, town halls, national, local and regional initiatives, and any other event that helps to build bridges. Parliament has strongly supported the citizens' panels, an exercise in deliberative democracy, since their inception.

Against this background, and with the aim to assist decision-makers in the next steps of the process, this paper presents some of the most recent and significant Parliament resolutions for each recommendation delivered by citizens' panels. This paper also indicates the existing EU legislation, programmes and/or initiatives relevant for each recommendation, to give a picture of the current state of affairs.

This paper therefore looks at the **51 recommendations** endorsed by European Citizens' Panel 3: **Climate change, environment and health** during the final panel meeting, which took place at the College of Europe in Natolin, Warsaw (Poland) on 7-9 January 2022. The recommendations are presented following the order put forward by the panel. The title of each section corresponds to the title of each sub-stream.

This paper is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of all European Parliament resolutions and existing action at EU level on the matter. It shows how Parliament has actively proposed concrete measures in the areas dealt with in the 51 recommendations, or has encouraged other institutions (e.g. the European Commission) to take legislative initiatives in many of the areas in question. In some fields, the EU already possesses the means to meet citizens' expectation, and in this respect, this paper stimulates a further reflection on how to improve the existing tools. For those interested in obtaining more information, one or two publications on the European Parliament Think Tank site are also presented for each recommendation.

An earlier paper looks at the recommendations put forward by Panel 2: European democracy / values, rights, rule of law and security; and two further papers will address those of Panel 1: A stronger economy, social justice and jobs / Education, culture, youth and sport / Digital transformation; and Panel 4: EU in the world / Migration.

2. The Conference on the Future of Europe – Infographic

The **Conference on the Future of Europe** is a bottom-up exercise allowing European citizens to express their opinion on the Union's future policies and functioning. Tools such as the digital platform and citizens' panels enable discussion of topics that matter to them.



Multilingual Digital Platform

Multilingual hub for citizens to share and debate ideas

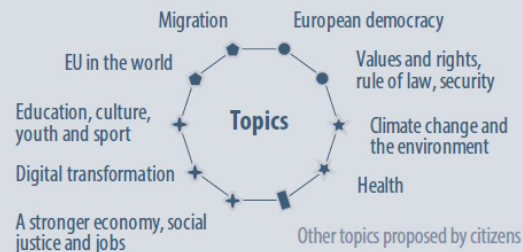
What it is

Main hub for citizens to share ideas and send contributions
Repository of citizens' contributions and documents
Input from events taking place under the umbrella of the Conference
Publication of conclusions reached by the Conference

Conference Charter

Citizens and event organisers must respect the Conference Charter:

- Respect EU values: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights
- Encourage diversity in the debates and respect freedom of speech
- No hate speech or content which is illegal or deliberately false or misleading
- Favour cross-border participation and use of different languages



- Guarantee full transparency, with input from citizens analysed and published on the digital platform
- Webstream or broadcast events whenever possible
- Respect data protection rules and the visual identity of the conference

Moderation of platform supervised by the Executive Board



Conference Plenary

449 representatives

Representatives

	Per Member State
European Parliament	108
National parliaments	108 (4)
European Citizens' Panels	80
Council	54 (2)
National events and/or panels	27 (1)
Committee of the Regions	18
Economic and Social Committee	18
Social partners	12
Civil society organisations	8
Local elected representatives	6
Regional elected representatives	6
European Commission	3
President of the European Youth Forum	1

Debates and discusses

The recommendations from the Citizens' Panels
The input from the multilingual platform

Work prepared

By 9 thematic working groups

Puts forward

Proposals to the Executive Board (on a consensual basis)

Consensus

To be found at least between the European Parliament, Council, Commission, and national parliaments



European Citizens' Panels

Forums where citizens discuss specific themes and provide a set of recommendations to the Conference plenary for the EU institutions to follow up

Four citizens' panels set up, between them covering the nine topics shown above

200 citizens on each panel, selected at random

- At least 1 man and 1 woman per Member State, applying degressive proportionality as in Parliament
- 1/3 should be between 16 and 25 years of age

Representatives of each panel take part in plenary

- At least 1/3 between 16 and 25 years of age
- To present their recommendations

Broad representation of citizens

Geographic origin
Gender
Age
Socioeconomic background
Level of education



Executive Board

9 representatives

- 3 from the European Parliament
- 3 from the Council of the EU
- 3 from the European Commission

Co-Chairs

Guy Verhofstadt (Parliament)
Clément Beaune* (Council)
Dubravka Šuica (Commission)

Observers from the European Parliament, Council, national parliaments, Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, other EU institutions and European social partners

Decide on the work of the Conference

Prepare the meetings of the plenary

Report to the joint presidency on the plenary's conclusions

Consensus

of the nine representatives

Joint Presidency

European Parliament	Roberta Metsola
Council of the EU	Emmanuel Macron*
European Commission	Ursula von der Leyen

Common Secretariat

Equal number from the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission

Ensure functioning of the Conference, assist the Executive Board and the Plenary

*The Council representatives change with the rotating presidency.

This is a further update of an infographic originally published in June 2021.

Source: [EPRS](#), 2022.

3. Citizens' recommendations

1	<p>We recommend that the EU provide subsidies for organic farming, including incentives for organic pesticides, to make organic goods more affordable. Furthermore, education for farmers in organic and sustainable farming needs to be supported by the EU and mono-culture farming should be avoided. Small organic farms, non-intensive farms and those with short supply chains should be given support to become more competitive.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Ahead of the presentation of the European Commission's 2018 proposals aiming at reforming the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP), the European Parliament set out its priorities for the future of food and farming, highlighting the need to empower local farmers and provide them with help and support on organic and value-added products and with new knowledge and technologies.</p> <p>Furthermore, in its resolutions on the 'farm to fork strategy' and on 'the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030', the European Parliament strongly supported the target proposed by the Commission of bringing at least 25 % of EU agricultural land under organic farm management in the EU by 2030. Parliament has stressed that pursuit of this objective must be market-driven, stimulating demand for organic food, including through public procurement and a broad variety of promotion measures aimed at supporting the stability of the EU's local organic products market and the fair remuneration of farmers. Parliament called Member States to define national organic farming targets in their territories, and to allocate the necessary financial resources under their CAP strategic plans to meet these targets.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The EU regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products, recently reviewed, ensures that the same high quality standards are respected all over the EU. The rules refer to agriculture and aquaculture farming practices, food processing and labelling, certification procedures for farmers as well as to the import of non-EU organic products. On 25 March 2021 the Commission published a communication on an action plan for the development of organic production, pursuing the objectives announced in the European Green Deal, the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 and the 'farm to fork' strategy. The action plan, incorporating the contributions channelled through the public consultation held ahead of its publication, puts forward 23 actions structured around three axes namely (i) boosting consumption while maintaining consumer trust; (ii) increasing production and (iii) improving the sustainability of the sector.</p> <p>Overall, the action plan aims to reach the target of 25 % of agricultural land under organic farming at EU level by 2030, as well as a significant increase in organic aquaculture, through initiatives implemented jointly by the Commission and EU Member States. The measures announced include the promotion of organic products through consumer information campaigns, as well as the distribution of organic products under the EU school scheme and in public canteens. The action plan also envisages supporting local and small-scale processing, in order to ensure efficient supply chains for organic products, as well as support for research and innovation in this area under the Horizon Europe programme. Currently around 8.5 % of the EU's agricultural area is farmed organically, with significant differences – ranging from below 1 % in some Member States to over 25 % in others. Taking into account these big differences, Member States are invited to develop their own national strategies on organic farming.</p> <p>The first annual EU-wide 'Organic Day' was held on 23 September 2021.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Caprile A. and McEldowney J., Development of organic production in the EU: 2021-2027 action plan, EPRS, July 2021.</p> <p>McEldowney J., Organic farming legislation – Revision of EU Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products, EPRS, March 2018.</p>

2	We recommend that innovation in vertical farming be supported by investments from the EU.
European Parliament position	<p>On numerous occasions, Parliament has highlighted the importance of the transition to sustainable food production, emphasising the role of research and innovation in agriculture and of developing and implementing innovative solutions, such as urban and vertical farming. Already in 2012, Parliament questioned the Commission about the possibility of EU funding for urban farming projects, such as the Sustainable Food in Urban Communities project financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the framework of the URBACT II programme.</p> <p>In its resolution on the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, Parliament supported the Commission's plan to set up an EU platform for urban greening, and stressed in this context the need to include measures such as supporting urban farming. In another resolution on the 'farm to fork' strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system, Parliament welcomed the fact that the new common agricultural policy (CAP) would provide incentives to promote innovative and sustainable business models for agriculture and food production, including fostering short supply chains. It underlined the importance of EU funding for research and innovation as key drivers of transition, and also emphasised equally the need to facilitate the investments needed to encourage sustainable practices. Parliament welcomed the reduction targets for pesticides and nutrient losses and pointed out that their achievability depends on the availability of safer, effective and efficient alternatives, such as innovative sustainable agricultural practices. Stressing that agricultural land is limited and hence must be used efficiently, Parliament highlighted the need to include innovative farming models with low land-use footprints.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>In the 'farm to fork' strategy, which aims to accelerate the transition to a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system, urban food systems are identified as one of the key areas for research and innovation. Vertical farming has been studied in the framework of several research and development projects funded under previous research programmes; support to research and innovation in the agricultural sector will continue under the future Horizon Europe programme. Projects dealing with vertical farming are INFARM, PLOUTOS and the European Forum on Urban Agriculture (EFUA). Urban and vertical farming was also taken into account in a Commission's Farmers of the Future foresight project.</p> <p>The ERDF and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) have long been providing financial support for vertical farming initiatives implemented in the Member States. Such support is also possible under the 2021-2027 programming period, but under the new CAP, specific measures are being defined by the Member States.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>McEldowney J., Urban agriculture in Europe: Patterns, challenges and policies, EPRS, December 2017.</p> <p>Pierr A., Zasada I., Doernberg A., Zoll F., Ramme W., Urban and peri-urban agriculture in the EU, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, April 2018.</p>

3	The EU should set minimum standards for food quality, as well as food traceability and the use of seasonal food in school canteens. Healthy ingredients for school canteens should therefore be subsidised to ensure affordable, high-quality food for pupils.
European Parliament position	<p>Parliament has underlined the importance of continuing the EU school schemes that promote healthy food in school canteens. In its March 2016 resolution on the aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments, the Parliament stressed that the EU support should do more to promote healthy eating habits and the consumption of local products.</p> <p>In its November 2021 resolution on the common agricultural policy (CAP), Parliament underlines that EU countries should choose products for school schemes on the basis of objectives including health and environmental considerations, seasonality, and availability of local or regional produce, and encourage in particular local or regional purchasing, organic products, short supply chains or environmental benefits, including sustainable packaging.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Applicable since 1 August 2017, the renewed EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme supports the distribution of these products to schoolchildren, from nursery to secondary school. EU countries approve a list of products (in collaboration with their health and nutrition authorities) which should help achieve the schemes objective of helping children to follow a healthy diet. The scheme also supports educational and information measures. EU countries may encourage local, short-supply chain, organic and quality scheme products if they wish. The total EU budget for the scheme for the period 2017-2023 is €250 million per school year.</p> <p>In the 'farm-to-fork' (F2F) strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system, adopted in May 2020, the Commission announced its plan to revise the EU school scheme legal framework with a view to refocus the scheme on healthy and sustainable food. The proposal is expected to be done by the end of 2023. The F2F strategy also includes further actions to determine the best modalities for setting minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement to promote healthy and sustainable diets, including organic products, in schools and public institutions.</p> <p>In its communication on an action plan for the development of organic production, published in March 2021, the Commission points out that by integrating organic products into school meals and workplace canteens through public procurement, into the hospitality sector through incentives and visibility, into supermarkets through promotion campaigns, and into everyday home cooking, more organic food will become accessible to more European citizens.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>McEldowney J., EU agricultural policy and health: Some historical and contemporary issues, EPRS, October 2020.</p> <p>Tuinsma T., Farm to Fork strategy: An overview of Parliament's positions, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, November 2020.</p>

4.	Bike lanes / urban infrastructure (Climate, Environment, Health)
European Parliament position	<p>2017/2006 (INI), Resolution on the role of EU regions and cities in implementing the COP21 Paris Agreement on Climate Change</p> <p>Parliament stressed the need to act on smart and long term <i>urban planning</i> and mobility, including <i>infrastructure</i>, by investing in, in particular <i>green infrastructure</i> and mobility.</p> <p>2019/2956 (RSP), Resolution on the European Green Deal (EGD).</p> <p>Parliament has welcomed a more comprehensive urban mobility plan to reduce congestion and improve liveability in towns and cities, through e.g. support for zero-emissions public transport, <i>cycling</i> and walking <i>infrastructure</i>.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Communication, European Commission, <i>Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future</i>, COM(2020)789 final</p> <p>In line with 2030 climate targets, increasing the modal shares of e.g. collective transport, walking and <i>cycling</i>, will significantly lower pollution and congestion, especially in cities. This will improve the <i>health</i> and well-being of people. The Commission will further engage with cities and Member States to ensure that all large and medium-sized cities, which are TEN-T urban nodes put in place their SUMP by 2030. These plans should include new goals, among which active transport, such as <i>cycling</i>, announcing over 2300 km of extra <i>cycling infrastructure</i>. This should be doubled towards 5 000 km in safe <i>bike lanes</i> within the next decade.</p> <p><i>Proposal for a Regulation, European Commission, Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network</i>, TEN-T, COM (2021) 812 final</p> <p>SUMPs will become mandatory for TEN-T urban nodes. Cities will need to take into account <i>cycling infrastructure</i> in their transport planning. Consideration should be given to infrastructure for cycle paths, including the EuroVelo routes. Multimodal digital mobility services will help to enhance the integration of the different modes, with a focus on the most sustainable modes; public transport and active transport such as walking and <i>cycling</i>. When building or upgrading road and railway infrastructure, the continuity and accessibility of pedestrian and <i>cycle paths</i> should be taken into account.</p> <p>Communication, European Commission, <i>the New EU Urban Mobility Framework</i>, COM(2021)811 final</p> <p>The EU needs to take action on sustainable urban mobility, with a focus on public transport, active mobility (e.g. walking, <i>cycling</i>) and efficient zero-emission urban logistics. The aim is better park and ride facilities, better equipped with <i>bike parking</i>. The requirement with regard to SUMPs will further stimulate <i>active mobility</i>. <i>Healthier</i> and safer mobility with a renewed focus on walking, <i>cycling</i> and micro mobility is key, including the necessary infrastructure and data collection.</p> <p>EU funding (2021-2027) for urban infrastructure could come from the European structural and cohesion funds, Horizon Europe, the Connecting Europe Facility, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and Invest EU. Besides, two concrete examples of EU funded projects are EIT Urban Mobility and ELTIS.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Pape M., Cycling mobility in the EU, EPRS, May 2015.</p> <p>Pape M., Sustainable and smart mobility strategy, delivered at local level, EPRS, April 2021.</p> <p>Van Lierop C., Strengthening the Urban Agenda for the EU, EPRS January 2021.</p>

5	<p>We recommend making the production of food part of public education. Subsidise and support the creation of gardens in schools, if feasible, and urban gardening projects for public and private spaces. The need for space, water and support infrastructure needs to be part of urban planning frameworks. For example, former parking lots could be used for greening, vertical gardening on buildings, or there could be mandates to include green spaces for receiving building permits. Share innovative and best practices across all Member States.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament has reflected on the role of education in sustainability, including in food production and healthy food, on various occasions. Its 2018 resolution on the COP 21 Paris Agreement appealed for the Commission to increase its support for education in climate protection. In 2021, in its resolution on the European education area it called for the promotion of education on climate change, and green, ecological transition.</p> <p>The previous year it adopted by a large majority a resolution calling for a European Year of Greener Cities 2022 with the focus on urban green spaces and infrastructure. It highlighted the need to support urban gardening and urban school gardening as a pillar of environmental education. The initiative has not yet been implemented despite a positive reaction from the Commission listing its actions in this area.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The Commission's July 2020 Skills Agenda for Europe includes skills to support the green and digital transitions (twin transitions). As skills for the green transition need to feature in school and educational curricula, building in environmental and climate considerations, in January 2022, the Commission published a proposal for a Council recommendation on education for environmental sustainability, in an effort to put climate change, biodiversity and sustainability at the core of education and training systems in the EU. The Erasmus + programme will give priority to projects related to green competence and skills, related curricula and approaches.</p> <p>In parallel, the Joint Research Centre published an accompanying competence framework on sustainability. The GreenComp provides learners and educators with information on sustainability competences, and the challenges and consequences of climate change, and inspires reflection on the behavioural changes needed. Education for Climate Coalition is a community of students, teachers and educators who look for educational solutions and train teachers and educators in this area.</p> <p>The school schemes project aims to provide schoolchildren with healthy food such as fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables, and milk. The scheme also supports educational measures, including farm visits, school gardens and cooking workshops.</p> <p>The Commission communication on green infrastructure highlighted the importance of green spaces, green roofs and vertical gardens in urban areas for the quality of life and health of inhabitants. Green infrastructure helps mitigate climate change by creating fresh air corridors. It also presents a more coherent approach by integrating ecological and sustainability issues into spatial planning.</p> <p>The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is an interdisciplinary initiative launched by the Commission in 2020. It links climate, ecological and social concerns with culture, art, science and innovation. The World Green Infrastructure Network is a partner initiative of the NEB and promotes green infrastructure: green roofs and walls, urban forestation, aiming to enhance the inclusion of green infrastructure in EU regulations on buildings' energy performance, or urban rainwater management (blue infrastructure).</p>

EPRS/POLDEP
publication for
more information

Malet, R., [Towards a European education - Critical perspectives on challenges ahead](#), Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, October 2020.

Buiskool, B.-J., Marye Hudepohl, M. [Effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and ESC programmes](#), Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, March 2020.

Bourguignon D., [Nature-based solutions](#): Concept, opportunities and challenges, EPRS, October 2017.

6	<p>We recommend that the EU adopt a directive requiring urban development programmes to fulfil specific environmental requirements, with the aim to make cities greener. The directive must apply to private and public property and spaces, such as new buildings being developed. The directive must impose minimum standards to ensure buildings and spaces are as green as possible. 'Green', here, refers to the use of renewable energy sources, reduced energy consumption, low levels of CO₂ emissions and the inclusion of plants in architectural projects.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal supports the renovation of all existing buildings to become 'near zero energy' buildings, in order to achieve carbon neutrality in the EU by 2050 at the latest.</p> <p>Parliament's resolution of 17 September 2020 on maximising the energy efficiency potential of the EU building stock sets out how the EU can implement and improve the Renovation Wave for Europe strategy adopted by the European Commission, which sets the target of doubling the rate of building renovation this decade.</p> <p>Parliament's resolution of 15 December 2021 on the implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) looks at how to enhance the effectiveness and ambition of the main EU legislation in the field of (green) building standards.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>On 15 December 2021, the European Commission adopted a legislative proposal to revise the EPBD. This would set a new EU standard for 'zero emissions buildings' powered entirely by renewable energy and able to offset their life cycle global warming potential entirely.</p> <p>Buildings are currently responsible for about 40 % of the EU's energy consumption and 36 % of greenhouse gas emissions from energy, but only around 1 % of the building stock is renovated each year to meet EU energy efficiency standards.</p> <p>The revised EPBD would also seek to accelerate energy efficient renovations, especially in the worst performing 15 % of existing buildings across the EU.</p> <p>The revised EPBD would additionally oblige both new and renovated buildings to consider key quality of life issues in their construction such as air quality, electromobility (e.g. parking and charging points for electric vehicles), access for disabled persons, and easy regulation of room temperatures.</p> <p>The European Parliament and the Council of the EU (representing the Member States) are now developing their views on the Commission's proposal, and will subsequently negotiate the final text before it can enter into force.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Tenhunen S. Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2010/31/EU: Fit for 55 revision – Implementation in action, EPRS, August 2021.</p> <p>Wilson A., Revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive: Fit for 55 package, EPRS, February 2022.</p>

7	<p>We recommend that the EU, with the assistance of the Member States, develop, adopt and implement a common European charter targeting environmental issues, in their complexity. The charter will provide a framework for Member States to develop regular information and training campaigns, disseminated across all available media channels and a new dedicated information portal. These campaigns should be held across the EU and at all levels to foster environmental awareness among all citizens</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In November 2019, the European Parliament declared a climate and environment emergency. It called on the Commission, the Member States and all global actors, and declared its own commitment, to urgently take the concrete action needed in order to fight and contain this threat before it is too late.</p> <p>In its 2020 resolution on the European Green Deal, Parliament welcomed the idea of a European climate pact. In its view, it must bring together citizens, regions, local communities, civil society, businesses and trade unions as active participants in the transition to climate neutrality, based on genuine dialogue and transparent and participatory processes, including in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies. In its resolution on the biodiversity strategy for 2030, the Parliament stressed that knowledge about the environment should be an integral part of education, and that participatory sciences and awareness-raising should be supported, not least to show society the need to protect and restore biodiversity.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Under the EU Treaties, the EU is committed to a 'high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment'. Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the EU's policies (Article 11 TFEU, Article 37 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights).</p> <p>General environment action programmes (EAP), adopted jointly by the European Parliament and Member States in the Council, set the framework for EU environmental policy, and serve as a guide for policy-making, setting out priority objectives to be attained. Adopted in 2021, the 8th EAP, which builds on the environment and climate action objectives of the European Green Deal, will set the direction for EU environmental policy up to 2030.</p> <p>On climate action specifically, the European Climate Law sets a legally binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (climate neutrality), as well as an intermediate target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 % by 2030, compared with 1990 levels. In July 2021, the Commission put forward a package of legislative proposals with the aim of making the EU 'Fit for 55' and delivering the transformational change that is needed across the economy, society and industry on the way to achieving climate neutrality by 2050. The EU and Member States are legally bound to take the necessary measures at EU and national level to meet the target.</p> <p>To support climate action and raise awareness on the issue, the EU launched the European climate pact, with a dedicated website. It allows citizens, organisations, and groups to get involved, and share stories, solutions and suggestions.</p> <p>Providing sound, independent information on the environment for both policymakers and the public is the task of the European Environment Agency, which makes knowledge available through its website and other media channels.</p> <p>In January 2022, the European Commission presented a (non-legislative) proposal related to education and training for environmental sustainability. The aim is to support Member States, schools, higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations and others in providing learners with understanding and skills on sustainability, climate change and the environment.</p>

EPRS/POLDEP
publication for
more information

Erbach G., [European climate law](#), EPRS, August 2021.

Yougova D., [Eighth Union Environment Action Programme](#), EPRS, July 2021.

8 Ecological footprint	We recommend a graded unified labelling system showing the entire ecological footprint for every available product purchased within the EU. Products from outside the EU need to respect this labelling system in a transparent manner. The system should be based on clear labelling criteria on the products themselves and use, for example, a QR code that gives more in-depth information about the product.
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution of 25 November 2020 on a sustainable single market for business and consumers, Parliament called for the development and introduction of a mandatory labelling system on the environmental performance of products. While stressing that the labelling should focus on the estimated lifetime and reparability of a product, Parliament said that this labelling 'could take the form of an environmental performance index, taking into account multiple criteria throughout the life cycle of products according to product category' and should be based on scientific facts and transparent standards. Parliament also recommended assessing the possibility for the establishment of a public European register that would list authorised and banned environmental claims, as well as the conditions and steps to be made to assert a claim. Parliament also supported the plan to introduce digital product passports that would provide businesses and consumers with information on a product's climate, environmental, social and other impacts throughout the value chain.</p> <p>In its resolution of 10 February 2021 on the new circular economy action plan, Parliament called on the Commission to propose 'binding material and environmental footprint targets for the whole product lifecycle for each product category placed on the EU market'.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Concerning food information to consumers, Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 includes the obligation to label nutrition information since 13 December 2016. It mandates nutrition information for the majority of prepacked processed foods, the mandatory origin information for fresh meat from pigs, sheep, goats and poultry and the same labelling requirements for online, distance selling or buying in a shop. One of the upcoming proposals planned in the EU's May 2020 Farm to Fork strategy, for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system, is the introduction of standardised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling for food products.</p> <p>The European Commission plans to present a legislative proposal on substantiating environmental claims. This would require companies making environmental claims about their products to substantiate them by using the EU product and organisation environmental footprint (PEF and OEF) methods, developed by the Commission's Joint Research Centre. These methods are the EU's harmonised Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodology. The two environmental footprints measure 16 environmental impacts for a number of product groups and economic sectors, throughout their life cycle. The PEF has so far been developed, for instance, for beer, dairy, dry pasta, packed water, decorative paints, leather, t-shirts and thermal insulation, while the PEO exists for retail and copper production. This proposal would go hand in hand with the planned legislative proposal on empowering consumers for the green transition, which could ban making false and exaggerated green claims to consumers. A legislative proposal for a sustainable product policy would, meanwhile, introduce a digital product passport. All three proposals are expected in March 2022.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Keirsbilck B. et al, Sustainable Consumption and Consumer Protection Legislation, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, April 2020.</p> <p>Šajn N., Sustainable consumption: Helping consumers make eco-friendly choices, EPRS, October 2020.</p> <p>EP factsheet: Sustainable production and consumption, October 2021</p>

9	<p>We recommend that more financial investment should be made to explore new eco-friendly sources of energy and until then additional investment into existing optimal solutions for energy production. We also recommend informing and educating the European public about specific sources of energy in full transparency. We strongly recommend considering the entire ecological and social impacts of the energy production process for current and future generations.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament strongly supports financial investment in sustainable sources of energy. In its November 2020 resolution on the sustainable Europe investment plan, Parliament calls for the phasing-out of public and private investments in polluting and harmful energy sources, in favour of renewable energy systems. Parliament underlines the urgency of massive investment in technological innovation and energy efficiency; it calls on the Commission and Member States to prepare strategies to phase out all environmentally harmful subsidies to fossil fuels. Parliament, as co-legislator, also plays an important role in defining EU legislation on sustainable finance.</p> <p>In its May 2018 resolution on the action plan on sustainable finance, the Parliament recommended that the European Investment Bank (EIB) work with small market participants and community cooperatives to undertake bundling of small-scale renewable energy projects to enable them to be eligible for EIB funding.</p> <p>In its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal, the Parliament stressed the need for a systemic climate mainstreaming and proofing of all programmes in the EU's research and innovation agenda. In its resolution of 8 July 2021 on a new ERA for research and innovation, the Parliament encourages an overall increase in the national budgets devoted to research and innovation in clean energy technologies, thereby fostering national objectives and funding targets that indicate concrete and relevant pathways to 2030 and 2050.</p>
Existing proposals and/or acts on the issue	<p>Through the Taxonomy Regulation (which entered into force in July 2020) the EU is aiming to facilitate public and private investment in sustainable sources of energy. The regulation considers as eligible activities for sustainable investment the generation, transmission, storage, distribution or use of renewable energy, including using innovative technology, with a potential for significant future savings or through necessary reinforcement or extension of the grid.</p> <p>The Renewable Energy Directive (RED) promotes and facilitates the take-up of renewable energy sources in the EU Member States, including on a cross-border basis. With a budget of more than €15 billion between 2021 and 2027, the climate-energy-mobility cluster of Horizon Europe will invest in collaborative research and innovation activities to create new knowledge and solutions to develop eco-friendly technologies. Three out of the six investments priorities of the cluster defined in the Horizon Europe strategic plan for 2021 to 2024 will contribute directly to eco-friendly energy. Through Mission City, Horizon Europe is expected to spur innovation in eco-friendly energies, with the objective of making 100 European cities climate neutral by 2030. In addition, 37 % of the support given to Member States through Next Generation EU, corresponding to no less than €248 billion will be directed towards investments expected to contribute to the EU objective of climate neutrality.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Wilson A, Revision of the Renewable Energy Directive: Fit for 55 package, European Parliament, November 2021.</p> <p>Wilson A, Horizon Europe, framework programme for research and innovation 2021-2027, European Parliament, July 2021.</p>

10	We recommend a drastic reduction of chemical pesticides and fertilisers in all types of farms, by enforcing the application of higher common standards, by accelerating research into natural alternatives and by supporting the adoption of new solutions, including training for farmers.
European Parliament position	In its recent resolution on the farm to fork strategy, Parliament expressed support for binding pesticide reduction targets. It also called action to improve the pesticide approval process and its implementation. In its view, to achieve the targets for the reduction of the use and associated risks of chemical pesticides and the reduction of nutrient losses, safer alternatives must become available to ensure the availability of a functioning plant protection toolbox. In this context, Parliament called for an increase in research and development in the area of alternative plant protection products, fertilisers, more resistant varieties that require less input to secure stable yields and digital tools, as well as incentives for application methods and technologies such as precision agriculture. It invited the Commission to speed up and simplify the adoption of new plant health solutions, including PPP (plant protection products) with a lower impact, such as low-risk substances or biosolutions.
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>EU pesticide legislation includes rules on the placing of plant protection products (PPP) on the market; sustainable use of pesticides; and pesticide residues in food and feed. The Sustainable Pesticide Use Directive (SUD) aims to achieve sustainable use of PPPs by reducing the risks and impacts of PPP use on human health and the environment and promoting integrated pest management, as well as alternative approaches or techniques, such as non-chemical alternatives to pesticides.</p> <p>The revised Fertilisers Regulation, applying in full from mid-July 2022, eases access to the EU single market for organic fertilisers. The regulation also sets a content limit for cadmium in phosphate fertilisers to reduce heavy-metal pollution and associated health risks. On fertiliser use, the Nitrates Directive, targeting water pollution from nitrates used for agricultural purposes, requires the designation of 'nitrate vulnerable zones', where Member States need to establish and implement action programmes, including measures to limit the application of nitrogen-containing fertilisers.</p> <p>Under the conditionality rules of the common agricultural policy (CAP) 2023-2027, beneficiaries have their payments linked to a set of obligations, some of which arise from the Nitrates Directive and the SUD. CAP eco-schemes can also support voluntary practices by farmers (more ambitious than the legal baseline) that contribute to the sustainable use of nutrients and pesticides. Farm advisory services, whose role has been strengthened, make advice available to farmers on a broad range of topics, including the environmental dimension of land and farm management.</p> <p>Under the farm to fork strategy and the biodiversity strategy for 2030, part of the European Green Deal, the EU has set itself the target of reducing the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50 % by 2030. It will also aim to reduce nutrient losses by at least 50 %, which should reduce the use of fertilisers by at least 20 % by 2030. The EU is further seeking to bring 25 % of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030. To achieve the pesticide reduction target, the SUD will be revised in the first quarter of 2022. The revision will seek to increase the uptake of less hazardous and non-chemical alternatives for pest control. An integrated nutrient management action plan is also expected in 2022.</p> <p>The EU supports research and innovation in agriculture, for instance through the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI). Around €9 billion are available under the Horizon Europe programme for research and innovation in the area of food, agriculture and the environment. A specific EU mission has been launched in the area of soil health.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Caprile A., Development of organic production in the EU, EPRS, July 2021.</p> <p>Rossi R., The EU 'farm to fork' strategy, EPRS, October 2021.</p>

11	<p>We recommend the extension of the protected areas for the conservation of biodiversity (including mammals, birds, insects and plants), and enhancing the rule of law regarding human intervention in these areas. The protected areas will be seen not only as islands, but as a continuum with greener urban areas, following harmonised EU standards.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Parliament took a strong stance on biodiversity protection, supporting a move away from voluntary commitments and the adoption of legally binding targets for the EU and its Member States, including the specific goal of reaching at least 30 % of protected terrestrial and marine areas.</p> <p>In its June 2021 resolution on the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, Parliament called for a legally binding biodiversity governance framework. This 'biodiversity law' (counterpart of the European 'climate law') should steer a path to 2050 through a set of objectives, including targets for 2030, and establish a monitoring mechanism with smart indicators, within and beyond protected areas. The quality of protected areas must be ensured, including through the implementation of clear and effective conservation plans and proper management. As regards urban greening, Parliament expressed support for binding targets on urban biodiversity, such as a minimum share of green roofs on new buildings. It also called for the number of green spaces to be increased in line with the number of inhabitants, while also addressing inequalities in access to green spaces.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Nature protection in the EU is based on two main pieces of legislation, the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive, which seek to ensure the conservation of species and habitat types of EU importance. They are the basis for the Natura 2000 network of protected areas. Natura 2000 sites are not strict nature reserves where human activities are systematically excluded. They often include land that is inhabited, privately owned, or used for recreational or economic purposes.</p> <p>Under the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the EU has set itself new targets for nature conservation for the coming decade. One of those is legally protecting a minimum of 30 % of the EU's land area and 30 % of EU seas, and integrating ecological corridors, as part of a genuine trans-European nature network. At least a third of these protected areas (i.e. 10 % of land and 10 % of sea), should be under strict protection. Strict protection does not necessarily imply that the area is not accessible to humans, but that natural processes are left essentially undisturbed to respect the areas' ecological requirements. Natura 2000 currently covers 18 % of the EU's land and 8 % of its sea, with an additional 8 % of land and 3 % of sea covered by national protection schemes. By contrast, only 3 % of land and 1 % of sea are under strict protection.</p> <p>The biodiversity strategy also calls on cities with populations above 20 000 citizens to develop urban greening plans, with measures to create biodiverse and green urban forests, parks and gardens; urban farms; green roofs and walls; tree-lined streets; urban meadows; and urban hedges. The plans should also help improve connections between green spaces. To help cities go greener, the EU launched a specific initiative in 2020, the 'Green City Accord'.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Halleux V., Biodiversity protection: Where do we stand?, EPRS, June 2021.</p> <p>Halleux V., Protecting pollinators in the EU, EPRS, July 2021</p>

12	<p>We recommend redirecting the generic subsidies for agriculture mainly towards projects relating to the development of sustainable agriculture, including respect for nature and workers. The beneficiaries should comply with clear environmental standards, and be strictly monitored.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Parliament set out its priorities for the future of food and farming ahead of the presentation of the European Commission's 2018 proposals aimed at reforming the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP). These priorities include more targeted interventions for diverse agricultural systems, with farm payments that should help farmers who are actively farming to earn their living and help both food production and the safeguard of environmental and animal welfare standards. These principles were at the core of Parliament's position during the three-year negotiations on the post 2022 CAP, on which EU legislators reached a deal in 2021. Parliament also introduced the issue of respect for agricultural employees' social rights in the negotiations on the future CAP and secured its inclusion for the first time in CAP legislation.</p> <p>In a resolution on the 'farm to fork' strategy launched by the Commission in May 2020 in the context of the European Green Deal, Parliament stressed the need to support a fair transition to sustainability. Parliament's plea to take action to reduce the environmental impact of food chains confirmed the 'farm to fork' strategy's approach and took forward the EU's commitment in the area of sustainable farming.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The CAP dates back to the 1960s, with objectives – set out in Article 39 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU – focusing on food security and the modernisation and competitiveness of the farming sector. Farmers' income support represents the bulk of CAP financial interventions, mostly directed to farmers in the form of a basic payment per hectare of land. However, over the years, constant demands to make the CAP more responsive to emerging needs have brought new objectives, such as protecting the environment and preserving natural resources. This has led to the greening of CAP payments by linking financial support to EU rules on the environment and human, plant and animal health, and to mandatory actions and investments that contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources.</p> <p>The future 2023-2027 CAP strengthens environmental conditions and standards to benefit from farm payments, and expands the set of environmental actions available to farmers. The new rules on the national CAP strategic plans (with which each EU country will define the CAP interventions for achieving set objectives) include measures such as eco-schemes to reward farmers' actions in favour of climate and the environment, beyond environmental conditionality and other obligations to receive CAP funds. Moreover, the inclusion of social conditionality in the post 2022 CAP legislation requires CAP beneficiaries to respect elements of social and labour law to receive CAP funds. Innovative farming practices are among the actions that eco-schemes could support, such as the use of precision farming to reduce inputs and improve farm efficiency. Carbon farming represents both another group of practices potentially supported by eco-schemes and a new EU initiative to reward carbon capture and storage on farms to contribute to climate change mitigation.</p> <p>The performance of the CAP strategic plans will be monitored and evaluated against established targets and by means of a set of common indicators. These will reflect as far as possible whether the measure supported contributes to achieving the objectives envisaged, including environment- and climate-related goals.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Rossi R., CAP strategic plans, EPRS, December 2021.</p> <p>Guyomard H., Bureau J.-C. et al., The Green Deal and the CAP: Policy implications to adapt farming practices and to preserve the EU's natural resources, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, 2020.</p>

13	We recommend that the EU ensure fair competition for environment-friendly agricultural products by establishing stricter standards for both EU and the imported products, by ensuring their traceability, labelling and quality control.
European Parliament position	<p>Parliament has been pushing for strict environmental standards for both EU and imported products, arguing that if EU farmers are to adopt higher environmental or social standards, similar practices must be adopted by countries outside of the EU, to avoid unfair competition. In its October 2021 resolution on the farm to fork strategy, Parliament underlines that the strategy must not favour imports of products from non-EU countries with a greater environmental and climate impact and argues that agri-food products from non-EU countries must therefore be subject to the same requirements. Parliament stresses that, unless animal production standards in non-EU countries are aligned with those of the EU, imports of animal products from those countries should be forbidden.</p> <p>In its November 2021 resolution on the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference, the Parliament stresses that the WTO Agreement on Agriculture must be adapted to meet the challenges of the present day and to ensure fairer competition conditions by taking into account modes of production. In a July 2021 resolution, Parliament welcomed the incorporation of the Paris Agreement as an essential element in future trade agreements and called for the inclusion of animal welfare, fair trade and circular economy provisions in them.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The EU's farm to fork strategy, published in May 2020, includes 27 actions to be taken by 2024 to improve the sustainability of the EU's agri-food system, including a sustainable food system framework laying down rules on sustainability labelling. The 'organic' logo for agricultural products can also be displayed on imported products, which conform to EU rules. These rules aim at guaranteeing equivalence of standards and control measures between EU and non-EU countries.</p> <p>France has announced as one of its six-month EU Council Presidency priorities that it will push for reciprocal environmental standards for agri-food trade during its EU presidency, in the first half of 2022, so that EU food imports would respect the same rules as those for European farmers. The European Commission has warned that these kind of 'mirror clauses' could breach World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and that the EU cannot simply introduce new requirements for food producers outside of its territory. The Council and the Parliament have invited the Commission to present, at the latest in June 2022, a report containing an assessment of the legal feasibility of applying EU health and environmental standards to imported agri-food products.</p> <p>Concrete example of EU initiatives are the new rules on antibiotics use, where non-EU countries wanting to export animals or products of animal origin into the EU will have to respect the ban on the use of antimicrobials for promoting growth, as well as the ban on the use of those antimicrobials designated in the EU as reserved for human use only. Another example are the upcoming EU rules on deforestation-free imports, which aim to minimise the impact of EU consumption on global forest loss by targeting import of palm oil, soy, beef, cocoa and coffee.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Rossi R., 'Farm to fork' strategy: Striving for healthy and sustainable food, EPRS, June 2020.</p> <p>Titievskaja J., Sustainability provisions in EU free trade agreements: Review of the European Commission action plan, EPRS, November 2021.</p> <p>Zezza A. et. Al., Agricultural trade: assessing reciprocity of standards, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, May 2018.</p>

14	<p>We recommend rapid and massive reforestation and afforestation in the EU, by maximising the use of land. A special focus should be given to the reforestation of exploited or destroyed forests and the afforestation of areas with degraded soil. New more responsible solutions should be promoted for a better utilisation of wood, e.g. replacing plastics and other chemical materials, ensuring higher energy efficiency from biomass, recycling of wood products.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In its 2020 resolution on the 'European forest strategy – The way forward', the European Parliament set out its priorities for a revised post-2020 strategy. Parliament called for an ambitious, independent and self-standing EU forest strategy, aligned with the European Green Deal and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. Parliament stressed the need to give full political support to the forestry sector, acknowledging the multifunctional role played by forests and ensuring adequate financial instruments combining EU, national and private funding. The Parliament supported afforestation and reforestation as suitable tools in enhancing forest cover, especially on abandoned land that is not suitable for food production. It stressed the crucial role of wood-based materials in substituting fossil-based alternatives in industries such as construction, textiles, chemicals and packaging, and the need to take fully into account the climate and environmental benefits of this material substitution.</p> <p>Parliament's resolution of 22 October 2020 on an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation stressed that trade and investment policy need to be reviewed in order to address the global deforestation challenge in a more effective manner, by creating a global level playing field and taking into account the link between trade agreements and global biodiversity, as well as forest ecosystems.</p> <p>Parliament called for safeguarding of the recognition of the role of forestry, agroforestry and forest-based industries in the post-2020 common agricultural policy (CAP), and in the implementation of the European Green Deal. These principles were further reflected in the Parliament's resolution on the 'EU biodiversity strategy for 2030', as well as in Parliament's position during the negotiations on the post-2022 CAP, on which EU legislators reached a deal in 2021.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The new EU forest strategy for 2030, presented by the Commission in 2021, aims to overcome the challenges faced by European forests, such as pressures from human activity and natural processes as well as the consequences of climate change. The strategy includes a host of actions to strengthen forest protection and restoration, enhancing sustainable forest management, and improving the monitoring and effective planning of forests in the EU. It includes an annexed roadmap of the Commission's action to implement the pledge to plant 3 billion additional trees by 2030 in the EU.</p> <p>Beyond the general policy framework set by the EU forest strategy, forest management and conservation have been covered at EU level by a number of directives and regulations, and a number of other EU policy tools affecting EU forests. EU nature legislation comprising the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Natura 2000 network of protected areas has been designed to preserve the most valuable and threatened species and habitats, while the EU Timber Regulation aims at countering the trade in illegally harvested timber and timber products. Forestry programmes are also eligible for funding under the CAP national rural development programmes, under the EU LIFE programme for environment and climate action, and benefit from specific research support allocations. The LULUCF Regulation (land-use, land-use change and forestry), currently under revision, incentivises more climate-friendly land use and promotes the climate benefits of wood products, which can store carbon sequestered from the atmosphere and offer a substitute for emission-intensive materials.</p>

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Augère-Granier M., [European forest strategy – The way forward](#), EPRS, September 2020.

Augère-Granier M., [Agroforestry in the European Union](#), EPRS, June 2020.

Mueller C., [Brazil and the Amazon Rainforest: Deforestation, Biodiversity and Cooperation with the EU and International Forums](#), Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, May 2020.

15	<p>We recommend the swift and progressive elimination of non-sustainable forms of food packaging, including plastic packaging and those of other non-biodegradable materials. We propose achieving this by offering financial incentives to companies that change to fully biodegradable forms of packaging, investing in research into alternatives and introducing penalties for companies that do not use biodegradable packaging.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution of 13 September 2018 on the EU strategy for plastics, the European Parliament called on companies to ensure that all packaging plastics are reusable or recyclable in a cost-effective manner at the latest by 2030. Parliament also asked the Commission to revise the requirements for packaging in EU waste law, taking into account the relative properties of different packaging materials on the basis of life-cycle assessments. In its resolution of 10 February 2021 following up on the publication of the Commission's new circular economy action plan, Parliament insisted that all packaging should be reusable or recyclable in an economically viable way by 2030. Parliament stressed the need to reduce excessive packaging, improve recyclability and minimise the complexity of packaging, increase recycled content, avoid hazardous substances, and promote reuse. Moreover, while acknowledging the potential role of bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics in the circular economy, Parliament warned that bio-based and biodegradable plastics alone will not solve the concerns relating to plastics, and that awareness of this kind of plastic must be raised.</p> <p>In its resolution of October 2019 on the multiannual financial framework for 2021 to 2027, Parliament strongly supported the introduction of a new yearly contribution to be paid by Member States, based on the quantity of non-recycled plastic packaging waste.</p>
Existing proposals/acts on the issue	<p>Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste (PPWD) regulates the placing on the market of packaging, and packaging waste prevention and management. Member States must take measures to prevent the generation of packaging waste and to minimise the environmental impact of packaging. By 31 December 2025, at least 50 % of plastic packaging waste, by weight, must be recycled (55 % by 2030). All packaging placed on the market has to comply with essential requirements concerning its composition, reusable and recoverable nature. In 2022, the Commission will present a review of the PPWD to tackle excessive packaging.</p> <p>Directive (EU) 2019/904, on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, introduced EU wide bans (from 3 July 2021) on some single-use plastic products, such as plates, cups, food and beverage containers made of expanded polystyrene, and all products made from oxo-degradable plastic. Member States also have to achieve a measurable reduction in the consumption of single-use plastic food containers and drinks cups (by 2026 compared with 2022). As there are no widely agreed technical standards to certify that a specific plastic product is biodegradable in the marine environment in a short timeframe and without causing harm to the environment, the Commission has announced that it will present a framework for bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics by mid-2022.</p> <p>As of 2021, Member States have to pay a yearly contribution based on the amount of plastics packaging waste that is not recycled (€0.80 per kilogramme); the funds collected feed into the EU budget. This contribution is an incentive for Member States to reduce plastic packaging waste.</p> <p>Horizon Europe, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation for 2021 to 2027, funds research addressing over-packaging and the use of single-use plastics, and related microplastic pollution.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Halleux V., Single-use plastics and fishing gear, EPRS, June 2019.</p> <p>D'Alfonso A., Own resources: Reforming the EU financing system, EPRS, June 2021</p> <p>EP factsheet: Resource efficiency and the circular economy, October, 2021</p>

16	<p>We recommend that intensive animal farming be phased out gradually, including the elimination of disrespectful living conditions of animals. We propose introducing common standards for animal farming (e.g. maximum number of animals, appropriate outside space) and stronger investment in non-intensive methods (extensive and sustainable farming) by providing farms with financial incentives and training to support this change.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In October 2021, the Parliament adopted an own-initiative report on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system.</p> <p>The report responded to the farm to fork strategy published by the European Commission in 2020, and called, among other things, for stronger harmonisation of the legal framework for animal husbandry in the EU, using common, science-based animal welfare indicators, inviting the Commission to evaluate and revise, where necessary, the existing body of animal welfare legislation. Parliament also called on the Commission to adopt a species-by-species approach, to accommodate the characteristics of each different animal (including housing systems), suited to their specific needs, and to put forward a legislative proposal with the objective of phasing out the use of cages in EU animal farming by 2027.</p> <p>The request to speed up the review and the phasing out of cages in farming was also put forward in a resolution on the European citizens' initiative 'End the cage age' adopted in June 2021. Parliament also called for support for farmers in moving to more sustainable farming, in the form of adequate advisory and training services, incentives and financial programmes.</p> <p>In 2020, Parliament set up a Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport (ANIT) to investigate European Commission enforcement and Member State implementation of EU rules. The ANIT report on alleged contraventions of EU animal law on animal transport was approved in January 2022.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The protection of animals for farming purposes, including requirements for the maximum number of animals and appropriate outside space, is guaranteed in EU law by a horizontal directive, while specific acts cover the handling of pigs, calves, laying hens and chickens. EU animal welfare legislation is currently undergoing a fitness check, as part of the revision proposed in the farm to fork strategy. Promoting a balanced and economically viable transition to cage-free farming, the new common agricultural policy will provide financial support and incentives to help farmers upgrade to more animal-friendly facilities.</p> <p>In this framework, 'ecoschemes' will be mandatory for Member States. Farmers will be rewarded for implementing climate and environmentally-friendly practices, such as organic farming, carbon farming, as well as animal welfare improvements. Member States must allocate at least 25 % of their income support budgets to ecoschemes, for a total of €48 billion of the direct payments budget. In addition, agri-environment commitments will account for at least 35 % of rural development funds, to encourage environmental, climate and animal welfare practices.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Augere-Granier M-L., The EU pig meat sector, EPRS, September 2020.</p> <p>Rojek B., European Citizens' Initiative: 'End the cage age', EPRS, June 2021.</p> <p>Patterns of livestock transport in the EU and to third countries, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, June 2021.</p>

17	<p>We recommend tightening controls on the prohibition of the unnecessary use of antibiotics and other animal drugs in feed additives for animals: make it a reality! We propose that the use of antibiotics be authorised in farming only when absolutely necessary to protect the health and well-being of animals, instead of in a preventive way. In addition, it is necessary to invest further in research into more efficient antibiotics, developing alternatives while building upon existing research into antibiotics.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In resolutions from 2011, 2012 and 2018, Parliament already raised the issue of the use of antibiotics in farming and its link to antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Parliament called for the use of last-resort antibiotics to be banned altogether in food-producing animals and emphasised that good animal husbandry together with hygiene practices could contribute to the prevention of infections and, as a result, to the reduced use of antibiotics.</p> <p>Between 2016 and 2018, the Parliament and Council adopted a package of measures including the Animal Health Law, the regulation on veterinary medicinal products and the regulation on medicated feed. The package aimed at updating measures to fight outbreaks of animal diseases, putting more emphasis on prevention, applying the principles of good animal husbandry and prudent use of veterinary medicines, prohibiting the prophylactic use of antibiotics in medicated feed and the use of antibiotics as performance enhancers.</p> <p>Parliament succeeded in making EU standards reciprocal for imported foodstuffs: trading partners will have to respect the ban on antibiotics for growth promotion, as well as the restriction on antimicrobials reserved for use in humans.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The Regulation on veterinary medicinal products and the Regulation on Medicated Feed aim in part to restrict the use of existing antimicrobials in farms, ban preventive antibiotic treatment of animals, and encourage research into new medicines. The main objectives are simplifying the regulatory environment and cutting red tape for companies developing veterinary medicines, thus encouraging the development of innovative veterinary medicines, and bolstering EU action to fight antimicrobial resistance through responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials in animals, including reserving the use of certain antimicrobials for human medicine.</p> <p>The two above-mentioned regulations include measures to reduce overall EU sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals by 50 % by 2030, as envisaged by the farm to fork strategy, which is at the heart of the Green Deal.</p> <p>The common agricultural policy requires Member States to draft national strategic plans detailing how they will use CAP instruments to achieve the objectives.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Laaninen T. and Rojek B., Animal medicines package, EPRS, October 2018.</p> <p>De Jongh, T. et. al., Access to medicinal products, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, June 2021</p>

18	<p>We recommend that European legislation make it compulsory to declare the use of hormonal substances and endocrine disruptors in the production of food: the type, quantity and exposure of the final product used. All food products including these substances must have detailed labels on their packaging displaying this information and the reasons for their use. Additionally, we have to accelerate research into the effects of hormonal substances and endocrine disruptors on human health.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Examples of endocrine active substances sometimes found in food include several pesticides, environmental pollutants like dioxins, and the food contact material, bisphenol A. Parliament has called consistently for caution regarding endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs); for instance, in its October 2016 resolution Parliament called for a ban on bisphenol A in all food contact materials, and in the interinstitutional negotiations updating the Drinking Water Directive Parliament pushed for strict provisions on endocrine disruptors.</p> <p>In an April 2019 resolution on a comprehensive EU framework on endocrine disruptors, Parliament stated that EDCs were of equivalent concern to substances classified as carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction, and should therefore be treated identically in EU legislation. Parliament called on the Commission to develop a horizontal definition based on the WHO definition for suspected EDCs as well as for known and presumed EDCs and to accompany the definition with proper guidance. In July 2020, Parliament adopted a resolution on the upcoming chemicals strategy. It underlined that the strategy should be based on robust and up-to-date scientific evidence, taking into account the risk posed by endocrine disruptors, hazardous chemicals in imported products, and the combined effects of different chemicals, and reaffirmed its calls for a comprehensive EU framework.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The EU has introduced specific legislation aimed at phasing out endocrine disruptors in water, industrial chemicals, plant protection products and biocides. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) have given guidance on how to identify substances with endocrine disrupting properties. Under the regulations on pesticides and biocides, the general rule is that a substance identified as an endocrine disruptor cannot be approved.</p> <p>In October 2020, the Commission put forward the chemicals strategy for sustainability. Commission admits that the EU regulatory system needs to be consolidated and simplified to ensure that endocrine disruptors are recognised in a timely manner and that exposure of humans and the environment is minimised. The Commission says that it will ensure that endocrine disruptors are banned in consumer products as soon as they are identified, allowing their use only where it is proven to be essential for society. The Commission has also conducted a fitness check on endocrine disruptors, taking a cross-cutting view to identify possible inconsistencies in EU legislation, and is working on an update of the data requirements in the REACH Regulation (on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals). This will ensure that industry includes information on endocrine disrupting properties of the chemicals they place on the EU market in their REACH registration dossiers. A revision of EU legislation on food contact materials is planned for 2023.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Endocrine disruptors: From Scientific Evidence to Human Health Protection, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, March 2019.</p>

19	<p>We recommend discouraging the consumption of processed foods by taxing unhealthy food and investing the funds raised in healthy food. We propose introducing a Europe-wide scoring system for healthy food based upon best food-labelling practices in Member States and informing consumers of the health properties of food.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Food prices can be influenced by taxation and such measures are the responsibility of Member States. Over the years, Parliament has consistently advocated food labelling as a means to empower consumers to make informed choices. Among the recommendations in its resolution on the farm to fork strategy from October 2021, Parliament highlights the need to address the overconsumption of meat and ultra-processed products, as well as products high in sugars, salt and fats. Parliament calls for a comprehensive range of measures to reduce the burden that overconsumption of highly processed foods place on public health and calls on the major food producers and retailers to swiftly and seriously reformulate foods towards a healthier composition.</p> <p>In the final report of Parliament's Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA), the committee calls for a mandatory and harmonised EU front-of-pack nutritional label, developed based on robust independent scientific evidence, to encourage and help consumers make informed, healthy and sustainable choices about food products.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (FIC Regulation) includes the obligation to provide nutrition information since 13 December 2016. It provides in particular clearer and harmonised presentation of allergens (e.g. soy, nuts, gluten, and lactose) for prepacked foods (emphasis by font, style or background colour) in the list of ingredients and mandatory allergen information for non-prepacked foods, including in restaurants and cafes. It also mandates certain nutrition information for the majority of prepacked processed foods, the mandatory origin information for fresh meat from pigs, sheep, goats and poultry and the same labelling requirements for online, distance selling or buying in a shop.</p> <p>One of the upcoming proposals planned in the EU's May 2020 farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system, is introducing standardised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling for food products. The Commission published a report on front-of-pack nutrition labelling in May 2020, giving an overview of labelling schemes used in EU countries. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will give scientific advice to support the development of a EU-wide system. A public consultation in preparation of the proposal is open until 7 March 2022, and the Commission is expected to adopt its proposal in the fourth quarter of 2022.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Laaninen T., Nutrition labelling schemes used in Member States, EPRS, July 2020.</p> <p>EU Public Health Policies – State of play, current and future challenges, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, September 2019.</p> <p>Food Labelling for Consumers – EU Law, Regulation and Policy Options, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, March 2019.</p>

20	<p>We recommend that the EU take more actions that enable and incentivise consumers to use products for longer. The EU should combat planned obsolescence by lengthening products' warranty and setting a maximum price for spare parts after the warranty period. All Member States should introduce tax breaks on repair services, as is the case in Sweden. Manufacturers should be required to declare the expected lifespan of their products. The EU should provide information on how to re-use and repair products on an internet platform and through education.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>For more than a decade, the European Parliament has advocated banning planned obsolescence of products and improving repair options for consumers. More recently, in its resolutions of 25 November 2020 and of 10 February 2021, it called on the Commission to consider banning 'premature' obsolescence, by adding to the list of banned commercial practices those that 'effectively shorten the lifetime of a product to increase its replacement rate and unduly constrain the reparability of products, including software'. Parliament also called the Commission to assess whether the duration of the legal guarantee could be brought in line with the estimated lifetime of specific products and whether there is a need to establish a legal guarantee at EU level for parts replaced by a professional repairer after the legal guarantee has expired.</p> <p>The two resolutions called for the adoption of a set of measures on repair, including: mandatory labelling on the estimated lifetime and reparability of products; ensuring that consumers are provided with information on availability of spare parts, repair services and software updates at the time of purchase; giving consumers free access to repair and maintenance information; setting a mandatory minimum period for the provision of spare parts that reflects the product's estimated lifespan; ensuring reasonable maximum delivery times and reasonably priced spare parts. Parliament called on the Member States to launch campaigns to encourage consumers to choose repair and introduce incentives for repair, such as a 'craftsman bonus'. It also supported the plan to introduce digital product passports that would, among other things, provide consumers with reliable, transparent and easily accessible information about the durability of the product and its maintenance, reuse and repair.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The Commission has announced plans to develop a new right to repair in 2022 for consumers that could include extending the legal guarantee in scope and duration. For instance, the guarantee could be prolonged beyond two years for certain products; or it could be restarted when consumers choose to repair rather than replace a faulty product; or producers and sellers could be required to repair products after the legal guarantee expires, possibly even for free. The Commission also announced a proposal on empowering consumers for the green transition, to provide consumers with reliable and relevant information on product durability and reparability, availability of repair services, spare parts and repair manuals, and software updates and upgrades. This proposal is expected in March 2022. The proposal on sustainable products, also expected in March, will revise the Ecodesign Directive and make it applicable to the widest range of products, requiring them to be more durable and repairable. That proposal could introduce a digital product passport, which would include information on sustainability, including repairs. The Commission's new circular economy action plan also announces measures that could enable the use of value-added tax (VAT) rates to promote circular economy activities such as repair services.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Šajn N., Right to repair, EPRS, January 2022.</p> <p>Šajn N., Consumers and repair of products, EPRS, September 2019.</p>

21	<p>We recommend that the EU enforce stricter environmental manufacturing standards and ensure fair working conditions throughout the entire production chain. EU production standards should be more sustainable, harmonised across Member States, and applied to imported goods. These should also include social standards, such as a living wage for workers producing the goods and good working standards in factories. Products that do not comply with these standards should face consequences.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Stricter rules on corporate governance may help make companies more accountable for their impact on environment and society. Through due diligence, they may be also required to identify, address and remedy their impact on human rights and the environment throughout their value chains. On 10 March 2021, the European Parliament adopted a resolution with recommendations to the Commission on corporate due diligence and corporate accountability, calling for a mandatory due diligence framework. Parliament proposed measures to ensure that products placed on the internal market comply with environmental criteria, and prohibit the importation of products linked to severe human rights violations. In the annex to its resolution, Parliament proposed a draft directive that includes an obligation on Member States to establish rules for businesses to carry out effective due diligence with respect to potential or actual adverse impacts on human rights, the environment and good governance in their operations and business relationships. According to the proposal, business undertakings should make public their due diligence strategies and provide a grievance mechanism responding to stakeholders' warnings and concerns. The proposal requires Member States to provide for proportionate sanctions and to enforce them, and to put in place a liability regime so that firms can be held liable and provide remediation for any harm arising out of potential or actual adverse impacts on human rights, the environment or good governance. On 17 December 2020, the Parliament adopted a resolution on sustainable corporate governance, pointing out that more has to be done in order to mitigate companies' long-term impact on society and the environment. On 10 October 2019, in the resolution on employment and social policies of the euro area, the Parliament called on the Commission to put forward a legal instrument ensuring that every worker in the EU has a fair minimum wage, which is set according to national traditions, through collective agreements or legal provisions. Parliament argued that in order to maintain and increase global competitiveness, the labour market regulatory framework in the Member States needs to be clear, simple and flexible while maintaining high labour standards. Parliament is preparing an own-initiative report on a new EU strategic framework on health and safety at work post 2020, including a better protection of workers from exposure to harmful substances, stress at work and repetitive motion injuries.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The EU is working to promote sustainable production and working conditions both internally to the Union and externally. The updated EU industrial strategy, released in 2021, confirmed the green transition as a priority for the European industrial sector. The EU taxonomy is aiming to facilitate more environmental, social and governance disclosures by companies, while the Commission proposal on a corporate sustainability reporting directive (CSRD) (to be adopted) contains due diligence disclosure requirements. The Commission has also made a legislative proposal on sustainable corporate governance. The 2019 Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions aims to establish new rights for all workers, not least by addressing insufficient protection for workers in more precarious jobs.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Lecerf, M., Minimum wage in the EU, EPRS, October 2020. Zamfir I, Towards a mandatory EU system of due diligence for supply chains, EPRS, October 2020.</p>

22	We recommend that the EU and Member States introduce measures to limit advertising for products that damage the environment. Products with a low sustainability score should have a mandatory disclaimer in all forms of advertising that shows that they are harmful for the environment. For products that are not sustainable at all the EU should ban advertising.
European Parliament position	Parliament has long been in favour of making consumption in the EU more sustainable, including via consumer information. In its 2020 resolution on a more sustainable single market for business and consumers , Parliament addressed responsible marketing and advertising, acknowledging that 'advertising has an effect on levels and patterns of consumption'. Parliament also stressed that 'consumers are confronted with misleading claims about the environmental characteristics of products and services, both online and offline'. Therefore, it stressed the need to protect consumers from greenwashing , by means of several tools for responsible advertising, including stronger enforcement of legislation on misleading and comparative advertising , and clear guidelines, translating into a strengthened certification system. These positions were reinforced by Parliament's resolution of 2020 on the new circular economy action plan , which states that circular, safe and non-toxic products should be seen as the default choice by consumers. The resolution also welcomed the Commission's proposal (see below) to set horizontal principles for product policy and binding requirements on products placed on the EU market. Recent EPRS studies (on food and mobility , prevention of climate change and on energy) acknowledge and explore the contribution of behavioural change to achieving sustainable consumption.
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The EU has had voluntary environmental labelling system (EU Ecolabel) in place since 1992 to support sustainable consumption. In 2017, labelling on energy efficiency was made mandatory for some products. Otherwise, currently, environmental information is not systematically included in the information that has to be made available to consumers under the Consumer Rights Directive.</p> <p>The European Commission is taking action to address this issue. Under the European Green Deal, the Commission presented a new circular economy action plan in March 2020, in which it announced a sustainable product policy initiative, expected to be published in the spring of 2022. The initiative should address, among other things, the lack of reliable information on product sustainability. In the spring of 2022, the Commission will also submit legislation on empowering consumers for the green transition. This is expected to include proposals to ensure that consumers receive trustworthy and relevant information on products at the point of sale (including on products' lifespan and possibility of repair). Moreover, the Commission will soon propose measures to reduce green washing, including by requiring companies to adopt a standard methodology to assess their impact on the environment, such as the 'environmental footprint' method. Responsible marketing and advertising practices as regards food are also part of the EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices, which entered into force in July 2021 and is part of the farm to fork strategy.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Sajn N., Sustainable consumption. Helping consumers make eco-friendly choices, EPRS, October 2020.</p> <p>EP factsheet: Sustainable production and consumption, October 2021.</p> <p>Keirsbilck B. et al., Sustainable Consumption and Consumer Protection legislation, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, April 2020.</p>

23	<p>We recommend that the EU put in place and expand the infrastructure for deposit-return schemes for all primary packaging made of glass, plastic, aluminium, etc. in a homogenous way across the EU. Whenever possible, manufacturers should re-use the containers returned by sterilising them, rather than just recycling the material. In addition to food and drink containers, the scheme should also include other kinds of bottles and containers, such as shampoo bottles.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution of 13 September 2018 on a European strategy for plastics in a circular economy, Parliament stressed that deposit-refund schemes were one possible way to achieve high separate collection and recycling rates, and reduce plastic waste litter, together with extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes with modulated fees, and increased public awareness. Parliament stressed that the choice of a certain scheme remained within the remit of the competent authority in the Member State.</p> <p>In its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal, Parliament called for measures for cross-border coordination of deposit return systems. In its resolution of 10 February 2021 on the new circular economy action plan put forward by the European Commission in March 2020, Parliament stressed the need to stimulate both increased recyclability in product design and measures such as effective separate collection and deposit return systems, in order to promote a high quality of material collection flows, reuse and recycling, to maintain materials at their highest value and to achieve clean, non-toxic and sustainable closed material loops.</p> <p>Furthermore, Parliament called on the Commission to support and explore the potential for compatible national deposit return schemes to achieve a collection rate of 90 % of plastic beverage containers, and as a step towards establishing a single market for packaging, especially for neighbouring Member States. For Parliament, compatible schemes could be reached through serialisation and codified and unified labelling. If a Member State did not have a scheme in place or planned to redesign their scheme, they should be encouraged to choose, by means of best practises and relevant scientific evidence, a scheme similar to or compatible with those of other Member States.</p> <p>Parliament also called on the Commission to revise the directive on packaging and packaging waste to promote reuse, and called for circularity approaches in industry, including product reuse.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Deposit return schemes are collection systems in which consumers pay a deposit on products, and get refunded when the product packaging is returned to a collection point. Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste (PPWD) regulates the placing on the market of packaging, and packaging waste prevention and management. Member States must take measures to prevent the generation of packaging waste and to minimise the environmental impact of packaging. According to the PPWD, Member States must take measures to encourage the setting up of systems to reuse packaging in an environmentally sound manner, without compromising food hygiene or consumer safety. Such measures may include the use of deposit-return schemes. In 2022, the Commission will present a review of the PPWD, in order to promote packaging reuse and recycling.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Halleux V., New circular economy action plan, EPRS, February 2021.</p> <p>Towards a circular economy, STOA, September 2017.</p> <p>EP factsheet: Resource efficiency and the circular economy, October, 2021</p>

24	We recommend that enhanced implementation of circular economy policies be promoted at European level, targeting both corporations and citizens, in the form of financial incentives for those that comply with it.
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal, Parliament stressed that EU action on the circular economy should provide strong incentives for innovation, sustainable businesses and markets for climate-neutral, non-toxic, circular products. Parliament also expressed its conviction that the EU's industrial strategy should focus on incentivising value chains for business models aimed at achieving, inter alia, circularity, while maintaining and developing international competitiveness and avoiding the delocalisation of European industries.</p> <p>In its resolution of 10 February 2021, following up on the publication of the Commission's new circular economy action plan, Parliament reaffirmed its commitment to promote a more circular economy. Parliament is convinced that this model is key to reducing the environmental footprint of European production and consumption, respecting planetary boundaries, and protecting human health, while at the same time ensuring a competitive and innovative economy. Parliament pointed out the need to provide market incentives for the most sustainable companies and sustainable products and materials, and urged Member States to support companies that have business models, services or products that reduce waste and resource use, and make use of their services. Parliament also stressed the need to facilitate public involvement in separate waste collection, and in this context the important need for Member States and regional and local authorities to raise public awareness about sustainable consumption and waste prevention, sorting and disposal. The resolution also emphasised the need to offer the right economic incentives and the regulatory environment to promote innovation in circular solutions, materials and business models, and to phase out market-distorting and environmentally harmful subsidies.</p>
Existing proposals/acts on the issue	<p>In December 2015, the Commission adopted its first 'circular economy package'. The package consisted of an action plan, including 54 actions addressing all phases in the produce lifecycle, and proposals to revise EU waste laws in order to prevent waste and increase recycling of municipal and packaging waste. All actions have been delivered or are being implemented, and four EU waste laws have been revised ((EU) 2018/849, (EU) 2018/850, (EU) 2018/851 and (EU) 2018/852). EU waste legislation promotes the use of economic instruments in support of waste management, such as extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes (where producer responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of the product's life cycle). EPRs will be mandatory for all packaging by 2024. Lower financial contributions under EPRs may be used as a direct economic incentive for companies to design products that can be more easily recycled or reused.</p> <p>Between 2016 and 2020, around €10 billion in EU public funding has contributed to funding the transition towards a more circular economy (from Horizon 2020, cohesion policy, LIFE, and the European Fund for Strategic Investments).</p> <p>In March 2020, the Commission put forward a new circular economy action plan including a set of 35 new actions, aimed at making sustainable products the norm in the EU, empowering consumers and reducing waste generation. In particular, companies will have to substantiate their claims about the environmental footprint of their products or services, by using standard methods. Consumers will be able to obtain reliable information on products they buy, e.g. on their lifespan and repair options.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Halleux V., New circular economy action plan, EPRS, February, 2021.</p> <p>Sabbati G., Living in the EU: circular economy, EPRS, March, 2021.</p> <p>EP factsheet: Resource efficiency and the circular economy, October, 2021</p>

25	<p>We recommend that the EU regulate the use of environmentally-safe packaging (i.e. packaging made out of biodegradable or recyclable products, or more durable products, where possible) and/or the use of packaging that takes up less space, which will also contain in the form of a QR-code the information pertinent to the package's recycling and/or disposal process once it has been used.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution of 10 February 2021 on the Commission's new circular economy action plan, Parliament insisted that all packaging should be reusable or recyclable in an economically viable way by 2030. Parliament also highlighted the need to reduce excessive packaging, improve recyclability and minimise the complexity of packaging, increase recycled content, avoid hazardous substances, and promote reuse. Furthermore, Parliament called on the Commission to revise the directive on packaging and packaging waste with a view to achieving the best environmental impact, in line with the waste hierarchy and for a low carbon footprint.</p> <p>Moreover, while acknowledging the potential role of bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics in the circular economy, Parliament warned that bio-based and biodegradable plastics alone will not solve concerns about plastics, and that awareness should be raised in this respect.</p> <p>Furthermore, Parliament called on the Commission to assess the possibility of revising the identification system for packaging materials (Decision 97/129/EC) to facilitate separate collection for citizens according to the recyclability of packaging. Concerning products in general, Parliament supported the introduction of digital passports providing information about durability and end-of-life handling, as well as composition and environmental impacts.</p>
Existing proposals/acts on the issue	<p>Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste (PPWD) regulates the placing on the market of packaging, and packaging waste prevention and management. Member States must take measures to prevent the generation of packaging waste and to minimise the environmental impact of packaging. All packaging placed on the market has to comply with essential requirements concerning its composition, reusable and recoverable nature. In 2022, the Commission will present a review of the PPWD, in order to promote packaging reuse and recycling, and to tackle excessive packaging.</p> <p>Although bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics may present advantages compared with fossil-based, non-biodegradable plastics, it is necessary to assess in detail whether and where these plastics actually represent sustainable alternatives over conventional plastics. The Commission has therefore announced that it would present by mid-2022 a framework for bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics, to clarify the role they can play in a carbon neutral and circular economy.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Halleux V., New circular economy action plan, EPRS, February 2021.</p> <p>Pinto J. et al., The environmental impacts of plastics and micro-plastics use, waste and pollution: EU and national measures, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2020.</p>

26	We recommend that the European Union establish a legal framework to ensure affordable, and better access to local and quality food products for all European consumers.
European Parliament position	<p>In its 2018 resolution on the future of food and farming the European Parliament set its priorities ahead of the reform of the common agricultural policy, emphasising the need to meet societal expectations, namely access to safe, high-quality, sustainable and affordable food, while preserving farmers' livelihoods. Parliament called for enhanced support for local markets and short food supply chains that are more environmentally sustainable. These principles were at the core of Parliament's position during the three-year-long negotiations on the post 2022 CAP, on which EU legislators reached a deal in 2021.</p> <p>Furthermore, in its resolution on the farm to fork strategy, the Parliament welcomed the ambitions and goals set by the Commission as an important step in ensuring a sustainable, fair, healthy and resilient food system. In particular, Parliament recalled that food affordability and availability requires appropriate policy responses, and urged the Commission to enhance food aid for the food-insecure population in the EU, whose situation has been aggravated by the pandemic. Parliament also welcomed the strategy's goal of shortening supply chains, emphasising the importance of locally produced food, especially fresh and organic food. Parliament expressed the need to maintain EU market standards regarding food quality and safety, with targeted legislative initiatives where necessary, including adequate labelling systems, and the guarantee that imported products comply fully with the relevant EU legislation.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Since its entry into force in 1962, the objectives of the common agricultural policy (CAP) – set out in Article 39 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU – have pursued food security, availability and affordability in the EU. These core objectives have remained unaltered over successive CAP reforms, including in the recent CAP 2023-2027 revision. Alongside the CAP, EU food safety policy and consumer protection rules ensure one of the highest levels of protection in the world, with shared competences between the EU and Member States. The General Food Law Regulation, revamped in 2019, lays down general principles, requirements and procedures relating to EU decision-making in food and feed safety, and establishes the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) as an independent scientific advisory and monitoring body.</p> <p>The 2020 farm to fork strategy goes beyond, setting out a vision for a sustainable EU food system that should, among other things, secure access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and sustainable food for all. In order to achieve its ambitious targets, the strategy includes an action plan with 27 legislative and non-legislative measures over a timespan running from 2020 to 2024, including revision of current rules on EU food labelling and the quality scheme scheduled for 2022. One of the first deliverables of the strategy was the voluntary 2021 EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices, which includes explicit commitments to support local actions to enhance the availability of / access to healthy and sustainable diets for all, as well as to promote local supply chains and sourcing. In 2023, the Commission is expected to table a new legislative framework for sustainable food systems, on which a public consultation should be held in 2022. The legislative framework will promote policy coherence at EU and national levels across all elements involved in the food system, drawing up common definitions, principles and requirements and addressing the responsibilities of all actors in the food system.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Rossi, R., European Union food system, EPRS, September 2020.</p> <p>Bassot E. et al., Towards a more resilient Europe post-coronavirus (pp. 101-112, Building greater EU food security,) EPRS, April 2021.</p> <p>Rossi, R., The EU 'farm to fork' strategy, EPRS, October 2021.</p>

27	<p>We recommend that the European Union encourage research and development, with funding schemes, in order to introduce more sustainable and affordable products within the European market. Also, the European Union must organise consultations with citizens, at all decision-making levels including the local level, in order to identify their needs regarding sustainable products.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament promotes the contribution of research and innovation in order to help achieve the political priorities of the EU: recovery from the pandemic, and the twin digital and ecological transitions.</p> <p>In a resolution of 8 July 2021 on a new ERA for research and innovation, Parliament stressed the importance of nurturing links within and between innovation and industrial ecosystems and their actors, including academics, industry, the public sector, and civil society across the EU to ensure that research results are disseminated, and taken up in the economy and society. It called on the Member States to ensure the funding of research and innovation activities to deliver on the green and digital twin transition. Parliament also invited Member States to increase their national budgets for research and innovation, to raise public spending on research and innovation from the current average level of 0.81 % of GDP to 1.25 % by 2030.</p> <p>Parliament echoed those positions in the preparation and adoption of the annual EU budget. In a resolution of 25 March 2021 on general guidelines for the preparation of the 2022 budget, it emphasised the continued need to massively boost investment in research, development and innovation, in order to make the EU a driving force in delivering the European Green Deal and the digital transition. It also noted the particular merits of Horizon Europe, the EU's main research and innovation programme. This allowed Parliament to obtain increased funding in 2022 for Horizon Europe (+€100 million above the Commission's draft budget).</p> <p>In a resolution of 7 July 2021 on Citizens' dialogues and citizens' participation in EU decision-making, Parliament stressed the importance of promoting exchanges between citizens (especially young people) of different countries at European, national, regional and local levels, in particular through networks of local and regional communities. It called on the Commission to ensure sufficient funding through the 'Citizens' engagement and participation' strand of the Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values programme.</p>
Existing proposals and/or acts on the issue	<p>Under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, research and innovation policy is a shared competence (Title XIX).</p> <p>Horizon Europe (budget of €95.5 billion between 2021 and 2027) is the main Union programme supporting research and innovation. Its strategic plan has been co-designed also with research and innovation actors and society. In addition, Next Generation EU will provide further support investment for research and innovation.</p> <p>Horizon Europe faces over-subscription, since its annual budget is not sufficient to fund all the excellent proposals submitted to the calls for funding.</p> <p>To mitigate this trend, Parliament has contributed to the adoption of a joint declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the re-use of decommitted funds in relation to the research programme. This will support education and research while contributing to the overall efficiency of EU budget execution.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Wilson A, Horizon Europe, framework programme for research and innovation 2021-2027, EPRS, 2021.</p>

28	We recommend the European Union find a regulation mechanism for fashion products entering the common market. This mechanism would aim at encouraging better consumption thanks to an indicator guaranteeing that products meet sustainable criteria.
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution of 10 February 2021 on the new circular economy action plan, Parliament called for the new EU textiles legislation to include a combination of ecodesign requirements for textile products, producer responsibility rules, and labelling for consumers. Ecodesign requirements would make products more environmentally friendly, but would also prescribe requirements related to quality, such as durability and reparability of fashion items.</p> <p>Parliament has long advocated social and environmental standards, human rights and corporate responsibility in its international trade agreements for all products. Some of these aspects are especially relevant to textile products. It called on the Commission to adopt a directive on corporate due diligence and corporate accountability in its resolution of 10 March 2021. The directive would require all products sold on the EU market, regardless of where they have been produced, to conform to the environmental and human rights criteria. This would be complemented by other measures such as the prohibition of imports of products linked to severe human rights violations. In addition, in its resolution of 25 November 2020 on a sustainable single market for business and consumers, Parliament favoured a mandatory environmental performance of products labelling system.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The European Commission is expected to spell out its plans addressing the environmental and social impacts of the textile industry in its sustainable textiles strategy in March 2022. That document is likely to announce specific legislation on eco-design requirements for textile products that would also include information enabling consumers to choose more sustainable textiles. In addition, the strategy is expected to explore how to reinforce the protection of human rights and due diligence across value chains. The Commission is also working on several legislative proposals applicable to all products, but relevant to making fashion more sustainable. A legislative proposal on sustainable corporate governance, of 23 February 2022, would require larger companies to address negative sustainability impacts in their value chain, regarding both the environment and human rights. A proposal on substantiating green claims, expected at the end of March, will focus on providing consumers with information. Producers who make environmental claims about their products will be required to base them on the product environmental footprint (PEF) methodology that the Commission is developing for textiles.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Russell M., Textile workers in developing countries and the European fashion industry: Towards sustainability?, EPRS, July 2020.</p> <p>Šajn N., Environmental impact of the textile and clothing industry: What consumers need to know, EPRS, January 2019.</p> <p>Keirsbilck B. et al., Sustainable Consumption and Consumer Protection Legislation, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, April 2020.</p>

29	<p>We recommend that the EU take measures to make CO₂ filters mandatory, especially for coal plants, in a transition period, as long as we still depend on conventional energy. In addition, we recommend that the EU provide financial aid for Member States that do not have financial resources to implement CO₂ filters. The support is conditional on compliance with EU climate policies connected to the Paris Agreement, the Green Deal and any new climate law.</p> <p>This is a concrete step to take alongside continued investment in research into safe energy production and to help EU Member States progressively achieve the common reduction goals already adopted.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Carbon capture' is the usual terminology for CO₂ filters. Secure long-term storage of the removed CO₂ ensures it is not returned to the atmosphere. The resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal addresses the mobilisation of industry for a clean and circular economy. It highlights the role played by carbon capture and storage (CCS) towards climate neutrality of heavy industries. The resolutions on a European strategy for energy system integration and on a European strategy for hydrogen (both from 19 May 2021) acknowledge that CCS will play an important role in achieving the European Green Deal objectives.</p> <p>The resolution of 10 February 2021 on the new circular economy action plan calls on the Commission to develop a regulatory framework for certification of all nature-based and technological carbon removal solutions (including carbon capture and storage and utilisation). The resolution of 25 November 2020 on a new industrial strategy for Europe identifies CCS as one of the decarbonisation technologies for which research needs to be accelerated.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The preamble to the European Climate Law mentions CCS and carbon capture and use (CCU) as technological solutions that can play a role in mitigating emissions from industry, thus aiding to the overall decarbonisation of the Union.</p> <p>In its 2018 strategic long-term vision, the Commission, while acknowledging that the rapid development of renewable energy technologies had been pivotal in emissions reductions in the industrial sector, still considered CCS to be necessary, namely for energy intensive industries.</p> <p>Directive 2009/31/EC on the geological storage of carbon dioxide, provides a legal framework for CCS in the EU. The 3rd implementation report, from 31 October 2019, highlights that power plants are setting aside land for future CCS retrofitting if the technical and economic feasibility should arise. Furthermore, it states that Member states, through own programmes or funding, are supporting research and demonstration activities on CCS.</p> <p>Adopted in 15 December 2021, the Commission Communication on Sustainable Carbon Cycles addresses several key challenges and actions to tackle them. One of these actions relates to industrial sustainable carbon through making industry responsible for reporting and accounting for the origin, from 2028 onwards, of any tonne of CO₂ captured, transported, used and stored. Also, by 2030 annual removals and storage of CO₂ should account to 5Mt.</p> <p>European funding for CCS and CCU is available in different mechanisms, such as the Innovation Fund, Connecting Europe Facility, the Recovering and Resilience Facility, the Just Transition Fund and Horizon Europe.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Gregor Erbach with Gema Andreo Victoria, Carbon dioxide removal: Nature-based and technological solutions, Briefing, EPRS, February 2021.</p> <p>Georgios Amanatidis, European policies on climate and energy towards 2020, 2030 and 2050, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, January 2019.</p> <p>Hugh McDonald et al., Carbon farming: Making agriculture fit for 2030, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, November 2021.</p>

30	<p>We recommend reducing the intensive industrial breeding of animals to reduce the production of methane as well as water pollution. For that purpose, the EU should reviews its common agricultural policy to direct its subsidies towards sustainable and locally based agriculture, among others supported by a labelling scheme for consumers to recognise sustainable meat products. In addition, we encourage the EU to invest in methods to re-use waste material from animal production and other industries.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In a resolution on the Commission's 'farm to fork' strategy, Parliament stressed the need to support the transition to sustainability in agriculture and food production, by taking action in areas such as sustainable farming and better animal husbandry. It highlighted the importance of recognising and monitoring the impact of agriculture and animal production on GHG emissions, calling for regulatory measures to reduce emissions from agriculture. It also called for a coherent policy to enable transition towards more sustainable practices, emphasising that support should be given to farms shifting to more ecological forms of production, moving away from high density stocking and crop monocultures. Parliament welcomed the Commission's intention to create a sustainable food labelling framework and called on the Commission to also address the overconsumption of meat.</p> <p>In its resolution on the EU's methane strategy, Parliament again stressed that methane emissions in agriculture were primarily driven by livestock numbers. It called on Member States to introduce effective and sustainable measures to address those emissions in their national strategic plans, and on the Commission to analyse this aspect thoroughly before approving the plans.</p> <p>Endorsing the European citizens' initiative on gradually ending caged farming, Parliament called for a food policy that would support the shift towards a more sustainable food system.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The new common agricultural policy (CAP) for 2023-2027 sets out measures (eco-schemes and agri-environment and climate measures) that must be included in Member States' national strategic plans to reward farmers' actions in favour of eco-friendly and less intensive agricultural practices like low intensity grass-based livestock systems.</p> <p>As part of the 'farm to fork' strategy, the Commission is undertaking a review of the EU promotion programme for agricultural products, including support for the most sustainable methods of livestock production. Actions announced in the strategy also include promoting dietary changes and sustainable consumption, notably the need to move towards less and more sustainably produced meat. In 2024, the Commission is planning to propose a legislative framework for sustainable food systems, to lay down rules for sustainability labelling of food products. The EU methane strategy sets out actions to measure, report and verify methane emissions. The Commission intends to support the setting up of an expert group to look at livestock, manure and feed management, feed characteristics, new technologies and practices.</p> <p>The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) researches topics such as reducing emissions from cattle farming, nutrient recycling from livestock manure, and sustainable beef production systems. The international multi-actor ERANET SusAn project targets innovative research in the area of sustainable animal production.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Van Woensel L., What if animal farming were not so bad for the environment?, EPRS, February 2017.</p> <p>Simões H., Reducing methane emissions: A new EU strategy to address global warming, EPRS, December 2020.</p>

31	<p>We recommend that although it is a cost-intensive process to generate green hydrogen, as 75 % energy should be produced in order to get 25 % hydrogen, there are multiple positive sides to this type of energy. The best solution can be to produce energy without CO₂ while we develop green hydrogen. Wind energy should be used for the production of green hydrogen and the EU should make more investments and increase the production of wind energy, as well as storing the energy for future purposes.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>On 10 July 2020, the European Parliament adopted its resolution on a comprehensive European approach to energy storage. Several of the points raised in Parliament's resolution were subsequently carried forward and included in two separate own initiative procedures. These resulted in two resolutions of 19 May 2021, the first on a European strategy for hydrogen and the second, on energy systems integration called for measures to accelerate the decarbonisation of existing hydrogen production, to ensure energy infrastructure for storage and hydrogen and to deploy additional renewable energy generation capacity. Parliament underlined the potential of hydrogen in energy-intensive industry, across several modes of transport and for seasonal energy storage. Parliament is convinced that hydrogen produced from renewable sources is key to the EU's energy transition and has encouraged Member States and the Commission to include projects for the hydrogen economy as important projects of common European interest (IPCEI).</p> <p>A recent own-initiative report on an offshore renewable energy (ORE) strategy by the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), voted in plenary in February 2022, stresses the potential to produce renewable hydrogen from increased ORE.</p> <p>The own-initiative procedures above were all linked to the Commission's adoption of strategies in these areas, such as the 8 July 2020 EU strategy on hydrogen.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>On 15 December 2021, the European Commission adopted the hydrogen and decarbonised gas markets package, as part of the 'fit for 55 files'. The package comprises a revision proposal for the 2009 EU Gas Directive (2009/73/EC) and a proposal to revise the 2009 EU Gas Regulation ((EC)715/2009), to establish an EU framework that encourages hydrogen production (especially green hydrogen).</p> <p>The first batch of 'fit for 55' legislative files, released on 14 July 2021, included higher renewables targets in the Renewable Energy Directive revision, which also calls for higher wind and renewable hydrogen shares; and a proposal to repeal the 2014 Directive on alternative fuels infrastructure, replacing it with a regulation comprising measures for hydrogen refuelling infrastructure along key transport corridors.</p> <p>A provisional inter-institutional agreement was reached on 15 December 2021 on the revision of the Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation ((EU)347/2013), which also includes provisions for the further roll-out of hydrogen infrastructure and support for hydrogen as projects of common interest.</p>
EPRS publications for more information	<p>Erbach G. and Jensen L., EU hydrogen policy: Hydrogen as an energy carrier for a climate-neutral economy, EPRS, April 2021.</p> <p>The potential of hydrogen for decarbonising EU industry, EPRS, December 2021.</p>

32	<p>We recommend that the EU set up a coercion and reward system to tackle pollution such as water, soil, air, and radiation pollution. Polluters should be fined, in combination with the mandatory support of an expert organisation, specifically designed to help entities to eliminate pollution and restore the ecosystem. This expert organisation should have a leading role in preventing and controlling the level of pollution.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Parliament has made a series of recommendations to strengthen the implementation of existing legislation to protect air quality and water bodies, and has called for an EU-wide common legal framework for the protection and sustainable use of soils.</p> <p>In its May 2021 resolution on the liability of companies for environmental damage, Parliament called for swift revision and transformation of the Environmental Liability Directive (ELD) into a fully harmonised regulation that would apply to all companies operating in the EU. It recommended creating an EU ELD task force made up of highly qualified experts and Commission staff to help Member States with the implementation and enforcement of the ELD, and to support and advise victims of environmental damage on legal recourse in the EU. It called for the Environmental Crime Directive to be updated following a thorough impact assessment.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The polluter pays principle (PPP) is one of the key principles of EU environment policy, anchored in Article 191(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The PPP holds polluters responsible for the pollution they cause, and requires them to bear the costs of managing it (including the cost of measures taken to prevent, control and remedy pollution and the costs it imposes on society). It is meant as an incentive for polluters to change behaviour and reduce pollution.</p> <p>The PPP is referred to in many EU directives, such as the Waste Framework Directive, the Water Framework Directive and the Industrial Emissions Directive. The Environmental Liability Directive establishes a framework based on the PPP to prevent and remedy environmental damage (damage to protected species and natural habitats, water bodies and soil). Operators carrying out occupational dangerous activities (listed in Annex III) are strictly liable for the environmental damage they cause (no need to prove fault). Operators conducting other than dangerous occupational activities are liable on the basis of fault. In line with the PPP, the liable operator must take the necessary preventive or remedial action and bear all costs. Recent assessments, in particular by the European Court of Auditors, have shown a need to strengthen the implementation of the PPP and the application of the ELD. Under the zero pollution action plan for air, water and soil, the European Commission committed to address those shortcomings. The ELD will be evaluated by April 2023, and revised if necessary. Key pollution-related pieces of legislation, including the Industrial Emissions Directive, await review in 2022.</p> <p>In December 2021, the European Commission tabled a proposal to revise the Environmental Crime Directive. It aims to make protection of the environment more effective by obliging Member States to take criminal law measures. The proposal defines new environmental crimes, sets a minimum level for sanctions and strengthens the effectiveness of law enforcement cooperation. It also obliges Member States to support and assist people who report environmental offences and cooperate with the enforcement.</p> <p>The European Environment Agency provides EU institutions and Member States with data on the state of the environment to help them make informed decisions.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Huemer M.-A., Revision of Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law, EPRS, November 2021.</p> <p>Faure M., Environmental liability of companies, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, May 2020.</p>

33	<p>We recommend the EU set up a special website/platform verified by multiple experts, with regularly updated and diverse scientific environmental information, that is easily accessible and transparent to all citizens. This website/platform should be linked to a forum where citizens and experts can interact. We also strongly advise initiating a media campaign to promote this website/platform (for instance through social media such as YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn).</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal, the European Parliament welcomed the Commission's plans for a European climate pact, an EU-wide initiative that invites citizens, communities and organisations to learn about climate change, connect and share knowledge.</p> <p>Scientific knowledge is a key element of policy-making in the European Parliament, which promotes wide access to evidence-based information and research for European citizens. The European Parliament, through its Parliamentary Research Service as well as the Policy Departments, produces analytical publications in all EU policy areas, including the Green Deal, and all publications are available free to the public. The Citizens' Enquiries Unit provides information on the activities, powers and organisation of the European Parliament, including the Green Deal. Other Parliament information tools on EU action against climate change in all 24 EU languages – useful for citizens – are the European Parliament webpages featuring the Green Deal, What Europe does for me and the European Legislative Train Schedule. In 2017, the European Parliament's Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) launched the European Science-Media Hub – a platform promoting accessible science information for all citizens while tackling misinformation and misinterpretations on scientific topics. The information of all these platforms is accessible via social media channels too.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The Climate-ADAPT platform aims to help users access and share data and information on different aspects of climate change. It includes a database that contains quality-checked information that can be easily searched.</p> <p>The third priority area of the LIFE programme focuses on climate change governance and information: Increasing awareness, cooperation and dissemination on climate change mitigation.</p> <p>Education for Climate Coalition is a European participatory community for students, teachers and education stakeholders to act collectively on innovative education solutions for environmental sustainability.</p> <p>The Climate Information Portal for Copernicus (CLIPC) provides users with a single point of access for scientific information on climate through the Copernicus Earth Observation Programme for Europe.</p> <p>The European Environment Agency, the European Environment Information and Observation Network, the European Commission's science and knowledge service of the Joint Research Centre, provide additional sources of climate/environment data and science publications.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Collova C. and Vikolainen V., European climate pact – Pre-legislative synthesis of national, regional and local positions on the European Commission's initiative, EPRS, October 2020.</p>

34	We recommend that the EU reduce the amount of imported goods that do not meet EU standards in terms of ecological footprint.
European Parliament position	<p>In a March 2021 resolution 'Towards a WTO-compatible EU carbon border adjustment mechanism', Parliament called for the introduction of a carbon border adjustment mechanism.</p> <p>On 22 October 2020, the European Parliament adopted a legislative-initiative resolution calling on the Commission to propose an EU legal framework making environmental due diligence mandatory for companies that place products linked to the risk of deforestation on the EU market.</p> <p>On 10 March 2021, the European Parliament adopted a legislative-initiative resolution recommending that the Commission initiate a legislative proposal on corporate due diligence and corporate accountability. Parliament proposed a draft directive that would oblige Member States to adopt rules for companies to carry out due diligence with respect to human rights, the environment and good governance in their operations and business relationships.</p> <p>In its 2019 resolution on the implementation of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Regulation (EU) 978/2012, Parliament advocated strong environmental provisions in all EU free trade agreements as well as in the unilateral preferences granted to developing countries.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>EU free trade agreements concluded since 2008 impose obligations on the parties not to lower their level of environmental protection or fail to enforce their environmental law in order to gain competitive advantages, and commit them to make efforts to further improve it. Moreover, they reaffirm the parties' obligations under international treaties they have ratified (such as the Paris Agreement). The ongoing amendment of EU unilateral trade preferences aims to impose an obligation on all beneficiaries to respect international environmental standards.</p> <p>The EU Timber Regulation (EUTR), adopted in 2010, requires that operators who place timber or timber products on the EU market exercise due diligence to make sure the timber has not been illegally harvested. Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production and labelling of organic products provides that imported agricultural products can be labelled 'organic' on the EU market, if they conform to equivalent standards as EU produced organic goods. The Commission communication COM(2009)/215 on the role of fair trade pledges EU support for trade-related sustainability schemes.</p> <p>On July 2021, the Commission published its proposal for a carbon border adjustment mechanism, which would equalise the price of carbon between domestic products and imports in selected sectors: iron and steel, cement, fertiliser, aluminium, and electricity generation.</p> <p>On 17 November 2021, the Commission presented a proposal for a regulation on deforestation-free products, which, if adopted, would impose a duty of due diligence on operators placing six commodities (soy, beef, palm oil, wood, cocoa and coffee) and some of their derived products on the EU market to ensure that they have not been produced on land subject to deforestation.</p> <p>The Commission proposes to make human rights and environmental due diligence mandatory, including for supply chains, as requested by Parliament, for all larger companies in the EU. The legislative proposal was adopted on 23 February 2022.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Remeur C., Carbon emissions pricing: Some points of reference, EPRS, March 2020.</p> <p>Zamfir I., Towards a mandatory EU system of due diligence for supply chains, EPRS, October 2020.</p> <p>Noti, K., et al, Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its implementation into EU Company law, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, November 2020.</p>

35	<p>We recommend that the EU encourage, promote and facilitate dialogue on climate change between all levels of decision-making, from the very local level (citizens) to the global level (national, international and intercontinental), to satisfy the concerns of all parties involved.</p> <p>Because dialogue and consensus are the optimal way to cope with climate change challenges: if the parties understand each other, there is more willingness to find common ground.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Parliament's resolution of 25 March 2021 on cohesion policy and regional environment strategies in the fight against climate change highlights the need for multi-level dialogue among national, regional and local authorities on the planning and implementation of climate policies; stresses the need for initiatives to bring together local and regional authorities responsible for implementing the EU's climate and energy objectives, such as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy; and points to the important role of community and citizens' initiatives in the ecological transition.</p> <p>The resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal, welcomed the Commission's plans for a European climate pact. It underlines the need to involve citizens, regions, local communities, civil society, businesses of all sizes and trade unions as active participants, based on genuine dialogue and transparent and participatory processes. It also stresses the importance of cooperation with stakeholders and social partners from energy-intensive sectors to find sustainable solutions in the transition to climate-neutral economies.</p> <p>In the negotiations on the European Climate Law, the European Parliament's position, adopted in October 2020, called for the encouragement and facilitation of strong public and social engagement on climate action at local, regional and national levels and expressed its support for a European climate pact.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The European Climate Law contains an article on public participation that requires the European Commission to 'engage with all parts of society to enable and empower them to take action towards a just and socially fair transition to a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society [...] and] facilitate an inclusive and accessible process at all levels, including at national, regional and local level and with social partners, academia, the business community, citizens and civil society, for the exchange of best practice and to identify actions to contribute to the achievement of the objectives'.</p> <p>The Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action requires EU Member States to 'establish a multilevel climate and energy dialogue [...], in which local authorities, civil society organisations, business community, investors and other relevant stakeholders and the general public' discuss scenarios for energy and climate policies, including national energy and climate plans.</p> <p>The European climate pact, launched in December 2020, is an open, inclusive and evolving EU-wide initiative that invites citizens, communities and organisations to learn about climate change, connect and share knowledge, and develop and scale up solutions to tackle climate change. It provides a forum for citizens to connect and collectively develop and implement climate solutions. One notable initiative of the climate pact are peer parliaments, in which citizens set up discussions about climate action and submit their conclusions for inclusion in a final report that will be discussed with European policymakers and stakeholders.</p> <p>The Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, launched in 2008 by the EU and supported by the European Commission, brings together local governments committed to voluntary implementation of the EU climate and energy targets. The initiative is characterised by bottom-up governance, multi-level cooperation and a context-driven framework for action. Today, it includes over 9 000 local and regional authorities from 57 countries.</p>

	<p>Multi-level dialogue is an integral part of EU policy-making. The Treaty on the European Union establishes two dedicated EU institutions, the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee that bring the views of local and regional authorities and of civil society, respectively, to the EU decision-making process.</p> <p>At global level, the EU engages in international forums (e.g. the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, G7, G20, OECD), bilaterally and multilaterally to discuss and find common solutions to the climate emergency.</p> <p>The European Parliament organises large-scale European Youth Events to establish a dialogue with young people from all over Europe. Other forms of cooperation include the 'Linking the Levels' unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service which helps foster connections with local, regional and national authorities..</p>
EPRS publication for more information	<p>Claudio Collovà and Vera Vikolainen, European climate pact - Pre-legislative synthesis of national, regional and local positions on the European Commission's initiative, Briefing, EPRS, October 2020.</p> <p>Klemen Žumer and Yann-Sven Rittelmeyer, Linking the levels of governance in the EU, Briefing, EPRS, July 2020.</p>

36	<p>We recommend that the EU financially support European Member States in order to improve the connectivity of rural areas. This should be done by developing a European public transportation network based on affordable prices (prioritising railways) and with incentives for public transportation usage. To this end, internet connectivity should also be developed in rural areas within a short and realistic time frame.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In its 2018 resolution on the future of food and farming, Parliament highlighted the persistent development disparities in rural areas of different EU regions. This suggested that cohesion criteria should continue to play a key role in the distribution of funds and that better synergies must be found between policies and funds to create a multiplier effect for rural areas. In another 2018 resolution, Parliament addressed the specific needs of rural, mountainous and remote areas (RUMRA) It called for cooperation with urban areas to foster cohesion and prevent the risk of territorial fragmentation, and for adequate funding, especially in cohesion policy. Both resolutions stressed the role of the concept of smart villages, as this would address issues such as insufficient broadband connections and the provision of services in rural areas. Parliament has been actively involved in promoting the smart village concept, as reflected in its support for the pilot project and in the establishment of the RUMRA and Smart Villages intergroup.</p> <p>In negotiations on the post 2022 common agricultural policy (CAP), on which EU legislators reached a deal in 2021, Parliament stressed the importance of the rural development budget and played a key role in securing recovery funding for rural development.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>In 1997, the European Commission's Agenda 2000 communication made the first move towards establishing EU rural development policy within the CAP. Co-financed by EU and national funds, rural development measures help rural areas face economic, environmental and social challenges. One of the measures aims to provide basic services and promote village renewal in rural areas, by investing in broadband infrastructure for instance. In this context, the smart village concept is gaining traction on the rural development agenda, with core elements being the involvement of the local community and the use of digital tools.</p> <p>The new rules of the post 2022 CAP recognise that many EU rural areas are suffering from underinvestment in broadband and connectivity. The Commission's recommendations on the national CAP strategic plans (with which each EU country will define CAP interventions for achieving set objectives) fix a target of 100 % access to fast broadband internet in rural areas by 2025. This means that the share of rural households with next generation access (NGA) broadband will have to increase significantly from the 2019 EU average share of 56.4 %.</p> <p>In June 2021, the Commission published a communication on a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas up to 2040. This includes a 'rural pact' constituting a framework for cooperation among authorities and stakeholders, and a rural action plan including infrastructure initiatives to overhaul rural mobility.</p> <p>Alongside the CAP, EU cohesion policy is key rural regions' mobility and infrastructures. In recent years, EU countries have directed a good share of rural area investment towards sustainable transport and key internet infrastructure in rural areas. Around 20 % of the cohesion policy (2014-2020) budget allocated to rural areas was spent on Thematic Objective (TO) 7 'Promoting sustainable transport and improving network infrastructure'. Important investments were also allocated under TO 2 'Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies'.</p>

EPRS/POLDEP
publication for
more information

McEldowney J., [Long-term vision for rural areas: European Commission communication](#), EPRS, September 2021.

Martinez Juan A. and McEldowney J., [Smart villages: Concept, issues and prospects for EU rural areas](#), EPRS, March 2021.

Kah S., Georgieva N. and Fonseca L., [EU Cohesion Policy in non-urban areas](#), Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, September 2020.

37	<p>We recommend improving existing transportation infrastructures that may be in disuse or those that can still be improved from an ecological point of view (for electric trains). This should be done with the intention of not damaging environmentally protected areas.</p> <p>Improving existing infrastructure would avoid spending too many resources and causing damage to protected areas important for biodiversity conservation. Having a bigger railway infrastructure would trigger a reduction in CO₂ emissions and an increase in population mobility from urban to rural areas.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In a 2020 resolution on the Green Deal, Parliament stated that all modes of transport must contribute to the decarbonising the transport sector. It called for greater investment in EU railway networks to ensure equal access to railway transport and make rail more attractive. It also welcomed the Commission's plan for measures to boost interconnectivity between road, rail and inland waterways. In a 2021 resolution on revision of the Trans-European transport network (TEN-T) guidelines, Parliament highlighted the importance of rail in decarbonising the transport sector and of fully implementing the Fourth Railway Package for rail to maximise its potential. It called for barriers in the rail network to be removed, faster electrification, modernisation of rolling stock and supporting innovation. It also underlined the need to develop high-speed passenger rail services.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The revised EU railway market rules – the Fourth Railway Package – adopted in 2016 included measures to make European railways more innovative and competitive and to improve rail service performance for passengers. The December 2019 Green Deal states that a 90 % reduction in transport emissions is needed by 2050 to achieve climate neutrality and that all transport modes must contribute. The Commission is planning initiatives to increase railway and inland waterway capacity. The December 2020 sustainable and smart mobility strategy (SSMS) stressed the need to develop the multimodal transport system. It listed several milestones for rail – doubling high-speed rail traffic by 2030, doubling rail freight traffic by 2050 and tripling high-speed rail traffic. It also called for further electrification of rail transport.</p> <p>In 2021, new rules were adopted for the Connecting Europe Facility, a programme supporting investment in transport, energy and digital infrastructure. On transport, it prioritises environmentally friendly modes and charging points for vehicles using alternative fuels. To address the consequences of the pandemic, and support the green and digital transitions, the EU set up the Recovery and Resilience Facility in February 2021. In their national plans for transport, governments want to invest in modern trains, clean vehicles recharging infrastructure and improving public transport, some also focus on renovating regional and local railway lines. Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (JU), set up in November 2021, aims to help make the European rail system more competitive and attractive by providing solutions for traffic management, vehicles, infrastructure and services. In line with the SSMS, in December 2021, the Commission adopted an action plan to boost passenger rail services and tabled a proposal for TEN-T revision. The TEN-T proposal aims to boost high-speed railway travel and shift more freight transport onto rail, while the action plan includes further initiatives to remove barriers to cross-border and long-distance travel and to make rail travel more attractive.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Pape M., Transport trends in national recovery and resilience plans, EPRS, October 2021.</p> <p>Pape M., Sustainable and smart mobility strategy, EPRS, January 2021.</p>

38	<p>We recommend that the EU promote the purchase of electric vehicles complying with good standards regarding battery life. This could be achieved by introducing EU incentives applying to all EU Member States and by improving electric infrastructures. At the same time, the EU should invest in the development of other non-polluting technologies, such as biofuels and hydrogen for those vehicles whose electrification is difficult to achieve, such as boats and lorries.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution on the Green Deal, Parliament called for sufficient investment in developing appropriate infrastructure for zero-emissions mobility. In its resolution on the revision of the Trans-European transport network guidelines, Parliament called for measures to step up the roll-out of alternative fuels and the deployment of electric charging points and hydrogen filling stations to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.</p> <p>In its resolution on the new circular economy action plan, Parliament called for the new EU regulatory framework for batteries to cover sustainable, ethical and safe sourcing, measures for recycled content, substitution of harmful substances, improved separate collection, reuse, higher recycling targets, recovery of valuable materials, extended producer responsibility, and consumer information.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Under the European Green Deal, a 90 % reduction in transport emissions is needed by 2050 to achieve climate neutrality. The sustainable and smart mobility strategy lists milestones for transport to achieve the targets, e.g. at least 30 million zero-emission vehicles on EU roads by 2030, with nearly all vehicles zero-emission by 2050.</p> <p>As part of the fit for 55 legislative package, the Commission proposed to revise current legislation on CO₂ emission performance standards for new passenger cars and vans registered in the EU, raising the level of ambition for 2030 and beyond. A review of standards for new heavy-duty vehicles is expected in 2022. The proposed revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive sets targets for an alternative fuel recharging and refuelling infrastructure across the EU, e.g. with new targets also for hydrogen refuelling, for electric charging points for cars along highways, electric charging points and LNG refuelling along highways for trucks, as well as electricity provision for ships in ports and stationary aircraft in airports.</p> <p>The Commission also proposed to extend emissions trading to the road and maritime sectors; and to revise the Renewable Energy Directive, with targets for renewable energy use in transport. It tabled a FuelEU maritime proposal, setting increasingly stringent limits on carbon intensity of the energy used by vessels that should oblige them to use alternative fuels.</p> <p>The Clean Vehicles Directive promotes clean vehicles in public procurement tenders. The recent revision of the road haulage charging rules introduces CO₂ emission-based tolling for heavy-duty vehicles across the EU to encourage wider use of cleaner vehicles.</p> <p>On batteries, the Parliament and Council are considering a proposal setting mandatory requirements on sustainability (e.g. carbon footprint rules, minimum recycled content, durability criteria), safety and labelling of batteries, and requirements for their end-of-life management.</p> <p>On financing, the Connecting Europe Facility prioritises investments in environmentally friendly transport, including for charging points for electric vehicles. The EU Recovery and Resilience Facility can also support investments by EU Member States in transport infrastructure.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Halleux V., New EU regulatory framework for batteries, EPRS, July 2021.</p> <p>Soone J., Deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure: Fit for 55 package, EPRS, November 2021.</p>

39	We recommend that the European Union safeguard common health standards, but also push for decent minimum wages, a maximum number of working hours and common training standards, for common certifications, for healthcare professionals across the European Union.
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament has consistently promoted the establishment of a coherent EU public health policy and in a May 2020 resolution insisted on the need for a new stand-alone European health programme. The BECA final report of 9 December 2021 underlined the importance of constant training, stepping up public health services, health and safety at work, standardisation and recognition of professional qualifications. Parliament has been pressing for a new initiative on work-life balance for several years. In its resolution of 13 September 2016 on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance, Parliament stressed that reconciliation of professional, private and family life needs to be guaranteed as a fundamental right. In its 2019 resolution on employment and social policies of the euro area Parliament called for a legal instrument to ensure that every worker in the EU has a fair minimum wage, set according to national traditions, through collective agreements or legal provisions. Healthcare workers' rights appear in several Parliament resolutions: in the resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences Parliament urges the Member States to ensure safe working conditions for all workers on the front line, in particular medical staff, by implementing appropriate and coordinated national measures. Parliament is preparing an own initiative report on a new EU strategic framework on health and safety at work post 2020, including better protection for workers from exposure to harmful substances, stress at work and repetitive motion injuries.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>At European level, a number of regulations on employees' working conditions support healthcare workers. In 2017, an important step was the launch of the European Pillar of Social Rights, highlighting the importance of fair working conditions, flexible working arrangements, healthy work-life balance and a healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment. The Work-Life Balance Directive, to be fully implemented by 2022, extends the right to request flexible working arrangements to all working parents of children up to eight years of age, and all carers. The Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive of June 2019 is meant to ensure greater transparency and predictability of working conditions for all workers. The European Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work lays down general principles concerning the prevention and protection of workers against occupational accidents and diseases. In June 2021, the European Commission adopted a new EU Occupational Safety and Health Strategic Framework for 2021-2027 with the aim of updating protection standards for workers and addressing traditional and emerging work-related risks. EU4Health is a funding programme for 2021-2027 that will ensure a high level of human health protection and pave the way to the 'health union'. Concerning the health sector, it is also important to mention Directive 2013/55/EU, on the system of recognition of professional qualifications in the EU. In 2020, the European Commission also adopted a communication entitled 'Guidance on the free movement of health professionals and minimum standards for the harmonisation of training in relation to COVID-19 emergency measures – recommendations regarding Directive 2005/36/EC' which aims to ensure the free movement of health professionals to the largest extent possible in extraordinary circumstances and the need to address staff shortages in Member States.</p>

EPRS/POLDEP
publication for
more information

Scholz N., [EU4Health programme](#), EPRS, April 2021.
 Lecerf M., [Minimum wage in the EU](#), EPRS, September 2020.
 Konle-Seidl, R., [The proposed Minimum Wage Directive](#), Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, November 2020.
 Samek, M. et al., 2022, [Revaluation of working conditions and wages for essential workers](#), Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, January 2022.

40	<p>We recommend that the European Union ensure that treatments across the EU are of equal quality and of fair local cost. This could be ensured, for instance thanks to an extension of the competences of the European Medicines Agency (EMA), or the creation of a new specialised European procurement agency, which would be competent to negotiate and obtain more suitable prices for medicines for all the Members States. The risk of pharmaceutical industry monopolies must be minimised.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>For many years the European Parliament has been actively promoting equal access to affordable and quality treatments at an affordable price, underlining the need to put patients at the centre of health policies. In its resolution of 24 November 2021 on a pharmaceutical strategy for Europe, Parliament called on the Commission to look into policy options that help guarantee that centrally authorised medicines are marketed in all Member States and not just in those that are commercially interesting. It stressed the need to ensure that any form of incentive at EU level leads to fair and affordable pricing of pharmaceuticals, particularly for innovative drugs, across all Member States.</p> <p>In its resolution of 17 September 2020 on the shortage of medicines, Parliament called on the Commission to strengthen its mechanisms for the joint procurement of medicines in order to guarantee universal access to treatment for all citizens regardless of their place of residence. In its resolution of 10 July 2020 on the EU's public health strategy post-Covid-19, Parliament called for EU joint procurement to be used for the purchase of Covid-19 vaccines and treatments, and for it to be used more systematically to avoid Member States competing against each other and to ensure equal and affordable access to important medicines and medical devices, in particular for new innovative antibiotics, new vaccines and curative medicines, and medicines for rare diseases.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU states that a high level of human health protection must be ensured in all Union policies and activities. Article 168 specifies that EU action should complement and support the actions of the Member States, which have the main responsibility for health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care.</p> <p>The EU4Health programme 2021-2027 (established by Regulation (EU) 2021/522) supports building a European health union, by investing in building stronger, more resilient health systems and making medicinal products, medical devices and crisis-relevant products available and affordable for all European citizens. On 25 November 2020, the European Commission adopted a pharmaceutical strategy for Europe. It aims to give the EU's pharmaceutical policy a long-term vision, by notably ensuring access to affordable medicines for patients. In its work programme for 2022, the Commission announced that it would propose a new framework for a dynamic EU pharmaceutical sector, to ensure access to affordable high-quality medicines for all EU citizens, foster innovation and enhance security of supply.</p> <p>On 25 January 2022, the European Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation (EU) 2022/123 on a reinforced role for the European Medicines Agency in crisis preparedness and management for medicinal products and medical devices.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Amand-Eeckhout L., Reinforced role for European Medicines Agency, EPRS, January 2022.</p> <p>European pharmaceutical research and development. Could public infrastructure overcome market failures?, Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), EPRS, December 2021.</p> <p>De Jongh T. et al., Access to medicinal products, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, June 2021.</p>

41	We recommend the creation of a European healthcare database, in which medical records would be made available in cases of emergencies or illnesses. Participation should be optional, and personal data protection must be ensured
European Parliament position	<p>In the resolution of 25 March 2021 on a European strategy for data, the European Parliament stresses the need to speed up the creation of a common European health data space. It recommends that EU citizens should have secure access to a comprehensive electronic record of data concerning their health, and that they should retain control over personal health data and be able to share it securely with authorised third parties, in accordance with data protection legislation.</p> <p>In the resolution of 24 November 2021 on a pharmaceutical strategy for Europe, the European Parliament welcomes the initiative of building interoperable digital infrastructure for the European Health Data Space, which will collate real-world data, to leverage the full potential of real-world data and access to rare therapies and to ensure fair, transparent and non-discriminatory access to data throughout Europe. It recalls that the consistent application and enforcement of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in all Member States is the foundation for such initiatives.</p>
Existing proposals and/or acts on the issue	<p>Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, stipulates that 'a high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Community policies and activities'.</p> <p>The main role for health protection and, in particular, healthcare systems continues to lie with the Member States. However, the EU has an important role to play in improving public health, preventing and managing diseases, mitigating sources of danger to human health, and harmonising health strategies between Member States.</p> <p>The creation of a European healthcare database was included in the Commission's 2021 work programme. This followed on from previous Commission initiatives, such as a 2019 recommendation on an electronic health record exchange format. The database initiative aims at harnessing the potential of digital health to provide high-quality healthcare and reduce inequalities across Europe. It should promote access to health data for research and innovation on new preventive strategies, as well as on diagnosis and treatment of diseases to improve health outcomes, while allowing citizens to control their personal data. The initiative is set to be published in 2022.</p> <p>Under the 2022 EU for Health work programme, investments of more than €80 million are expected to support activities conducive to the design and establishment of the European healthcare database.</p> <p>Under the Horizon Europe work programme for 2021 to 2022 – Cluster 1 – Health – seven topics (corresponding to €222 million) are expected to expand relevant knowledge and solutions for healthcare data, through transnational collaborative research activities. Those activities will benefit from and build on the relevant outcomes of previous EU investment in research and innovation, such as Horizon 2020.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	Kriticos M., EU health data centre and a common data strategy for public health EPRS, 2021.

42	<p>We recommend that the European Union further develop and synchronise already existing health research and innovation programmes, as is done in the framework of the existing Horizon Europe programme. Academic outcomes and results should be made freely available in all Member States</p>
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament supports the increase of investment in research and innovation, including through the development of joint initiatives in health research, within the EU and beyond. It also promotes Open Science, and the free flow of scientific knowledge.</p> <p>A Parliament resolution of 8 July 2021 on a new ERA for research and innovation calls on the Member States to increase public spending in a manner coordinated across the EU. It invites them to increase national public research and innovation funding of joint programmes and European partnerships from its current level of just below 1 % to 5 % of public research funding. It also invites Member States to agree jointly on priority areas for European research area (ERA) action.</p> <p>On free access to academic outcomes and results, the above-mentioned Parliament resolution stresses the key role of open science, including the open access to scientific publications, during the pandemic. In a resolution of 7 July 2021 on trade-related aspects and implications of Covid-19, the European Parliament highlighted the critical importance of open technology, know-how and research sharing for an effective pandemic response.</p>
Existing proposals and/or acts on the issue	<p>Under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, research and innovation policy is a shared competence (Title XIX). The Union pursues the objective of strengthening its scientific and technological bases, by achieving a European research area in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely and contribute to EU competitive sustainability.</p> <p>Horizon Europe (budget of €95.5 billion) is the main Union programme between 2021 and 2027 supporting research and innovation.</p> <p>The Horizon Europe health cluster is geared towards improving and protecting the health and well-being of citizens of all ages by generating new knowledge, developing innovative solutions and integrating where relevant a gender perspective to prevent, diagnose, monitor, treat and cure diseases. Between 2021 and 2024, the investment priorities of the cluster are laid down in Horizon Europe's 2021-2024 strategic plan.</p> <p>Horizon Europe Regulation establishes European partnerships, to allow the EU to invest together with public and/or private partners on common research and innovation agendas. In the field of health (cluster 1), several partnerships have been launched (for example, the innovative medicine initiative). A partnership on pandemic preparedness is currently under preparation.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Wilson A., Horizon Europe, framework programme for research and innovation 2021-2027, EPRS, 2021.</p>

43	We recommend that the EU increase its budget dedicated to joint research and innovation projects in the area of health (without budget cuts in other EU health-related programmes). This would also strengthen European scientific and research institutions overall.
European Parliament position	<p>In its resolution of 8 July 2021 on a new ERA for research and innovation (R&I), the European Parliament stressed the key importance of R&I investments, and invited Member States to increase their national budgets devoted to R&I.</p> <p>In its resolution of 21 October 2021, on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, the European Parliament notes that Horizon Europe, with high European added value, is expected to make a key contribution to the efforts towards enhancing Europe's preparedness and resilience to crises. It also highlights the need to bolster Union investment in health research, including funding for cancer research. Based on the excellent implementation rate of Horizon Europe, it recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ increasing the allocation of Horizon Europe over the level of the draft budget by €305 million in commitment appropriations. ➤ making available half of the remaining amount of the 2020 research decommitments (€408.7 million) to the health cluster under Horizon Europe.
Existing proposals and/or acts on the issue	<p>Under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, research and innovation policy is a shared competence (Title XIX).</p> <p>Horizon Europe (budget of €95.5 billion) is the main EU programme between 2021 and 2027 for research and innovation.</p> <p>Oversubscription to Horizon calls for funding means that the available budget cannot support all the excellent proposals submitted to the calls for funding, making the case for additional investment.</p> <p>Parliament was the architect of a joint declaration by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the re-use of decommitted funds in relation to the research programme. This will support education and research while contributing to the overall efficiency of EU budget execution.</p> <p>With €8.25 billion between 2021 and 2027, Horizon Europe's health cluster is aimed at improving and protecting the health and well-being of citizens of all ages by generating new knowledge, developing innovative solutions and integrating where relevant a gender perspective to prevent, diagnose, monitor, treat and cure diseases. Between 2021 and 2024, health cluster investment will target the six following expected impacts adopted in Horizon Europe 2021-2024 strategic plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ staying healthy in a rapidly changing society; ➤ living and working in a health-promoting environment; ➤ tackling diseases and reducing disease burden; ➤ securing access to innovative, sustainable and high-quality health care; ➤ unlocking the full potential of new tools, technologies and digital solutions for a healthy society; and ➤ maintaining an innovative, sustainable and globally competitive health-related industry. <p>Horizon 2020 allocated €469 million in funding to a portfolio of 105 research projects relevant to Covid-19 in 2020. Information on the related calls for funding is available on the Funding and Tenders portal.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	Wilson A., Horizon Europe, framework programme for research and innovation 2021-2027 , EPRS, 2021.

44	<p>We recommend that a health week be established as a European Union initiative across all Member States, the same week, on all health issues, with a special focus on mental health. During this week, all main topics on mental health will be collectively covered and promoted, together with other already existing initiatives, such as those from the Mental Health Europe organisation.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>For many years on a number of different occasions the European Parliament has expressed the need to address mental health issues. In its resolution of 10 July 2020 on the EU's public health strategy post-Covid-19, Parliament called for an EU mental health action plan for 2021 to 2027, with equal attention being paid to the biomedical and psychosocial factors of mental illness.</p> <p>Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs is finalising an own-initiative report on mental health in the digital world of work.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>According to Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, EU action on public health is designed to complement and support the actions of the Member States, which have the main responsibility for health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care, including resource allocation.</p> <p>The European Commission (DG SANTE) has made it a priority to identify and disseminate best practice in order to make progress in health promotion and in disease prevention in Europe. The Best Practice Portal provides an overview of best practice in the Member States, notably in the field of mental health, translating into measures co-funded under the health programmes (including the EU4Health programme).</p> <p>The EU Health Policy platform is the main forum for communication and cooperation between health interest groups and organisations and the European Commission. Through the EU Health Award, funded under the EU4Health programme, the European Commission highlights outstanding contributions to healthcare or health policy by local authorities, civil society and educational institutions. Each year, the EU Health Award covers a different topic with good practices displayed on the EU health policy platform, to inspire others to adopt similar approaches. Topics covered by the 2021 EU Health Award e.g. were cancer prevention and mental health.</p> <p>The European non-governmental network Mental Health Europe advocates for positive mental health and wellbeing and for the rights of people living with mental ill health. It works closely with the European Parliament and its Members through the MEPs' Coalition for Mental Health and Well-being. Mental Health Europe has been organising European Mental Health Week since 2020.</p> <p>European Public Health Week is an initiative of the umbrella organisation European Public Health Association (EUPHA), supported by the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe). This annual initiative began in 2019.</p> <p>The Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks-Europe (GAMIAN-Europe) has launched a call to the European Commission to make 2023 the European Year for Mental Health.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Scholz N., Mental health and the pandemic, EPRS, July 2021.</p> <p>Mental health and well-being in the digital world of work post COVID, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, December 2021.</p>

45.	<p>We recommend that female sanitary products stop being considered as luxury products when it comes to taxation, as they are essential products.</p> <p>We also recommend that hormonal contraception products used for medical reasons, such as in the cases of fibromyalgia and endometriosis, be taxed as a regular medical treatment.</p> <p>We also recommend that the European Union encourage the harmonisation of medically assisted reproductive treatments for all women (single or married) across all Member States.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>Taxes are usually a Member State competence. Any proposal at EU level usually requires unanimity in Council while the Parliament is only consulted.</p> <p>The European Parliament, in its June 2021 resolution on the situation of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the context of women's health, called for improved access to safe, fair and 'circular' menstrual products. Parliament stressed the negative effects of the so-called tampon tax on gender equality and called on all Member States to eliminate the so-called care and tampon tax by making use of the flexibility introduced in the VAT Directive and applying exemptions or 0 % VAT rates to these essential basic goods. Parliament also urged the Member States to encourage the widespread availability of toxin-free and reusable menstrual products. Parliament also raised the taxation issue, calling for VAT exemptions, in its January 2019 resolution on gender equality and taxation policies in the EU.</p> <p>In the June 2021 resolution mentioned earlier, the Parliament recognised fertility treatment and care as essential health services. It called on the Member States to make medically assisted reproduction equally available and accessible to all persons of reproductive age, irrespective of marital or socio-economic status, gender identity or sexual orientation. It has also called for full use to be made of EU competences, so as to promote upward convergence and the provision of cutting-edge and emerging treatments, and for EU funding to support these aims.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>When it comes to tax rates, EU legislation can only set harmonised minimum tax rates to avoid market distortions. Since 2007, the EU has allowed Member States to reduce VAT on this category of products to the minimum level of 5 %.</p> <p>On 7 December 2021, the Council reached agreement on updated rules for VAT rates. The agreement allows Member States to adopt VAT rates lower than 5 %, including VAT exemption, for pharmaceutical products used for medical products, including products used for contraception and female sanitary protection, and absorbent hygiene products. The proposed directive has been sent to the European Parliament for consultation. Once Parliament has issued its opinion on the proposal by March 2022, the Council will formally adopt the directive establishing the new rules.</p> <p>Access to medically assisted reproductive treatments varies across the EU. Since the Member States are responsible for organising and delivering health services and medical care, including fertility treatments, the EU has no direct powers in this area. However, it does have complementary competences to support Member States, encourage cooperation between them and legislate on safety standards for reproductive tissues and cells. From 2021-2027, funding for improving access to reproductive healthcare and supporting innovation is available under the EU4Health programme.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Puccio L., More flexible VAT rates, EPRS, 25 October 2018.</p> <p>Ask EP, Citizens' enquiries on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the European Union, EPRS, 8 June 2021.</p>

46	<p>We recommend that the European Union take a strong stance in influencing all Member States to include in their school curricula, as appropriate, issues on mental health and sexual education. To help Member States adopt such issues in school curricula, the European Union should develop and make available a standard programme on mental health and sexual issues.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights approached sexual education in 2013 from the perspective of women's right to a sexual education but the text adopted by Parliament confirmed that education policy is a national competence of individual countries, and the EU can only support, coordinate and promote best practices. In its March 2021 resolution on children's rights, Parliament called for age appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health in the context of preventing sexual abuse. It also noted that lack of education about sexuality puts the safety and wellbeing of young people at risk, and makes them more vulnerable and less equipped to identify sexual abuse and violence. Its June 2021 resolution on reproductive health rights stressed the benefits of a comprehensive sex education for young people, as well as the importance of comprehensive and age-appropriate sex and relationship education in school curricula, and sexuality information in all EU countries.</p> <p>Parliament's 2009 resolution on mental health expressed deep concern regarding the stigma attached to mental health and the exclusion of people suffering from mental illness. It identified as key areas for action training on mental health for teachers and health practitioners, and prevention of bullying.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The European pact for mental health and wellbeing, initiated by the European Commission in 2008, led to the establishment of the EU-Compass for action on mental health and wellbeing to monitor the situation across policy areas. The resulting consortium, Joint Action for Mental Health and Wellbeing, disseminates good practices in this area, such as social-emotional learning and wellbeing education in schools to reduce and prevent mental distress, violence, bullying, conflict and aggression.</p> <p>As part of the EU-funded research programme, the Models of Child Health Appraised project, a study on sexual and reproductive health among children was published in 2021. It stressed that the development of safe and meaningful sexual behaviour depends, among other things, on a comprehensive sexual education.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Scholz N., Mental health and the pandemic, EPRS, July 2021.</p> <p>Beaumont K., Maguire M., Policies for Sexuality Education in the European Union, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, January 2013.</p>

47	<p>We recommend that the European Union develop a better communication system for all its initiatives on mental health, namely a public health portal on good practices, within Member States and for all citizens. Members of the European Parliament could present these good practices to each other, in order to make them better known across Member States.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>In a resolution of 10 July 2020 on the EU's public health strategy post-coronavirus, Parliament called for an EU 2021-2027 action plan on mental health. In a resolution on the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in the Covid-19 crisis, adopted on 8 July 2020, Parliament underlined that lockdown is a serious problem, not only for persons with intellectual disabilities, but also for people with a mental illness, as isolation aggravates the problems.</p> <p>The Coalition for Mental Health and Wellbeing in the European Parliament (established in 2012, with secretariat support from Mental Health Europe) brings together MEPs to promote EU policies in the field of mental health. The MEP Alliance for Mental Health (established in 2009 as the European Parliament Interest Group on Mental Health, Wellbeing and Brain Disorders; secretariat provided by The Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks-Europe (GAMIAN-Europe)) brings together MEPs and stakeholders to advocate EU policies that contribute to mental ill-health prevention, and ensure high quality services and person-centred care.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>Policies and services addressing mental health are the individual EU Member States' responsibility. The EU's action in the field of mental health aims to complement and support Member States' policies and actions.</p> <p>The Best Practice Portal provides an overview of best practice in the Member States, notably in the field of mental health, and transmitted in actions co-funded under health programmes (including EU4Health programme – see below). In May 2019, the European Commission presented Member States with a pre-selection of practices under the banner 'Mental Health: good practices and implementable research results'. The Member States then ranked them according to relevance to their national priorities.</p> <p>The EU4Health programme (2021-2027) (established by Regulation (EU) 2021/522 of 24 March 2021) describes mental health as one of the challenges in the areas of health security and health systems (see the 2022 EU4Health work programme).</p> <p>The pandemic has had a significant impact on people's mental health. The Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) has set up a dedicated network space on its health policy platform to exchange mental health practice and knowledge. The platform is co-ordinated by Mental Health Europe and includes a focus on vulnerable groups. The challenges posed by the pandemic and approaches to addressing the growing burden of mental illness was the focus of a high-level online event organised by the Commission on 10 May 2021. The report entitled 'Promising approaches' highlights examples of initiatives implemented in 2020 to support the mental health needs of vulnerable groups, to serve as a practical example to provide information and inspiration on what can be done.</p> <p>During the May 2021 Mental Health Awareness week, the Joint Research Centre launched a mental health section on its 'health promotion and disease prevention' knowledge gateway.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Scholz N., Mental health and the pandemic, EPRS, July 2021.</p> <p>Ciucci, M., Mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, ENVI Webinar Proceedings, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, December 2020.</p>

48	<p>We recommend that the EU set and promote minimum standards for quality dental care, including prophylaxis, for all EU Member States. Free of charge dental care should be available for children, low-income groups and other vulnerable groups. In 15 to 20 years' time, the EU should guarantee that affordable dental care is available to everyone.</p>
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament has always been an advocate of supporting actions guaranteeing equitable access to healthcare and safe, effective and affordable medicines. In its resolution of 24 November 2021 on a pharmaceutical strategy for Europe, it underlined the need to put patients at the centre of all health policies. It recalled that healthcare is a human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It regretted disparities in access to high-quality healthcare services, including access to medicinal products, among Member States and also among different regions within Member States. It called for national and EU measures, including legislative measures where appropriate, to address these disparities and guarantee the right of patients to universal, affordable, effective, safe and timely access to essential and innovative medicines.</p> <p>In its resolution of 10 July 2020 on the EU's public health strategy post-Covid-19, Parliament underlined that the pandemic had affected vulnerable populations disproportionately. It also stressed the need to prioritise prevention, which benefits both public health and national health budgets.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>The EU has limited competence in the field of healthcare (see Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), including dental care. EU Member States have the competence to define their health policies and to organise, manage and deliver health services and medical care, including the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of resources assigned to them.</p> <p>The EU4Health programme is in favour of building a European health union, investing in building stronger, more resilient health systems. The EU4 Health 2022 work programme (with a budget of over €835 million) will go beyond the coronavirus crisis response to address healthcare systems' resilience. It will help Member States strengthen their health systems and improve access to quality healthcare.</p> <p>Health systems are affected by limitations in sustainability and resilience, challenges that have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis, which has also revealed inequalities in access to high-quality health care services. On 15 December 2021, the European Commission adopted the 2021-2022 work programme for Horizon Europe's health cluster (see Annex of Commission Decision C(2021)9128). Under the work programme's 'Destination 4' (Ensuring access to innovative, sustainable and high-quality health care), research and innovation is designed to support health care systems as they transform, to ensure fair access to sustainable health care services of high quality for all citizens, thanks to the development and uptake of safe, cost-effective and people-centred solutions, with a focus on population health, health system resilience, and improved evidence-based health policies.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Scholz N., EU4Health programme, EPRS, April 2021.</p> <p>Quaglio G., EU public health policy, EPRS Ideas Papers, EPRS, July 2020.</p>

49	We recommend including health and healthcare among the shared competencies between the EU and the EU Member States. In order to include this new shared competence, there is a need to amend Article 4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).
European Parliament position	<p>When it comes to health policy, the EU has coordination competencies under Article 168 TFEU and shared competences in the limited field of common safety concerns in public health matters (4(k) TFEU). Health policies therefore remain the responsibility of Member States and it is in this context EU action must be viewed. To change this distribution of competences would require a Treaty change, under the ordinary revision procedure (Article 48(1-5) of the Treaty on European Union – TEU) to the exclusion of the simplified revision procedure (Article 48(6) TEU), which is only applicable where there is no increase of Union competences.</p> <p>The Treaty however, allows a form of flexibility which was mentioned in a working document discussed within the AFCO committee in spring 2021, namely the use of the flexibility mechanism (Article 352 TFEU), whereby if an action is necessary within the framework of current policies and the Treaties do not provide the necessary powers, the Council, acting unanimously, on a proposal of the Commission and having consulted Parliament, may take the necessary measures. Additionally, <i>passerelle</i> clauses (Article 48(7) TEU) may be used where a decision has to be taken by Council acting unanimously.</p> <p>In a resolution of 17 April 2020, at the start of the pandemic, Parliament made a number of proposals within the realm of current competencies, such as strengthening the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA)) and setting up a European Health Response Mechanism.</p> <p>In a resolution of 10 July 2020, Parliament recognised that there was still scope to better deliver on public health, relying on the unused potential of the existing Treaties. It therefore called for a number of measures to form a European 'health union'.</p> <p>Overall, as recognised in the abovementioned working document, in the area of health, Parliament has called for EU institutions and Member States to learn the right lessons from the Covid-19 crisis and engage in far stronger cooperation. On the side of institutional capacity to react, Parliament has encouraged the use of <i>passerelle</i> clauses to overcome unanimity in Council and make decision making more flexible in matters that involve the response to the current pandemic.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	The European Commission is working on building a European health union , based on several pillars: strengthening coordination at EU level, reinforcing the mandates of existing agencies (ECDC and EMA), creating a new authority (HERA) for health emergencies, modernising the pharmaceutical strategy and implementing its plan to beat cancer.
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Bassot E., Unlocking the potential of EU Treaties, EPRS, May 2020.</p> <p>Quaglio G., EU public health policy, EPRS, July 2020.</p>

50	We recommend that the EU make first aid courses available to all EU citizens free of charge. The EU could consider making such courses obligatory for students and for workplaces (in both public and private sectors). These courses also need to be practical, recurrent and adapted to students' ages. There should also be a minimum number of defibrillators available in public places in all EU Member States
European Parliament position	Sudden cardiac arrest causes 20 % of all deaths in Europe. With this in mind, in 2012, the European Parliament suggested establishing a European week of awareness on cardiac arrest, aimed at improving the knowledge of the general public, doctors and health professionals. The following year, 16 October was proclaimed 'European Heart Arrest Day' – 'European Restart a Heart Day'. The goal of the initiative was to increase general awareness of cardiac arrest, for which saving time is crucial. Indeed, survival rates decrease by 10 % for every minute without intervention and can be greatly improved by the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Although all EU countries follow the European Medical Devices Directive , national legislation covering AEDs can differ greatly between countries. Replying to a question asked by a Member of Parliament in 2019, the European Commission confirmed there were no plans to introduce EU-wide tax incentives aimed at improving the uptake of AEDs in multi-occupancy buildings, since the EU Health programme did not have the legal basis to cover the distribution of such devices.
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>EU countries are responsible for their national health and education policies and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care, including the distribution of medical devices. To support Member States in their endeavours, the EU introduced an emergency number –112 – in 1991. People in distress can call free of charge and get immediate assistance from the fire brigade, a medical team or the police 24 hours a day and seven days a week in all 27 EU countries. In addition, first-aid courses are organised across the EU via the respective branches of the Red Cross. The Open Network Provision Directive in 1998, the Universal Service Directive in 2002 and finally the European Electronic Communications Code in 2018 specified how the emergency 112 number should work in the EU. EU countries are also required to make sure that access to the emergency services for people with disabilities is equivalent to that enjoyed by other end-users.</p> <p>Since March 2018, all new cars have to comply with EU legislation and be equipped with the eCall on-board emergency call system. In the event of an accident, the system is activated by sensors and automatically calls the 112 number, communicating the car's location, the time and the direction of travel, even if the driver is unconscious or unable to call. The eCall can also be triggered manually by pushing a button in the car, for instance if the driver witnesses an accident. It is estimated that the system could save up to 2 500 lives a year.</p> <p>The ESCAPE-NET consortium funded under the EU's Horizon 2020 programme has gathered and combined all available data on sudden cardiac arrest in Europe, including DNA samples collected during resuscitation. A comprehensive integration strategy of these exceptionally large and complete datasets constitutes a quantum leap in sudden cardiac arrest research, and offers a unique opportunity, to design strategies for tailor-made care. Going further, ESCAPE-NET will also take advantage of smart phone applications and ICT solutions, including mobilisation of lay rescuers with the aid of app-based or text messaging-based systems, to optimise first-response treatment.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publications for more information	<p>Quaglio G., EU public health policy, EPRS, July 2020.</p> <p>Lomba N., The benefit of EU action in health policy: The record to date, EPRS, March 2019.</p>

51.	We recommend that the European Union ensure that private health care providers do not unfairly benefit from public funds and do not drain resources from public health systems. The European Union should issue strong recommendations to Member States to increase funding for public healthcare
European Parliament position	<p>The European Parliament has consistently sought to strengthen and promote health policy. On 17 April 2020, the European Parliament adopted its resolution on EU coordinated action to combat the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences where it proposed, inter alia, 'investments in the healthcare sector in the post-crisis period in order to make health-care systems more resilient and focused on those most in need'.</p> <p>On 10 July 2020, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the EU's post-pandemic public health strategy, calling on the Commission 'to integrate adequate funding of the healthcare system ... within the country-specific recommendations under the European Semester'. In addition, while welcoming the significant increase in the proposed budget for the new EU4Health programme, Parliament stressed that 'increases in the EU's health budget should not be limited to the upcoming MFF, but that long-term investments and commitments are needed'. Parliament also called for the 'establishment of a dedicated EU fund to strengthen hospital infrastructures and health services'.</p> <p>On 9 March 2021, the European Parliament adopted its position at first reading on the proposal establishing a programme for Union action in the field of health for the 2021-2027 period. The position stated that the programme should pursue, inter alia, the general objective of 'strengthening health systems by improving their resilience and resource efficiency'.</p>
Existing proposals/ acts on the issue	<p>According to Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), a high level of human health protection must be ensured in all Union policies and activities. Article 168 TFEU specifies that EU action in public health is designed to complement and support the actions of the Member States, which have the main responsibility for health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care, including the allocation of the resources assigned to them.</p> <p>The EU4Health programme 2021-2027 (Regulation (EU) 2021/522 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 March 2021) is aiming to build a European 'health union', investing in building stronger, more resilient health systems and improving access to healthcare for all European citizens.</p> <p>Cohesion Policy also represents a major source of public investment, and can contribute to promoting health and to reducing existing health inequalities.</p>
EPRS/POLDEP publication for more information	<p>Scholz N., EU4Health programme, EPRS, April 2021.</p> <p>Dietzen S., Cohesion Policy and support to health, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, October 2021.</p>

In the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe, four European Citizens' Panels have discussed the development of European integration in broad subject areas. For each of the 51 recommendations put forward by European Citizens' Panel 3: Climate change, environment and health, the present paper sets out a selection of the most recent and relevant European Parliament resolutions on the matter and looks at existing EU legislation and other EU funding programmes, supporting and coordinating actions. However, this paper is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of all European Parliament resolutions and EU-level action in the area, but rather aims at feeding debate and discussion during the Conference plenary.

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PE 698.940
ISBN 978-92-846-9069-5
doi:10.2861/796759