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To: DGEM - Climate change
Subject: FW: ENDS Europe DAILY (18/12/2019): Netherlands working on proposal to ban PFAS in Europe

From: ENDS Europe
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2019 9:19:05 AM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)
To:
Subject: ENDS Europe DAILY (18/12/2019): Netherlands working on proposal to ban PFAS in Europe

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ENDS Europe Daily
December 18, 2019

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Netherlands working on proposal to ban PFAS in Europe



18 Dec 2019

The Dutch government has indicated it wants to prepare a 'comprehensive proposal' to phase out the use of poly- and perfluorinated alkylated substances (PFAS) in the EU, and plans to discuss it at a meeting of environment ministers this week

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Today's news in full

Netherlands working on proposal to ban PFAS in Europe

Robert Hodgson, 18 Dec 2019

The Dutch government has indicated it wants to prepare a 'comprehensive proposal' to phase out the use of poly- and perfluorinated alkylated substances (PFAS) in the EU, and plans to discuss it at a meeting of environment ministers this week

Denmark, Luxembourg and Sweden joined the Netherlands in putting the PFAS issue on the agenda of the EU Council summit in Brussels on 19 December, with a joint briefing note referring to “increased risks to health and the environment” from the highly persistent chemicals.

“The Netherlands wants to prepare a comprehensive proposal to restrict all uses of and products with PFAS except where essential,” according to the document dated 11 December. Several national authorities and the European Chemicals Agency, have “indicated their willingness to cooperate”, it says.

This could have wide-reaching implications for the chemical industry and manufacturers, with PFAS as a group encompassing some 4,700 different substances, many of which are used in products as diverse as non-stick coatings on cookware, pesticides and cosmetics.

The note also calls on the European Commission to deliver on EU governments' demands from June, when the EU Council [called for a PFAS strategy](#) as well as demanding that the EU executive deliver several overdue pieces of chemicals legislation, including a non-toxic environment strategy.

The European Environment Agency last week issued a detailed [report into the extent of PFAS contamination](#) in Europe, concluding that the large number of chemicals in the group means “a substance-by-substance risk assessment and management approach is not adequate”.

The German environment agency, UBA, also this month published the findings of studies into PFAS, conducted to support the government's preparation of REACH restriction dossiers, a move to tighten control of the substances under the EU's flagship chemicals regulation.

Meanwhile, the body of scientific evidence of the health impacts of PFAS was bolstered on Friday with the publication of a Swedish study into 1,533 infants that suggests an association between exposure to PFAS during pregnancy and low birth weight.

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Follow-up: EU Council [briefing note](#); UBA [report](#); Study [report](#) in Pediatric Research journal

Member states back green taxonomy deal

Simon Pickstone, 18 Dec 2019

Member state representatives endorsed on Wednesday plans to introduce a system for classifying environmentally sustainable economic activities, after reaching an agreement with MEPs earlier this week

Under the new taxonomy, activities can only be labelled as ‘green’ if they “substantially contribute” to mitigating or adapting to climate change, protecting

water resources, transitioning to a circular economy, preventing pollution, or restoring or protecting habitats and biodiversity.

Nuclear energy, which was a major point of contention during the negotiations, may be regarded as a 'transitional activity' within the taxonomy subject to assessment of the environmental impact of its waste, while no investment in coal will be considered sustainable.

The ambiguity around nuclear energy led to Poland and Hungary, both strong supporters of the technology, abstaining from the final vote, along with Austria, which is opposed to including it in the taxonomy.

The European Parliament and Council will now both have to formally adopt a revised version of the text, while the European Commission has the task of drawing up the taxonomy itself by establishing technical screening criteria for each economic sector and environmental goal.

It will be informed by the findings of the Technical Expert Group of Sustainable Finance and put in place through a series of delegate acts.

Katri Kulmuni, finance minister of Finland, which holds the EU Council presidency, said the agreement "will be key in helping redirect money to investments in sustainable sectors".

Industry and green groups have [broadly welcomed](#) the outcome of the negotiations, which had been [pushed back](#) following opposition from France, the UK and a number of eastern European states.

Commission executive vice-president Valdis Dombrovskis welcomed the outcome of the "steadfast negotiations", saying the taxonomy "will be crucial for the European Green Deal to become a reality" by unlocking billions of euros in green investments.

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Follow-up: Council [announcement](#), Commission [reaction](#)

MEPs demand mandatory reduction of pesticides to save pollinators

Raquel Guerra, 18 Dec 2019

MEPs have called on the European Commission to develop an action plan to protect the diversity of bees, butterflies and other insect pollinator species and to maintain the EU's natural ecosystems

A resolution on the EU pollinators initiative was approved by a show of hands in the European Parliament on Wednesday. The text calls for EU-wide mandatory reduction targets for pesticides to be included in the directive on sustainable use of pesticides and in the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

On behalf of the centre-left S&D group, environment committee coordinator Jytte Guteland welcomed the approval and said: “[Our] group demands mandatory EU-wide reduction targets for pesticides in order to create a non-toxic environment and to put an end to pollinators’ decline.”

On 3 December, the entire environment committee backed the text calling on the Commission to thoroughly evaluate the current policy and ensure more funding for research and better monitoring while addressing intensive farming, climate change and land-use changes.

Martin Dermine, policy officer at Pesticide Action Network Europe, told ENDS that the resolution sends “the Commission and member states back to the drawing board by obliging them to implement stricter standards to protect bees against pesticides.”

Dermine added that “we need a reform of our agricultural system.”

French S&D MEP Éric Andrieu, a member of the agriculture committee and former chair of the pesticides committee, echoed the text's demands to “drastically and quickly reduce the use of pesticides” and to monitor member states practices on “biodiversity conservation and to punish those states that do not do enough”.

Frédérique Ries, the liberal Renew Europe group’s shadow rapporteur, said: “The new Commission has a chance here to demonstrate it is committed to protecting our ecosystems by swiftly translating its promises into actions. We need concrete actions, now.”

The resolution is in line with the recent ‘[Save Bees and Farmers](#)’ European Citizens’ Initiative calling on the Commission to phase out synthetic pesticides by 2035 while committing to restore biodiversity and support small scale and sustainable farming.

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Follow-up: Draft [resolution](#) on the EU Pollinators Initiative, EP [press release](#), S&D group [press release](#), Renew Europe group [press release](#)

Governments accused of illegal agreement to overfish

Robert Hodgson, 18 Dec 2019

Quotas agreed at an EU Council summit exceed scientists' recommended maximum catch limits, campaigners said on Wednesday while accusing agriculture and fisheries ministers of contravening an EU law calling for all species to be fished at sustainable limits by 2020

The deal, which followed hours of intense negotiation in Brussels, saw the catch limits for 32 stocks in the Atlantic, North and the Mediterranean Seas either raised or maintained at current levels, while 40 were reduced. The result is the number of species fished at sustainable levels next year from 59 to 62.

The 2013 Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) Regulation obliges governments to ensure that all stocks are fished at or below maximum sustainable yield by 2015, or 2020 at the latest in exceptional cases.

“Ministers decided today to breach the law, allowing overfishing even beyond 2020. This decision represents a betrayal of European citizens and breaks their trust,” said Andrea Ripol, fisheries policy officer with the campaign group Seas At Risk.

The group cited cod in the west of Scotland, Celtic Sea sole and pollack in the Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Iberian waters as examples of fish that face being over exploited next year.

Ripol said ministers had set more unsustainable fishing limits than last year, and accused them of “systematically disregarding” advice on reduction of quotas for species where there is little scientific data, or where there is a problem of unwanted catch.

Andrew Clayton, who heads a campaign to end overfishing in north-western Europe for the Pew Trust, said governments had again failed to live up to their promises in the area of fisheries. “The limits set by ministers suggest that progress to end overfishing has stalled or even reversed, a disappointing outcome for the year when overfishing was supposed to become a thing of the past,” Clayton wrote.

Another environmental group, Oceana, described a 10% reduction in the number of days fishing vessels can spend at sea in the Western Mediterranean as “insufficient to bring in any visible benefits to severely overexploited populations”.

Pascale Moehrle, the group's executive director for Europe, pointed to a recent EU study that found widespread fraud in declarations of fishing vessels' engine power, and said Mediterranean stocks were fished at an average of twice the sustainable level.

“We urge commissioner Virginijus Sinkevicius to start infringement procedures against Mediterranean countries as a prerequisite to any fishing effort restrictions, otherwise the effectiveness of any adopted measure will be at risk,” Moehrle said.

The agreement between government ministers remains subject to formal adoption at a subsequent EU Council meeting, which will now be in 2020.

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Follow-up: EU Council [statement](#); EU [study](#) on engine power verification by Member States; 2013 Common Fisheries Policy [Regulation](#)

Shipowners propose \$5bn fund to cut CO2 emissions

Claudia Delpero, 18 Dec 2019

The global shipping industry has called on the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to create a \$5bn (€4.6bn) programme for research and development to cut CO2 emissions from the sector

The proposal was presented on Wednesday by eight international shipowners' associations representing 90% of the world merchant fleet.

The industry called for the establishment of a maritime research and development board overseen by IMO member states. The organisation would be financed by shipping companies through a mandatory contribution of \$2 per tonne of fuel purchased, raising about \$5bn in 10 years.

The funds would be used to research decarbonizing the sector and to deploy commercially viable zero-carbon emission ships by the early 2030s. This is needed to meet the IMO greenhouse gas emissions cut of at least 50% by 2050, a target that would rapidly lead the entire fleet to 100% decarbonisation, according to the industry.

Simon Bennett, deputy secretary general of the International Chamber of Shipping, said the IMO goals “can only be achieved by improving carbon efficiency of the world fleet by around 90%.” But technologies are not currently available at scale.

While welcoming the proposal, Jo Dardenne, shipping expert at green group Transport & Environment, noted that the fuel levy is “a drop in the ocean compared to what is needed to actually clean up shipping.” \$2 per tonne is less than 1% of the actual price the sector pays today for fuel and is 40 times cheaper than the carbon price paid in Europe, she said.

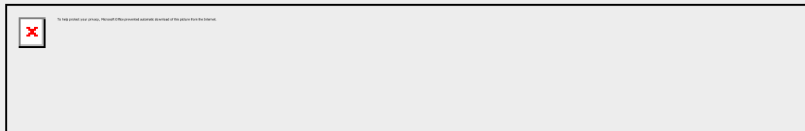
“If the industry is serious about changing, much more needs to be done, starting at the [European level](#), by including shipping in the EU’s carbon market (EU ETS) and mandate CO2 standards for all ships coming to European ports,” Dardenne said.

The International Chamber of Shipping however maintains that the responsibility for regulating CO2 emissions in the sector lies within the UN’s IMO.

The industry groups will submit the proposal for discussion at the next IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee in March 2020 and the fund could be put in place by 2023. In the same year the EU [could include shipping](#) in its emissions trading scheme if the UN agency is judged to have made insufficient progress.

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Follow-up: International Chamber of Shipping [proposal](#)



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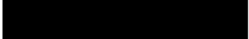
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