One would expect them to insist that we talk not so much about absurd examples of unnecessary EU regulation (whether real or imaginary) on the length of cucumbers or the curvature of bananas but rather about those EU laws that, for example, protect Europeans from excessive levels of pesticide residues in cucumbers and bananas.

And yet we have seen precisely the opposite. We have seen supposedly pro-European politicians put on the defensive by a crude narrative that presents all EU regulation as ‘Brussels interference’ — even if it saves lives, prevents abuse in the workplace, protects nature and delivers a range of other benefits to ordinary citizens.

In recent months we have seen the Juncker Commission set out five scenarios for the future of the EU that fail to include a clear vision for a sustainable future. This has led civil society organisations to propose a sixth scenario which goes beyond the ‘more or less Europe’ question to consider ‘what kind of Europe’, namely one whose future is clearly framed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

In that context, any attempt to row back environmental protection in the wake of Brexit would not only be incredibly destructive and short-sighted, it would also go against the express wishes of ordinary Europeans who have shown that they value greatly a clean and healthy natural environment.

The EEB, together with its partners in the Green 10, has given a clear signal that future access by the UK to the EU single market must be strictly conditional upon its willingness to be bound by the EU’s environmental legislation, present and future. We have conveyed this message directly to the EU’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier in a meeting in late March. Since then the European Parliament has called for any future deal with the UK to be attached to the UK’s continued adherence to EU standards, including environmental and climate change regulations.

As Britain tries to forge a new identity for itself outside of the European Union, it is important to acknowledge the value that many UK citizens place on a clean and healthy environment. Anyone who remembers how British beaches were plagued by raw sewage in the 1970s will know what a difference European environmental laws have made to people’s lives. A slim majority of voters in the UK referendum may have voted to leave the EU but not for a more polluted Britain. In the survey, the British placed environmental protection as joint third out of 15 policy areas they wanted more European action on. Brexiteers who threaten to dump European nature laws when the UK leaves the EU should not forget this.
THREE KEY CHALLENGES TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FROM BREXIT

The EU’s efforts to solve our environmental crisis are undoubtedly among its greatest achievements. Over the last 40 years our rivers and beaches have improved significantly, iconic species and wild spaces have been protected and a clean energy revolution is taking place as we speak.

This is not to downplay the enormity of the task ahead of us to reverse the loss of biodiversity, avert catastrophic climate change and reduce pollution but to take heart from the fact that the EU has the means to take on this task.

Brexit presents its own challenges. In the wake of Brexit we have seen calls within the UK to shed European environmental regulations on grounds that this would improve the competitiveness of the UK economy.

In the rest of the EU we have see something similar, though usually less extreme, but the UK’s have your cake and eat it approach to press for today.

These calls to cut environmental regulations have little genuine public support but if we allow them go unchallenged they could cause serious damage for our environment now and for generations to come.

Avoid a return of the ‘dirty man’
In the 1970s when Britain first joined the European Union it picked up an unkind moniker that it took many years to shake off.

The UK was dubbed the ‘dirty man of Europe’ as compared to other Western European countries Britain did little to control pollution from cars, power stations, and farms.

If the Brexit negotiations go badly then we could see what many people have described as the ‘worst case scenario’. No deal for the UK, and World Trade Organisation (WTO) tariffs being brought into effect with all the practical implications this will have for trade.

The fear is that in the face of such a damaging economic situation the UK would set up as a low tax low regulation economy providing services to industrial laggards on the edge of the EU.

The impact of the return to poor environmental regulation in the UK would not just damage the health and wellbeing of British citizens but risk that of its neighbours too by putting EU standards under political pressure.

This scenario may not be what Britain voted for but it is precisely the vision that some red tape slashing Brexiteers articulated during the campaign last year and continue to press for today.

Preserving the authority of the ECJ
In her landmark speech in January, Theresa May set out her Brexit strategy declaring that she did not want the UK to accept the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

She said that to stay in the single market “would amount to accepting a role for the European Court of Justice that would see it still having direct legal authority over our country.” She added it would “to all intents and purposes mean not leaving the EU at all.”

The ECJ is the European Union’s highest court and as such it has been a vital tool in the enforcement of environmental laws.

Enforcement has always been an issue when it comes to the EU’s nature directives. If the EU and the UK were to agree a trade deal which preserves environmental protections but the UK was not subject to the authority of the ECJ one would have to question whether that deal was enforceable.

Preserving our values
Since the Brexit vote there has been more than a bit of soul search within the EU 27. The future of Europe, it appears, is up for grabs.

One worrying development has been the desire in some quarters to pande to eurosceptics by articulating a future where less Europe equates to less environmental, health and consumer protection. Indeed this was evident in Juncker’s 10 political priorities and again in the Commission’s five scenarios where the only explicit mention of these topics is one where these issues would be repatriated.

Any move to deliver less environmental action at European level would erode the trust and support of exactly those citizens who generally still see the EU as a good thing. As the outcome of recent Dutch elections showed, pro EU and pro-Euro attitudes tend to go together.

At the same time such a strategy of appeasement has failed completely to convince the EU’s opponents. A case in point was Cameron’s strategy to seek support for EU membership on the basis of a renegotiated deal that included an unprecedented attack on red tape yet failed to convince the UK voters.

In the face of an onslaught of anti-EU, anti democratic and anti-environmental campaigns, the European Union needs to stand firm for what it believes in, listen to the silent majority that supports environmental protection, and work to deliver on what matters to them and preserve the value for a healthy natural environment that we share.

Pieter de Pous,
EEB EU Policy Director
EU countries obstructing measures that would bring the EU closer to a circular economy are revealed — and they are not your usual suspects.

This month, NGOs led by the EEB asked member states whether they will support proposals to boost EU waste policy in the negotiations taking place in Brussels in the coming months.

The proposals, already approved by the European Parliament in March and to be achieved by 2030, include higher recycling targets for municipal solid waste; targets for preparation for reuse of municipal solid waste and reuse of packaging; better separate collection of all waste streams, including biowaste; EU-wide rules for producer responsibility; and objectives to reduce waste generation.

At stake is the creation of over 800,000 jobs, one in ten coming from reuse, and €72 billion a year in savings across Europe. EU countries would also miss the opportunity to avoid the emission of over 420 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent, which equates to taking 4 in 10 cars off European roads.

**Laggards**
Countries opposing most of the proposals include Denmark and Finland — often regarded as leaders in waste policy despite their enormous amount of waste generated per capita. Other countries set to categorically reject higher ambition are Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia.

While eventually supporting a 65% recycling target, countries such as the Czech Republic, Italy, Sweden, Portugal, and Luxembourg are expected to oppose plans to make preparation for reuse mandatory, set a 10% target for packaging reuse and set waste prevention targets — all top priorities in a circular economy.

**A transparency problem**
The UK, Germany, Poland, Ireland, Slovenia and Croatia have so far been unwilling to share their positions, highlighting a long-standing transparency problem during negotiations between Member States, as well as member states and EU institutions. This creates barriers between EU citizens and their national governments, and is at odds with the progressive and transparent stance adopted by the European Parliament.

Unlike votes in the European Parliament, where discussions are recorded, inter-institutional and member states level negotiations take place behind closed doors. EU citizens are therefore prevented from knowing the position of their governments — let alone joining the debate.

**Leaders**
On the other hand, southern countries that generally struggle with waste management such as Greece and Romania as well as Spain are calling for stronger support for recycling, waste prevention, preparation for reuse and better separate collection.

Find out how your country did at [eeb.org](http://eeb.org).

Mauro Anastasio, EEB Communications Officer
Over a quarter of a million people across Europe and 600 civil society organisations and businesses have used the European Commission’s public consultation on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to make their voices heard.

They have called for the EU’s farm spending scheme to better protect our climate and environment, be fairer for farmers and consumers, to contribute to healthy and sustainable food production, and protect animal welfare.

The consultation responses were gathered through Living Land, an online campaign platform set up by the EEB, BirdLife Europe, and WWF.

The CAP was introduced in 1968 to feed Europe’s population in the wake of World War Two. However, it quickly drove the mechanisation of the farming sector by handing out billions of Euros in EU taxpayers’ money in subsidies to support a socially and environmentally harmful model of farming based on overproduction.

Successive reforms over the last few decades have failed to make the policy greener, fairer or simpler. Today, almost 40% of the EU budget is spent on the CAP, and it continues to support harmful farm practices which are the biggest cause of nature loss in Europe.

EEB Policy Manager for Agriculture and Bioenergy, Faustine Bas-Defossez, said: “The huge participation in the Living Land campaign shows that EU citizens expect public money to be invested in an agricultural model that serves sustainable farmers and rural communities, rather than one which destroys the very natural resources farmers rely on to farm. We need farming to work in harmony with nature and not against it.”

The whole picture
Support for the Living Land campaign does not just come from environmental quarters. The signatories and organisations hail from a variety of sectors: from those representing consumers, the food sector, and drinking water providers, to those promoting development, health, and animal welfare.

Bas-Defossez continued: “The CAP is failing rural communities with more and more farmers going out of business every year. Overproduction is linked to falling animal welfare standards and public health issues due to air pollution and pesticide and fertiliser run-off. Not to mention the impact an export-dependent model has on local economies in developing countries.”

Those who took part in the CAP public consultation — the largest ever EU consultation on agriculture policy — hope their input will have an impact on the Commission’s proposal for the next round of CAP reform, expected in early 2018.

EU decision makers are also poised to begin talks on the next EU budget where the amount of money allocated to farm policy will be negotiated. For the Living Land campaign supporters it is crucial that there is clarity on what the priorities of a future farm subsidy system will be before talks on how much money it is allocated begin.

With the ball now in the Commission’s court, the message from civil society is clear: the only way to tackle climate change, ecosystem collapse and a broken food and farming system is through a root and branch reform of the policy which has long been synonymous with the European project itself, the CAP.

Emily Macintosh, EEB Communications Officer
CAP CONFERENCE: A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVING CAP CAN DELIVER LASTING CHANGE SAYS COMMISSIONER HOGAN

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is “cracked not broken” EU Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan told the recent EEB and BirdLife Europe conference.

Commissioner Hogan made his remarks at the EEB and BirdLife Europe conference entitled “Who will fix the broken CAP?” which took place on 11 March.

He said: “I would like to signal my uneasiness about the title of this conference and the title for this session [The CAP — no longer fit for purpose]. If this was the case there would be hardly any remaining political support for it.”

“The CAP is a living policy, which has a direct and measurable impact on all the citizens of Europe. I am confident that by working closely with all stakeholders and decision-makers, we can arrive at a Communication that elaborates a pathway towards a CAP truly fit for the 21st century.”

While the Commissioner sees the CAP as one of the EU’s success stories, delivering real and lasting benefits for Europeans, he conceded that more could always be done, with the CAP contributing to achieving the EU’s international agreements, such as those on sustainable development and climate change.

In the Q&A that followed, the Commissioner welcomed the constructive approach of the “Living Land” campaign and said that the contributions of the 600 organisations that have signed up will be recognised. However, he also argued for NGOs to engage more at the member state level rather than just lobbying Brussels to achieve a truly lasting change.

The Commissioner’s comments regarding the condition of the CAP were challenged by other speakers at the event who had a more stark assessment of one of the Europe’s oldest and most controversial policies.

Experts and NGO leaders took issue with the CAP on many levels including biodiversity conservation, food safety, food waste, animal welfare and farmer livelihoods. The call for a joint food and farming policy which would enable a transition to sustainable food systems was echoed by many of the speakers. While many ingredients for a new CAP recipe were proposed, views diverged on how these changes could be achieved — while some argued for smaller incremental steps, full-on revolution was the solution for others.

The conference session that garnered the most attention, maybe not surprisingly, was the one that gave the floor to those voices that seem to be rarely heard in the CAP debates, but without whom no reform can ever be achieved — the farmers.

Alex Datema, Dutch livestock farmer, argued that we need a different way of farming, one that is productive, but also enhances biodiversity and landscapes.

Kristina Simonaiyte, EEB Communications Assistant

"The CAP must be in line with environmental and animal welfare policies. Any new agriculture policy needs to be based on a fitness check exercise. Coherence is extremely important. Agriculture and environment are inextricably interlinked — farming has largely shaped our landscapes in Europe, however, the current state of the environment is very alarming."

"Only by thinking big we will be able to move away from the current situation towards a policy that is fair, healthy, environmentally sustainable and globally responsible. Cosmetic changes and evolution are not enough — what we need is a revolution."

"We need a food policy that goes beyond the CAP. We can only meet the challenges with the current CAP through governance reform and an approach that monitors the impact of the CAP."

"While our interests in the short term might diverge, all the different groups — farmers, civil society, and businesses need to develop a long-term shared vision..."
MINING FOR SIGNATURES HELPS CLEAN UP EUROPE’S COAL PLANTS

People power helped score a major victory for cleaner air as the EU adopted much stricter emissions rules for power plants.

Thousands of signatures gathered around Europe and a robust campaign calling for cleaner air helped to persuade lawmakers in Brussels in April.

Stricter rules for emissions from large power stations were adopted in an incredibly close vote, where even the abstention of some of the EU’s smallest Member States would have been enough to swing the decision.

The EEB led a coalition of groups that collected more than 125,000 signatures in support of the new measures. The “Clean up Europe’s toxic air” petition appeared in nine languages and called on health and environment ministers to “Act now to stop toxic air pollution from power plants!” . Activists delivered the petition in Brussels on the day of the vote and to the responsible ministries in Warsaw and Berlin in the days before.

While the new rules will apply to all large power plants that burn peat, oil, gas and other substances, their most important impact will be on coal and lignite. Plants burning coal represent some of the biggest single-point sources of certain emissions in the EU, with coal plants alone responsible for more than half of all emissions of sulphur dioxide, and around 40% of NOx, dust and mercury, from industry in Europe.

The significance of the new limits became increasingly clear as the German government attempted to weaken the revised limits for existing lignite plants, a last-minute move described by campaigners as “desperate and unprecedented”. The EEB wrote to European Commissioner Vella to express concern about any late amendments and met with officials from the Commission and Member States to raise our concerns also.

Campaigners had expected the vote to be close, but Germany’s refusal to back rules that will have clear implications for their most polluting lignite plants left the decision on a knife edge. While coal-addicted countries like Poland, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic were always expected to oppose the new measures, there was widespread surprise and disappointment that Germany was willing to join this “unholy alliance” of polluters.

Christian Schaible, the EEB policy manager who provided expert input over a three-year period as the rules were drafted said:

“It was shocking to see Germany join some of Europe’s most polluting countries to try to block rules that will benefit people across the EU, their claim to be a frontrunner when it comes to environmental protection has been seriously undermined. The ‘new’ standards are actually all tried-and-tested techniques. Giant toxic power plants have enjoyed permission to pollute for far too long. These rules will go some way towards correcting this injustice.”

As a result of the new rules Member States will have to place stricter limits on toxic pollutants from all 2,900 large power plants. Stricter limits will have to be met by 2021.

Anton Lazarus, EEB Communications Officer

WHAT IS THE LCP BREF?

The EEB has a seat at the table for the technical talks that draft binding rules for European industry. These rules are found in reference documents called ‘BREFs’, which are issued for different types of industrial activities.

Environmental authorities must consult BREFs when issuing permits for industrial activities in the EU. BREFs define the ‘Best Available Techniques’ (BAT) for reducing the impact of industry on the environment and contain maximum emission limits that must be met by polluters.

The BREF for Large Combustion Plants (LCPs), which covers all large combustion plants burning oil, gas, biomass and other fuels, and importantly, all big coal-fired power stations, is called the ‘LCP BREF’. A revised version of the LCP BREF with stricter limits was adopted on 28 April in Brussels.

Member States, industry and environmental NGOs meet in Seville, Spain, to discuss which techniques should be considered as BAT. The EEB takes part in the ‘Sevilla Process’ to argue for the highest levels of environmental protection and to define the most ambitious BAT possible.

The BREF for Large Combustion Plants (LCPs), which covers all large combustion plants burning oil, gas, biomass and other fuels, and importantly, all big coal-fired power stations, is called the ‘LCP BREF’. A revised version of the LCP BREF with stricter limits was adopted on 28 April in Brussels.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS TOOLKIT DESIGNED TO ASSIST NGOS IN THE EU

The European Environmental Bureau has launched a new online toolkit to help environmental NGOs in Europe to learn more about and work with the opportunities that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer to the environmental movement in Europe.

In 2015 world leaders agreed on the Agenda 2030 and on 17 SDGs with 169 targets to get there. This global agenda succeeds the strictly development-focused scope of the Millennium Development Goals, which steered all development-related actions from 2000 to 2015. Between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2030, all countries have the duty to realise all 17 SDGs. But enforcement will depend on many factors, including the engagement of civil society. It is the relatively low engagement of environmental civil society that we aim to address.

The SDGs aim for a world where all humans can live well within planetary boundaries. Out of the 169 targets that make up the 17 SDGs, at least 59 are environmental targets. But environmental NGOs are currently underrepresented in the NGO coalitions that engage in holding States to account in relation to their SDG implementation. This is despite the fact that any proposal for a more environmentally-friendly alternative to policy decision X is likely to be aligned with your government’s obligation to meet target Y of Sustainable Development Goal Z. Therefore, the SDGs are like an extra hammer to help you nail down the points you are probably already trying to make.

But the SDGs also offer an opportunity to confronted national and European policymakers with the need for policy coherence.

To encourage more engagement from environmental NGOs with the SDGs, the EEB has created an online SDG toolkit which will be useful for different aspects of environmental NGOs’ work.

- **Events:** you’re an SDG expert and you want people to be able to find you when they are looking for a good speaker or moderator? Or: you’re looking for an SDG expert as speaker?
- **Policy:** you want to learn who works on the SDGs in your country, which policy proposals exist already, or when the next big policy event takes place?
- **Communications & Press:** you write press releases or campaign messages and like to link it to the relevant SDG, add some graphic content, or find some key social media accounts?

The SDG toolkit contains hundreds of articles, presentations, speaker bios, social media accounts, images, policy papers, monitoring and review documents, SDG coalition websites and many other resources. The site is easy to navigate as users can filter by region/country, by type of resource, or by SDG. The toolkit answers basic questions on the SDGs with the aim of inspiring national and local level environmental organisations and getting them started.

Leaflets about the SDG Toolkit are available upon request — in case you wish to spread this in your network, amongst your members or local groups.

Nick Meynen, EEB Project Officer – Global Policies and Sustainability Unit

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EEB REACHING OUT TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The EEB has launched an educational campaign at national level on waste and the circular economy. If successful it will make political progress on the circular economy easier at national and European level.

The circular economy already has good support amongst the public. People usually support initiatives such as bottle deposit schemes or digital platforms supporting the sharing economy. As well as measures that increase the recycling rate, take toxins out of recycled products or make products longer lasting.

It is in the fine detail of making it happen where we see more resistance.

The communications campaign will be led by Senior Communications Officer Jack Hunter and will focus mainly on France, Italy, Germany and Poland, although we will try wherever possible to make the products useful to other national audiences.

The Make Resources Count website has been relaunched with the focus squarely on consumers rather than EU policy. It will have a positive feel, with articles, interviews and video on themes like smart technology, people power, big ideas and creativity, content that is likely to do well on social media and the campaign’s Facebook page.

A series of high quality short films showcasing some of Italy’s most inspiring anti-waste projects will go live in June, in partnership with Legambiente. The campaign has a significant budget thanks to generous backing by the Swiss MAVA Foundation. It concludes at the end of March 2018, but may well be extended through fresh funding.
COMING AND GOING

DEPARTURES

Philippa Nuttall Jones left the EEB earlier in the year to set up her own communication consultancy. Philippa did a tremendous job as Communications Manager and had a huge part in the recent rebranding. We thank her for all of her hard work and wish her all the best in her new endeavour.

Edita Vysna who worked as Policy Officer in the area of agriculture during

ARRIVALS

Patrizia Heidegger joined the EEB team as Global Policies and Sustainability Director in March. Previously, she headed the NGO Shipbreaking Platform.

Ian Carey has joined as Communications Manager. He worked in a similar role with one of our associate members the Irish Environmental Network.

Kristina Simonaityte has also joined the communications team as Digital Communications Assistant.

Sebastian Winkler has joined the EEB as a consultant. He will be working on facilitating environmental NGO participation in OECD environment-related processes.

Anita Willcox has started working with the EEB on the issue of Mercury.

Alma Dufour has joined the Circular Economy team for the next six months as an intern.

Pamela Plaza is helping out for the next few months developing the EEB’s fundraising capacity.

Justine Bichon started working with the EEB as an intern in the area of agriculture.

Ariane Piraux has joined as finance team intern for the coming months.

Very special arrivals — We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to EEB staff member Tatiana Santos who gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Victor, on the 20 April. And a heartfelt congratulations to Louise Duprez on the arrival of a wonderful baby boy, Isaac, on the 21 May.

MERCURY TRENDY

The fight against mercury pollution took a huge step forward as the EU and seven of its Member States ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury last month. Bulgaria, Denmark, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, and Sweden and the EU ratified the treaty on 19 May thereby providing the “tipping point” needed to trigger its entry into force. The convention is designed to limit the use of mercury and protect people from its harmful impacts.

SAVE THE DATE

EEB CONFERENCE

The EEB annual conference will take place this year in Edinburgh, Scotland, on Monday 6 November, 2017. The EEB are partnering with our member the Scottish Environment Link. The conference will bring together members of the environmental movement from across the EU, the UK and Scotland, with policy makers, civil society as well as entrepreneurs to debate shared environmental challenges and opportunities.

TURNING A NEW LEAF: LAUNCH OF EEB’S NEW LOGO & WEBSITE

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) unveiled a new logo and website last month, which will allow the EEB to raise its voice louder and clearer than ever. On the occasion Jeremy Wates, EEB’s Secretary General said: “From our campaign pushing for a truly sustainable farming system in Europe to our work on global environmental justice, we will use our rebranding to keep up the pressure at the forefront of the European environmental movement and to help empower our members at a national level.” We invite you to visit the website and give us feedback. Please visit the new website at www.eeb.org.

META IS BACK

You may have noticed a long gap since the last Meta bulletin. This was down to the change over of staff and the increased workload of the rebrand. We will now be bringing you Meta every quarter with the next issue in September.