





Stakeholder Workshop

"Making Zero Pollution Integration Across Policies Work"

14 March 2023

Summary report







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1. Introduction and objectives of the workshop

The workshop brought together more than 35 participants from various national administrations (Zero Pollution contacts in ministries, compliance authorities, EPAs, etc.) with stakeholders from the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform (ZPSP). The list of workshop participants is available in <u>Appendix 2</u>.

Joachim D'Eugenio (Adviser for Zero Pollution, DG Environment, European Commission), opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and briefly introducing the agenda and objectives of the workshop: to discuss how, in practice, we can join forces on cross-cutting issues such as assessments, implementation or mainstreaming to make use of the different instruments in a joinedup way, and how to increase efficiencies and impacts on the ground with a more integrated approach by sharing experiences and identifying opportunities and challenges.

Veronica Manfredi (Director for Zero Pollution, DG Environment, European Commission), gave a welcoming statement, emphasising that despite challenges, due to difficult geopolitical events and the global pandemic, the European sustainability agenda remains on track in the current political context. The EU Zero Pollution Action Plan (ZPAP) has made significant progress, as demonstrated by the Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook published in December 2022. The report provides insights into where progress has been made and where it needs to be improved. The recently adopted Global Biodiversity Framework at COP15 in December 2022 will complement the ZPAP by providing a pathway for tackling the planetary 'triple crisis' of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution in a more integrated and effective way at a global level. By addressing scientific gaps and integrating policies, multiple benefits can be achieved, leading to a sustainable future for future generations.

Lilian Busse (*Vice-President, German Environment Agency UBA*) presented welcoming remarks by outlining that the responsibility of UBA is to ensure that all citizens have a clean and safe environment. To achieve this goal, Zero Pollution must be seen together with biodiversity, human health, and climate change across policy sectors and regulations. To move towards Zero Pollution, we must adopt new approaches and break down silos to collaborate across regulations and expertise, facilitated by overarching structures. Some promising approaches include the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform and the EPA-Network, which provide opportunities for collaboration and coordination towards the Zero Pollution ambition.

The opening statement delivered by *Arianna Censi* (*Member*, *Committee of the Regions; Deputy Mayor for Mobility of Milan, Italy*) emphasised the crucial role of the local and regional level in achieving Zero Pollution. To effectively tackle pollution, policies must have a cross-cutting approach and work across different sectors, while also being consistent with other initiatives. Mobility and transport must be integrated into these policies. Synergies must be created, and mismatches avoided across environment, climate, and energy policies. Local and regional authorities play a critical role in implementing policies on the ground, but as the transition of sustainable practices can be costly, and territorial disparities can be challenging, sufficient resources are necessary. Collaboration across local, regional, and national borders is also essential for the effective implementation of policies.

The comments following the introductions were focused on the importance of integrating health aspects when tackling pollution and the emphasis on our collective responsibility to protect people despite the costs.

2. Plenary session: Setting the scene

The workshop continued with plenary presentations, summarised in their respective subsections below, followed by a summary of discussion points.

All presentations from the workshop can be accessed here.





2.1. Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook – integrated assessment for a more integrated policy making

Ian Marnane (European Environmental Agency EEA) delivered a presentation on the EEA Zero Pollution Monitoring Assessment 2022, focusing on the following:

- The Zero Pollution hierarchy and key elements including prevention, reduction, control, elimination and remediation.
- An overview of the EEA Zero Pollution Monitoring Assessment 2022, including its topical chapters, sections of the health assessment, cross-cutting stories across relevant topics, integrated indicators and signals (i.e. emerging risks, growing need for evidence, legacy risks, etc.)
- The 10 Zero Pollution targets, where 4 targets are on track to be delivered and 6 targets are not or only partly on track.
- Next steps, including an update of the Zero Pollution Monitoring Assessment in 2024, where the baseline assessment and the Zero Pollution dashboard will be updated and new sources of data for assessment will be added.

During the discussion, the participants discussed the timetable for the next Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook, which is expected to take place in mid-2024. The plan is to create additional dashboards for different areas, combining them with available indicators, in order to simplify the process of identifying which indicators are doing well and which ones are not. Dashboards would also allow for a more integrated presentation of the overall impact of certain measures.

Another point being discussed was that it is challenging to establish a relationship between the pollution trend and the factors driving the trend. Information on what drives the pollution trend is available in many, but not all, areas. An example is the production and consumption patterns, such as the extraction levels of raw materials.

2.2. The Zero Pollution Action Plan as a chance for a crossregulatory approach to pollution prevention and reduction

Lena Vierke (*German Environment Agency UBA*) delivered a presentation focusing on the UBA's approach to Zero Pollution. The key focus points of the presentation were the following:

- The Zero Pollution Ambition and expertise of agencies, covering:
 - Technical expertise
 - Expertise on legislation and regulation
- The Zero Pollution Ambition Cycle to integrate cross-regulatory approaches to pollution prevention and reduction, including:
 - \circ Monitoring
 - Recognition of the need for action
 - Selection of appropriate measures
 - o Implementation of measures and control of success
 - Institutional Challenges of the Zero Pollution Ambition
- Key messages, including the need for mainstreaming the Zero Pollution Ambition and for cross-regulatory approaches, and ways forward to address institutional and other challenges.

The discussion emphasized the need that interaction between different environmental units within organisations should be organised differently. Adding another layer of complexity is the question of how we can involve other institutions that are responsible for addressing environmental issues from a variety of different perspectives.





Another point was that often it is not only institutional challenges that prevent progress but also political will that is lacking. There will have to be better ways to communicate with policy makers who arein responsible for industrial or agricultural policy.

2.3. Integrated environment policies – towards a more integrated enforcement and implementation on Zero Pollution

Stephanos Ampatzis and **Marianthi Podimata** (*DG Environment*) delivered a presentation focusing on integrated enforcement and implementation of Zero Pollution. The key points were the following:

- Key actions in the Zero Pollution Action Plan, particularly the importance of stricter implementation and enforcement of laws (ZPAP Flagship 5), where a number of key activities and events have already been delivered
 - Relevant actions taken by the European Commission (EC):
 - o EC approach to enforcement policy and enforcement action
 - o EC Communication in 2022, 'Enforcing EU law for a Europe that delivers',
 - Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) 2022:
 - Identification of strength and weaknesses across different areas
 - EIR peer-to-peer tools and exchanges for enhancing collaboration and promoting exchange of best practices, including the overview of the TAIEX-EIR Multi-country Flagship Workshop on Environmental Compliance and Governance
 - Proposal on the revision of the Environmental Crime Directive
 - Other recent EC proposals on air and water pollution where provisions on compensation, penalties and access to justice were included.

The participants were particularly interested to learn what conclusions were drawn at the previous TAIEX workshop, in which areas Member States did not sufficiently implement environmental law, as well as how this links to infringement cases in other policy areas outside of the environment. Moreover, it seems that enforcement capacities in the Member States may be limited and may be one of the root causes for poor implementation. An overview of such challenges are presented in the EIR report 2022 which has one section devoted to Zero Pollution. The report also explains the monitoring mechanisms for infringements, and how fines are used to target different areas for non-compliance. It is noteworthy that 25 % of all EU infringement cases are related to files from DG ENV. The lack of compliance may have serious consequences because if cases are not enforced in one area (e.g. circular economy) it may lead to compliance issues in another areas (e.g. waste and recycling). One area of action is to improve transparency and to empower citizens to request enforcement of the laws in their national courts ('access to justice'). Another aspect is the fact that most environmental administrations have limited resources.

Another topic was that polluters do not always pay for pollution. The EC has put forward concrete proposals to ensure stricter rules for water pollution, including proposals for extended producer responsibility which means that industries should pay a contribution towards the costs of wastewater treatment for micropollutants from pharmaceuticals and cosmetic products.

2.4 Discussion

Following the conclusions of the presentations of the plenary session, the discussion also highlighted human biomonitoring as an important source of knowledge on pollution. The correlation between human health and contamination in the environment seem strong, but the connection between human health and the environment is not addressed by any regulation. It would be good to develop regulations for human biomonitoring because of the impact of exposure to contaminants on human health and premature deaths. For human biomonitoring in the future we need to look at the Horizon Europe Partnership on the Assessment of the Risk of Chemicals (PARC) to help solve these issues.





Another topic was the importance of integrating analysis across regulations and how to become better at the connection between EU level and national level actions. In addition, we need to make better use of limited resources and avoid competition between topics and administrations, instead creating synergies and linking up efforts.

3. Parallel sessions: Breakout groups

The workshop then split into three breakout sessions to discuss the following topics in more detail:

- Integrated assessment, including 'one substance, one assessment' (1S1A)
- Implementation, compliance and enforcement of Zero Pollution laws
- Mainstreaming the Zero Pollution ambition.

Two questions were highlighted for discussion in all three groups:

- With a focus on experiences and opportunities stemming from existing policy and instruments, are existing instruments and the way they are co-acting effective as intended? What has worked and what not? If not, why not?
- What opportunities or barriers exist for integrated, cross-cutting approaches? What are the key enablers?

The background presentations used to introduce each of the breakout topics are available with the workshop presentations <u>here</u>. The outputs of the discussions are reported in the section below.

The break out group on topic 1 "Integrated assessment including 'one substance, one assessment' started with an Input from Peter Korytar (DG ENV) on "EU chemicals strategy for sustainability: One substance, one assessment" and Lena Vierke (UBA) on "How to identify the best possible risk management approach addressing a pollution problem".

Input for topic 2 "Implementation, compliance and enforcement of Zero Pollution laws" was given by Francesco Andreotti and Mihaela Monica Crisan with "A view from IMPEL Practitioners on Implementation, compliance and enforcement of zero".

For topic 3 André Conrad and Marcel Langner (both UBA) introduced the topics on "Mainstreaming the Zero pollution ambition".

4. Plenary session: Reporting back from breakout groups

The key discussion points and conclusions from each of the sessions are highlighted below in designated subsections. For breakout groups 1 and 3, supplementary visual material produced during the session is also available in <u>Annex 1</u>.

Topic 1: Integrated assessment including 'one substance, one assessment'

The key discussion points and conclusions from the breakout group on **integrated assessment** were as follows:

How can integrated assessment help?

- By addressing prevention not only in terms of preventing use of hazardous substances but also reducing consumption in general
- Through better targeting of risks from chemical mixtures
- By helping to move towards circular economy by increasing circularity of waste processes
- Through better guidelines and labelling on cosmetic products and the substances they contain





• By helping to avoid regrettable substitutions (i.e. substituting one unwanted substance with another unwanted substance).

Examples mentioned included the following:

- Activities on lead in Belgium taken into account different exposure sources
- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) being addressed in the EU chemicals strategy
- Bisphenol A (BPA) being addressed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) opinion and REACH restrictions
- Would the problems with trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) be solved by applying 'one substance, one assessment'?

Opportunities identified included the following:

- Streamlining of data reporting (avoiding duplications, repetitions)
- Facilitating third-party analysis of data through open data
- Pushing towards innovation (e.g. sustainable by design) and encouraging leadership within different sectors
- Helping withhazard identification and intervention in a timely manner
- Implementing global strategies and objectives (e.g. WHO global strategy on health, environment and climate)
- Considering benefits related to climate and biodiversity
- Breaking down silos between and across organisations.

Obstacles:

- Risk of pushing towards outsourcing pollution to other parts of the world
- Risks to EU competitiveness
- 'Paralysis by analysis': 'When do we know enough?' vs. the precautionary approach
- Lack of alternatives for certain essential uses of chemicals
- Tension between directives and regulations in terms of level of ambition.

Criteria and processes involved in the integrated assessment:

- Need for prioritisation, solving most important problems first
- Need to involve all stakeholders
- Essential uses how do we bring this into the assessment processes, how do we define essential uses?
- Need for risk management option analysis (as e.g. done by ECHA).

The discussion on these points emphasised the equal importance of focusing on forward-looking projections as compared to assessments based on historical data, and how this can be linked with prevention aspects in the future Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook.

The difficulty in understanding the scope of use of a substance when it is first developed and how it evolves over time was underlined. A potential solution was offered, being a mechanism to indicate when there is a diversion from the expected pathway of use. A good starting point for prevention could also be more emphasis on safe and sustainable by design.

Topic 2: Implementation, compliance and enforcement of Zero Pollution laws

The key discussion points and conclusions from the breakout group on **Implementation**, **compliance and enforcement** were as follows:

- There should be a compliance database to harmonise data at the EU level to enable better collaboration on cross-cutting and cross-border issues (e.g. transhipment of waste).
- There is a need to build upon best practices across different agencies, including:
 - o restructuring and reorganisation of departments to better target cross-cutting issues;





- establishment of working groups that would have a cross-cutting vision on different policies brought into the discussion;
- integrating thematic areas and establishing practices on how to efficiently coordinate between different thematic areas for cross-cutting issues.
- There is a need for connecting policy, science and the public.
- The protocols and agreements between enforcement authorities across different sectors should be complemented by clear procedures for collaboration.

In answer to the question 'How can cross-sectorial cooperation be further improved?' the breakout group offered the following suggestions:

- Taking into account all relevant legislation and not only necessary legislation under relevant directives
- People/structures needed to connect dots between different policy areas
- Additional training for environmental authorities' and other relevant authorities' experts for better preparedness
- More workshops and opportunities for collaboration among ministries so that cross-cutting issues can be addressed across relevant policies
- Some regulations (e.g. climate protection) are already cross-regulatory, but we need to make sure that each of the part of the regulations are understood and implemented.
- Additional Examples of cross-cutting legislation: Environmental Liability Directive (ELD), Environmental Crime Directive.

The discussion on these topics covered training opportunities available for environmental inspectors. Examples for such training include sessions on enforcing the Industrial Emissions Directive for both routine and non-routine inspections, as well as training for EU judges on the enforcement and sanctioning provisions of various EU legislations. Another point that came up during the discussion was the importance of transmitting data to the EEA; missing data from Member States can significantly affect the accuracy of daily pollution-level maps on the agency's website, which are crucial for informing citizens about pollution and compliance.

Topic 3: Mainstreaming the Zero Pollution ambition

A narrative was built based on two main hypothetical mainstreaming policy examples:

- At least 50% of Europeans work from home by 2050.
- EU meat consumption is reduced by 50% by 2050.

Participants were invited to assess the link between these hypothetical policy goals and the existing Zero Pollution targets.

Based on this, the **main discussion points and ideas** from the breakout group on **mainstreaming the Zero Pollution ambition** were as follows:

- There is a need for vertical integration (integration from the local, regional up to European or even global level) for consistency, coordination and collaboration across different levels of government.
- There are links between the two issues (i.e. working from home might change food consumption).
- There is a need for basic impact assessment to assess impacts of potential conflicts.
- There is a need to exchange ideas across disciplines.
- There could be conflict between nudging 'supposed' good behaviour and achieving the better alternative (e.g. the move from combustion engine to electric cars is widely discussed as a positive change of behaviour but what does it do for incentives to use public transport).
- There is a need for more research in fields where evidence is lacking.
- To avoid 'paralysis by analysis', we should ask when do we sufficient analysis of a problem and start to take action?'





• A target focus of further mainstreaming the Zero Pollution ambition should be on fairness, health and wellbeing.

The **main conclusions** were clustered around two aspects, behaviour change and holistic approaches:

- **Behaviour** how can we change behaviour?
 - Do we need political leadership to set the framework for behavioural change, rather than rely on individual action?
 - We need to address social aspects of affordability and access when thinking about behaviour change (e.g. not everyone can afford an electric car, there are issues of safety for women in public transport, etc.)
- Holistic approach:
 - There is a needed to integrate questions of gender, mental health and social justice alongside environmental considerations in a holistic approach (e.g. what are the implications of working from home).
 - Real change needs a holistic view and joined-up efforts across the EU, national and regional level.
- Mainstreaming has the potential to solve many problems, but solutions have to be found for the inherent complexity of this approach.

During the discussion, the topic of healthy diets and their impact on the environment emerged. Participants noted that while some foods, such as avocados, may be healthy for individuals, importing them from overseas can have negative environmental consequences, which must be considered (conflict of goals).

When underpinning policies by impact assessments, how can we factor in import and export of pollution? And how to factor in prevention in the assessment? At the same time, we need to avoid paralysis by analysis.

Another point raised was the association between higher meat consumption and higher social status. At the same time, healthy food can be more costly. This highlights the importance of addressing issues of inequality in discussions of healthy diets. The participants discussed overarching approaches such as planetary health and the planetary health diet, which could be useful additions to the Zero Pollution Agenda and help to incorporate mainstreaming ideas.

5. Plenary session: Conclusions

In her conclusions, *Lilian Busse* (*Vice-President, German Environment Agency UBA*) emphasised that among the key takeaways from the workshop, one is the need to make better use of technical tools and databases to move forward.

Different options to facilitate change have emerged from discussions, including cross-cutting collaboration, skills and training (e.g. data analysts), addressing behavioural challenges, and encouraging leadership. Mainstreaming is promising but complex, and we need to act together at the EU, national, and local level to create "snowballing" momentum to move forward.

In light of the next mandate of the Commission, while the planetary triple crisis (climate/biodiversity/pollution) is a common endeavour, there should not be a 'competition' between them. There is a need to ensure that Zero Pollution remains a priority on the political agenda, as part of the solutions for the triple crises, alongside climate protection and biodiversity.

Joachim D'Eugenio (Adviser for Zero Pollution, DG Environment) complemented the closing remarks by adding that despite the diverse backgrounds of participants, there has been consensus





on the need for action and about the direction moving forward. Although progress is already happening, there is a need to exploring ways to make this process easier, quicker and build momentum.

It is not only about doing more, but also doing things differently. And doing things differently means working outside of our usual circles and 'silos'. Exchanging ideas across disciplines is beneficial and has often brought out the relationship between the environment and social fairness.

Institutional challenges within and across institutions imply the need to engage with colleagues outside the environmental domain rather than spending time on solely discussing amongst 'ourselves'. There is particular potential for joining forces with the health and the social agenda.

Making real change on the ground is challenging: the issues that were mentioned most were needs for behaviour change vs. system change, political leadership, the social consequences of change and the concept of nudging.

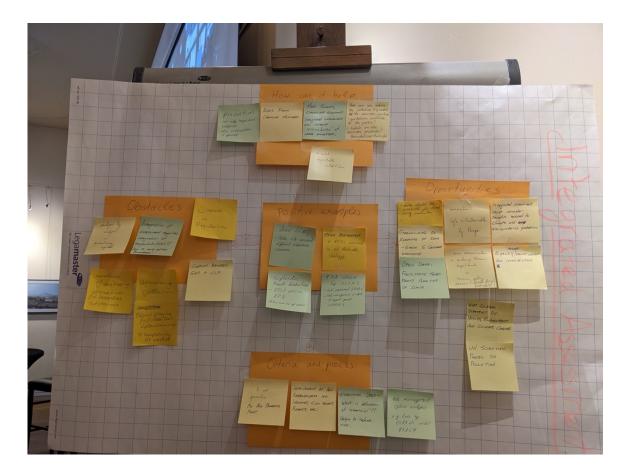
The workshop has offered an opportunity for creative brainstorming and thoughtful reflection, discussing and reflecting on issues that are increasingly vital, but to facilitate real change, we also need more opportunities for different groups to come together. Participants are invited to take these discussions back to their administrations and organisations.





Appendix 1: Breakout session visual outputs

Group 1







Group 3







Appendix 2: Meeting agenda

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	9:30	Registration and welcome coffee	
	10:00	 Introduction & objectives of the workshop (moderator: Joachim D'Eugenio) Veronica Manfredi, Director in DG ENV C for Zero Pollution Lilian Busse, Vice-President of the German Environment Agency (UBA) 	
	10:30	 Plenary session: Setting the scene (moderator: Lilian Busse) Ian Marnane (EEA): Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook – integrated assessment for a more integrated policy making Lena Vierke (UBA): The Zero Pollution Action Plan as a chance for a cross- regulatory approach to pollution prevention and reduction Stephanos Ampatzis & Marianthi Podimata (ENV): Integrated environment policies – towards a more integrated enforcement and implementation on zero pollution Ms Censi (Member of the Committee of the Region and Deputy Mayor for Mobily of Milan): Green Deal going local – policy integration in local communities Discussion 	
	12:00	 Plenary session: Introduction of topics for breakout groups (moderator: Joachim D'Eugenio) Topic 1: Integrated assessment including 'one substance, one assessment' Topic 2: Implementation, compliance and enforcement of zero pollution laws Topic 3: Mainstreaming the zero pollution ambition 	
	12:30	Lunch	
	13:30	 Breakout session 1. Integrated assessment including 'one substance, one assessment' 2. Implementation, compliance and enforcement 3. Mainstreaming the zero pollution ambition 	
		 Questions for discussion in all groups: Focus on experiences and opportunities stemming from existing policy and instruments: are existing instruments and the way they are co-acting effective as intended? What has worked and what not? If not, why not? What opportunities or barriers exist for integrated, cross-cutting approaches? What are the key enablers? 	
	15:15	Coffee break	
	15:30	Plenary session: Reporting back from breakout groups (moderator: Lilian Busse)	
	16:30	Plenary session: Conclusions (Lilian Busse and Joachim D'Eugenio)	
	17:00	End of workshop	







Appendix 3: List of participating organisations

EU institutions or bodies

- European Commission DG ENV
- European Committee of the Regions
- European Environment Agency
- Europol

National administrations

- German Environment Agency (UBA)
- Austrian Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology
- Environment and Resources Authority, Malta
- Federal public service Health, Food Chain Safety & Environment, Belgium
- Ministry of the Environment, Slovak Republic
- Ministry of Justice, Czech Republic
- Ministry of the Environment, Waters and Forests, Romania
- Ministry of Health, Poland
- Ministry of the Environment, Finland
- Ministry of the Environment of Estonia
- Natural Resources Wales, UK
- Région Wallonne SPW ARNE
- Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Resources and Environment, Cyprus

Civil society or non-governmental organisations

- IMPEL Network
- Airparif
- Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
- Copa-Cogeca
- CLEPA European Association of Automotive Suppliers
- Eurometaux