



Water policy under the European Green Deal

State of play and key challenges ahead

Danube Water Program Webinar

12 May 2021

European Commission – Directorate General for the Environment

The European Green Deal



Adopted initiatives with relevance for water

(1/2)

Title	Reference & adoption
The European Green Deal	COM (2019) 640 final 11.12.2019
A new Circular Economy Action Plan - For a cleaner and more competitive Europe	COM (2020) 98 final 11.3.2020
Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives	COM (2020) 380 final 20.5.2020
A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system	COM (2020) 381 final 20.5.2020
Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation	COM (2020) 456 final 27.5.2020
EU Strategy on Energy System Integration (Followed by 'A hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe')	COM (2020) 299 final 8.7.2020 COM (2020) 301 final 8.7.2020
Short-term EU health preparedness for COVID-19 outbreaks	COM (2020) 318 final 15.7.2020
Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy – Guidance to Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans	SWD (2020) 205 final 17.9.2020
Improving access to justice in environmental matters in the EU and its Member States (Aarhus)	COM (2020) 643 final 14.10.2020
General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030 (8 th EAP)	COM (2020) 652 final 14.10.2020

Adopted initiatives with relevance for water

(2/2)

Title	Reference & adoption
A Renovation Wave for Europe – greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives (<i>and statement on the New European Bauhaus</i>)	COM (2020) 662 final, 14.10.2020
EU strategy to reduce methane emissions	COM (2020) 663 final, 14.10.2020
Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability – Towards a Toxic-Free Environment	COM (2020) 667 final, 14.10.2020
New Consumer Agenda – Strengthening consumer resilience for sustainable recovery	COM (2020) 696 final, 13.11.2020
An EU Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral Europe	COM (2020) 741 final, 19.11.2020
Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe (<i>and Update on progress and implementation EU Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment</i>)	COM (2020) 761 final, 25.11.2020
Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future	COM (2020) 789 final, 9.12.2020
Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change	COM (2021) 82 final, 24.2.2021
Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All – Action Plan : ‘Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil’	COM (2021) xx final, 12.5.2021

CEAP - Key targets related to water



- **Food, water & nutrients** - one of the key product value chains addressed.
- **Water reuse and water efficiency:**
 - Facilitate **water reuse** and **water efficiency**, including in industrial processes
 - Application of the new **Water Reuse** Regulation (2020/741/EU)
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2020:177:FULL&from=EN>
- **Sustainable product policy framework** – aim to set principles for product policy and requirements on products placed on the EU market.
- **Review of the Industrial Emissions Directive**, and integration of circular economy practices in upcoming Best Available Techniques (BAT) reference documents
- Address and prevent **microplastics** → Environment, drinking water and food
- Key sectors: **Building** and **textile**



BDS - Key targets related to water

- 30% of EU land and sea protected, 1/3 of which under 'strict protection'
 - **Freshwater ecosystems** are included
- Restoration of freshwater ecosystems:
 - Increased efforts to **restore freshwater ecosystems and the natural functions of rivers** – WFD objectives to be met by 2027
 - **Restore at least 25,000km free flowing rivers**
 - Removal of primarily obsolete barriers
 - Restoration of floodplains and wetlands
 - **Restore and preserve ecological flows** → Member States review water abstraction and impoundment permits – WFD objectives to be met by 2027
- Focus → To implement and enforce EU environmental legislation

F2F - Key targets related to water policy



Reducing

- 50% of the use and risk of chemical pesticides and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030
- 50% (at least) of nutrient losses while ensuring that there is no deterioration in soil fertility
- 20% (at least) of the use of fertilizers by 2030
- 50% of sales of antimicrobials used for farmed animals and aquaculture by 2030

Objective:
>25% of EU land
under organic farming

Revising /Developing

- Sustainable Use of Pesticide Directive
- 2009 Regulation concerning statistics on pesticides and
- Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plans with Member States

Proposing

- Improved labelling to better meet consumers' information needs on healthy, sustainable foods
- Measures to facilitate the placing on the market of pesticides containing biological active substances

Providing

- Support from the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy through new streams of funding and eco-schemes to take up sustainable practices
- Farm advisory services
i.e. promoting effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)

Strategy on Energy System Integration



- Planning and operation of the **energy system ‘as a whole’** → Multiple energy carriers, infrastructures, and consumption sectors
- 3 pillars: **1) More circular energy system** **2) Greater direct-electrification** **3) Clean fuels** where electrification is difficult
- **Reduce the energy-water footprint:**
 - 1) Under Pillar 1: Potential of **energy produced from bio-waste or in waste water treatment plants**
 - 2) Circular Economy Action Plan → Increased sustainable production of **bioenergy from waste-water**, waste and residue, exploiting synergies and avoiding trade-offs
 - 3) Renewable and low-carbon fuel → Minimum shares or quotas in specific end-use sectors (including **maritime**) | Revision of the Renewable Energy Directive | Additional measures assessed under the REFUEL Aviation and **FUEL Maritime initiatives** (2020)
- **A hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe** → H2 can become an alternative low emission fuel for **waterways** and **short-sea shipping**

8th Environment Action Programme to 2030



- Water and marine in 2 of the 6 priorities:
 - d) **zero-pollution** ambition for a toxic free-environment, including for air, water and soil, and protecting the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts
 - e) **protecting, preserving and restoring biodiversity** and enhancing **natural capital**, notably air, water, soil, and forest, freshwater, wetland and marine ecosystems
- Enabling conditions:
 - (a) Ensuring effective and efficient **implementation** of Union legislation
 - (b) Strengthening the **integrated approach** to policy development and implementation
 - (c) Integrating environmental and climate sustainability in the **European Semester** of economic governance, including in the National Reform Programmes and National Recovery and Resilience plans
 - (d) Mobilising sustainable **investments**
 - (e) Phasing out environmentally **harmful subsidies**
 - (f) Ensuring that environmental policies and action are based on the best available **scientific knowledge**
 - (g) Harnessing the potential of **digital and data** technologies
 - (h) Making full use of **nature based solutions** and social innovation
 - (i) Effectively applying high standards for **transparency, public participation and access to justice**
 - (j) Making the data and evidence linked to the implementation of the 8th EAP **publicly available**
 - (k) Supporting the **global uptake** of the priority objectives

Renovation wave

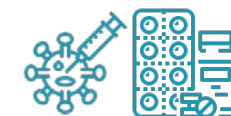


- Focus on optimizing the overall built environment, also by encouraging investment and financing
- Major opportunity:
 - Represents 40% of EU energy consumption, 36% of EU GHG emissions
 - 75% energy inefficient, 80% in use after 2050
- Important role of **water efficiency** (room for technologies, water reuse, harvesting rainwater):
 - **Digital Building Logbooks**, which will incorporate *'The Level(s) Framework - The European Framework for Sustainable Buildings'*, including water use
 - **Principle of high health and environmental standards** the text refers to ensuring high air quality, **good water management**, disaster prevention and **protection against climate-related hazards**, removal of and **protection against harmful substances** (e.g. asbestos and radon)
 - **Principle of the green and digital transition**, the text refers to smart buildings enabling efficient production and use of renewables at house, district or city level

Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability



- Objectives → Protect health and the environment + Boost innovation
- Actions:
 - Mixtures: account for the **cocktail effect** of chemicals when assessing risks from chemicals
 - Banning the **most harmful chemicals** in consumer products - allowing only where essential
 - Phasing out the per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (**PFAS**) in the EU, unless their use is essential
 - Boosting the investment and innovative capacity for production and use of chemicals that are safe and sustainable by **design**, and throughout their **life cycle**
 - Promoting the EU's **resilience of supply** and sustainability of critical chemicals
 - '**One substance - one assessment**': Simpler process for the risk and hazard assessment
 - Playing a leading role **globally** by championing high standards and not exporting chemicals banned in the EU



Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe

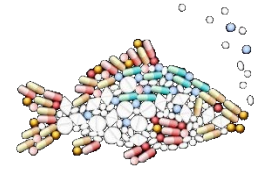
■ Main elements

<p>Delivering for patients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfil unmet medical needs • Ensure accessibility and affordability of medicines 	<p>Supporting a competitive and innovative European pharmaceutical industry</p>	<p>Enhancing resilience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversified and secure supply chains • Environmentally sustainable pharmaceuticals • Crisis preparedness and response mechanisms 	<p>Ensuring a strong EU voice globally</p>
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■ Environmental aspects

Flagship initiatives	Other actions
<p>Revision of manufacturing and supply pharma legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More transparency and oversight of the supply chain • Clear responsibilities • <u>Overall environmental sustainability</u> • Quality of medicines • Preparedness for new manufacturing technologies 	<p>Review the framework on good manufacturing practice and encourage inspections of good manufacturing and distribution practice to improve compliance</p> <p>Enhance MS' capacity to participate in international inspection and audit programme</p> <p>Cooperation with international partners to ensure the quality and environmental sustainability of the active pharmaceutical ingredients imported from non-EU countries</p> <p>Assess with MS and EMA the feasibility of improving information on manufacturing sites in existing databases or linked repositories, their use for products authorised in the EU and inspection status</p>
<p>Revise pharma legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the <u>environmental risk assessment</u> requirements and conditions of use for medicines, • Take stock of the results of research under the innovative medicines initiative 	<p>Continue the implementation of the actions under the <u>strategic approach to pharmaceuticals in the environment</u>, including the environmentally safe disposal of medicines and package reduction</p> <p>Engage with MS and stakeholders in developing best practices for decarbonising value chains</p>

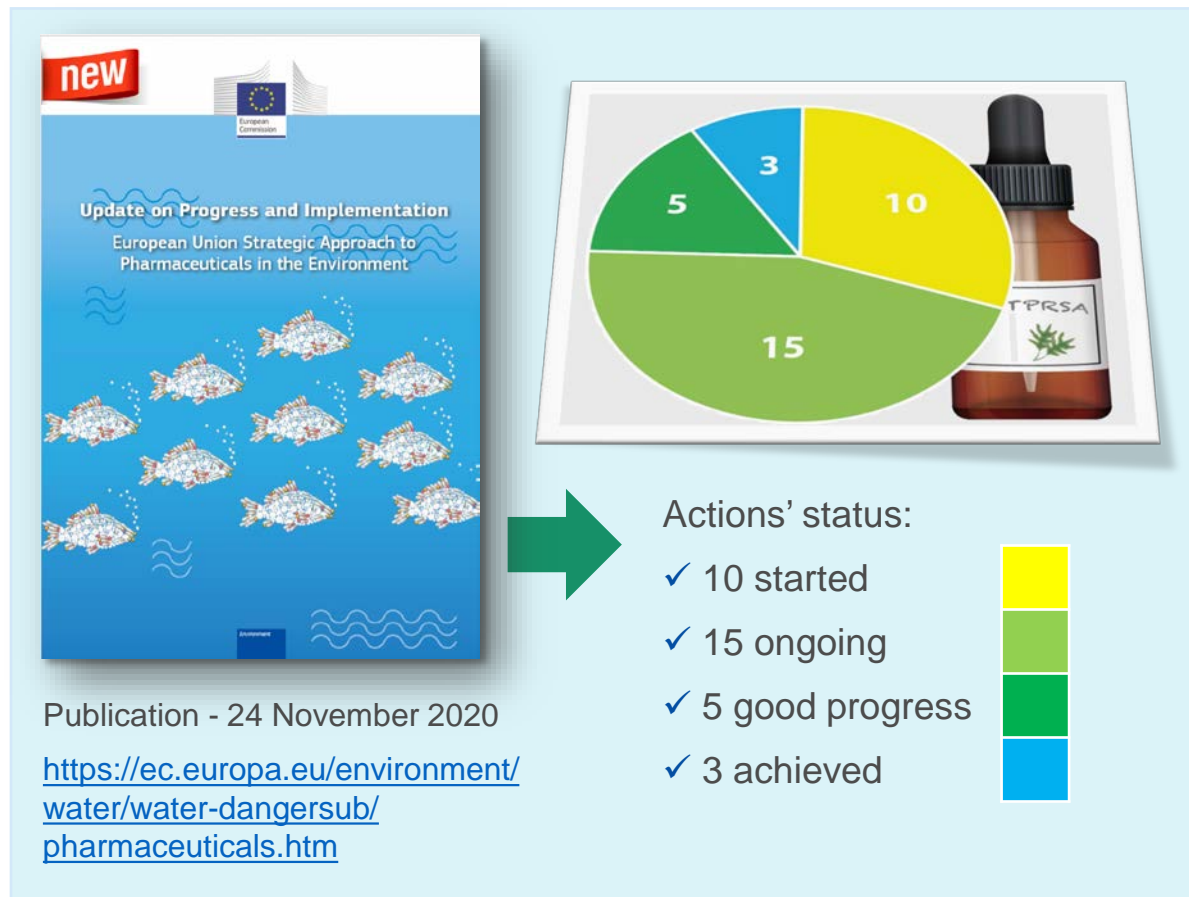
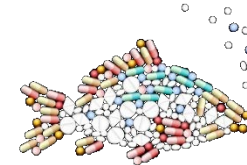
EU Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment (PiE)



Main elements – Reminder

- [COM\(2019\) 128 final](#) adopted on 11 March 2019, feeds in the Pharmaceutical Strategy
- Objective → To address the environmental implications of **all phases of the lifecycle** of pharmaceuticals (human and veterinary), from design and production through use to disposal
- Action areas:
 1. Increase **awareness** and promote prudent use
 2. Support the development of pharmaceuticals intrinsically **less harmful** for the environment and promote greener manufacturing
 3. Improve environmental **risk assessment** and its review
 4. Reduce **waste** and improve the management of waste
 5. Expand environmental **monitoring**
 6. Fill other **knowledge** gaps

EU Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment – progress and implementation



Most advanced actions:

- Additional pharmaceuticals included in the **WFD Surface Water Watch List** (rev. August 2020)
- Provisions in the Regulation on veterinary medicinal products for more prudent use of **antimicrobials in animals** and to fight antimicrobial resistance
- New guidelines on **hazardous domestic waste**. Pharmaceuticals included in the **UWWTD impact assessment**
- Pharmaceutical concentration and antimicrobial genes **sampled in JRC-LUCAS soil survey** (results expected in 2022)
- **Work with MS** e.g. to ensure health professionals consider environmental impacts of medication

Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy

– putting European transport on track for the future



- Sustainable, smart and resilient mobility system: a system for future generations
- Actions related to **inland waterborne and short sea shipping** transport:
 - Less pollution and biodiversity loss, and **reduction of 90% of GHG emissions by 2050**
 - 75% of road freight to **shift to rail and inland waterways** → Transport by inland waterways and short sea shipping will **increase by 25% by 2030 and by 50% by 2050**
 - By **2030, zero-emission vessels** will become ready for market
 - **FuelEU Maritime initiative** to boost the production and uptake of sustainable fuels
 - Zero-emissions airports and **ports**
 - Development of **TEN-T corridors** and inland **waterways into cities** (last-mile of city logistics)
 - TEN-T guidelines consistent with the '**do no significant harm**' principle and the Green Deal
 - **NAIADES III programme** to renew large fleets and improve access to finance, in compliance with the WFD and Habitats Directive
- **Financial estimations** → Additional 130 Bo € per year needed for fleets, 300 Bo € needed till 2030 to complete TEN-T network and infrastructures

EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy



Portugal fires - © Creative Commons – Astro_Alex

Some impacts estimated in the EU:

- **Over €12 billion per year** losses due to climate-related extreme weather events
- **At least €170 billion per year** in a global warming of 3°C above pre-industrial levels
- **2500 deaths**, due to the European heatwave of 2019

- 3 objectives and a range of actions:
 - **Smarter adaptation** → Knowledge and availability of data | Better data on climate-related risks and losses | European platform of adaptation **Climate-ADAPT**
 - **More systemic adaptation** → Improving adaptation strategies and plans at all levels of governance, society and economy and in all sectors | Integrate climate resilience in macro-fiscal policy | **Promoting nature-based solutions**
 - **Faster adaptation** → Accelerating the development and rollout of adaptation solutions | Reducing climate-related risk | Closing the climate protection gap | **Ensuring the availability and sustainability of fresh water**

EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy



Albufeira Barragem de Salgueiro
© Creative Commons – Victor Oliveira

- Towards a climate-resilient **water management**
 - Improve **coordination of thematic plans and other mechanisms** (incl. water resource allocation and water-permits) across sectors and borders
 - **Reduce water use:**
 - Raising the water-saving requirements for products
 - Encouraging water efficiency and savings
 - Promoting the wider use of drought management plans
 - Stable and **secure supply of drinking water** → climate change-risks in risk analyses of water management
 - Sustainable **soil management and land-use**
 - **Nature-based solutions** to achieve the goals of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive

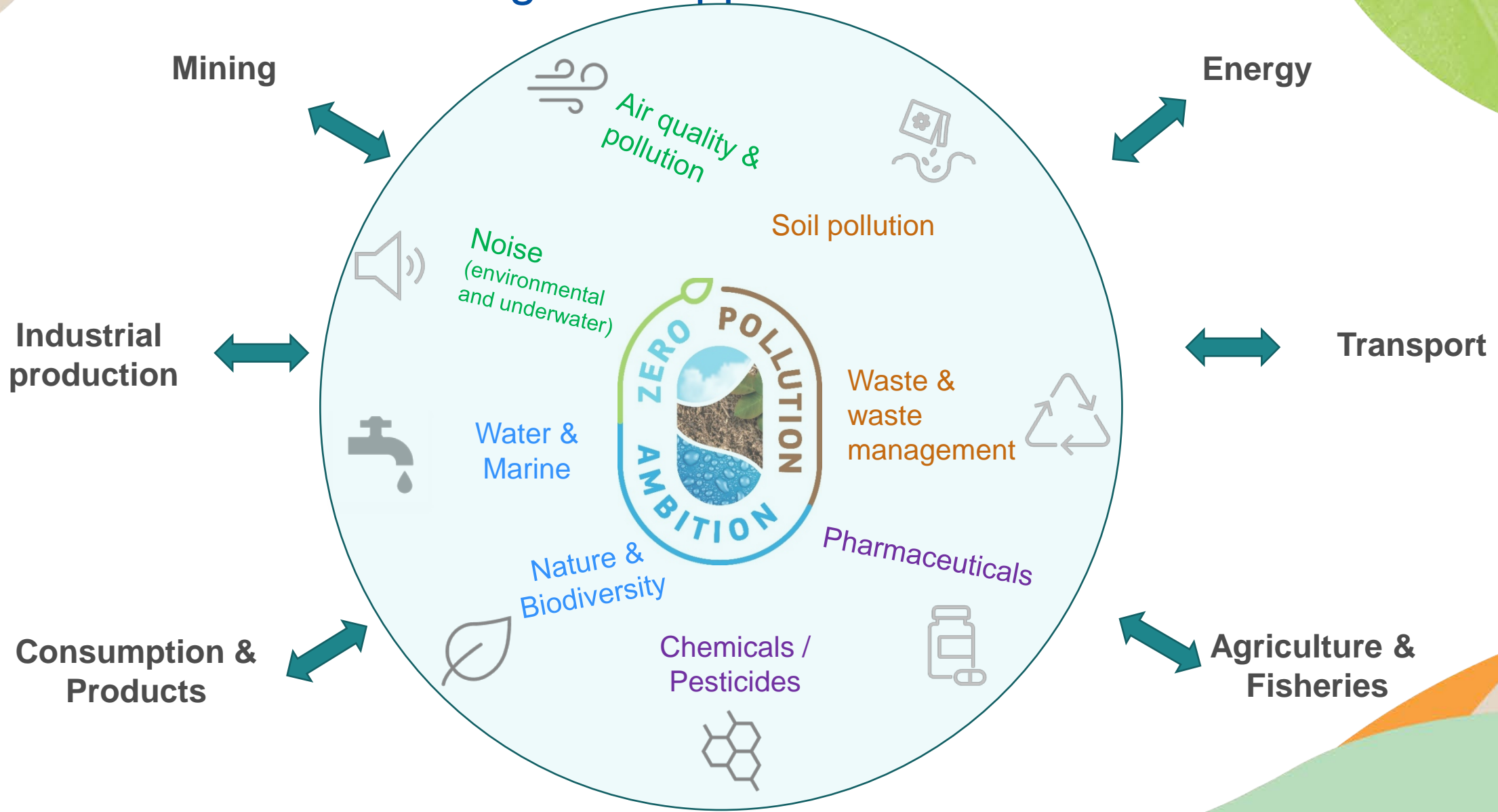
The zero pollution vision for 2050



© Simon Migaj - Unsplash

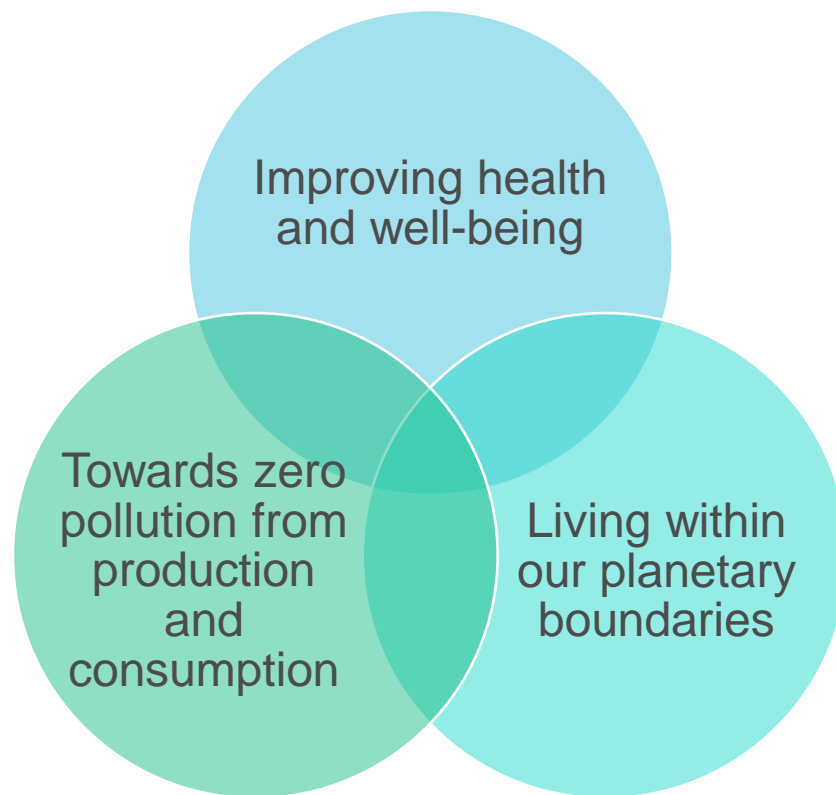
“ Air, water and soil pollution is reduced to **levels no longer considered harmful to health and natural ecosystems** and that **respect the boundaries our planet can cope with**, thus creating a toxic-free environment.”

Zero Pollution policies – towards an integrated approach

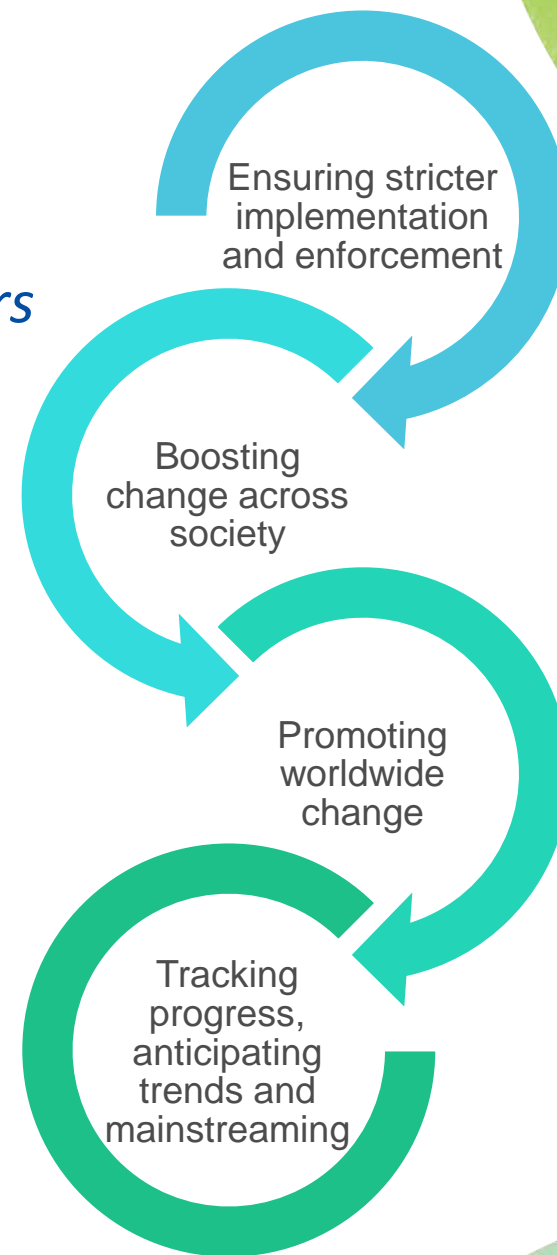


Action Areas

Thematic priorities



Enablers



Flagships – Integrated initiatives

1. Reducing health inequalities through zero pollution

2. Supporting urban zero pollution action

3. Promoting zero pollution across regions

4. Facilitating zero pollution choices

5. Enforcing zero pollution together

6. Showcasing zero pollution solutions for buildings

7. Living Labs for green digital solutions and smart zero pollution

8. Minimising the EU's external pollution footprint

9. Consolidating the EU's Knowledge Centres for Zero Pollution



To mobilise the necessary investments, the Commission is putting forward a two-fold response:



Next Generation EU

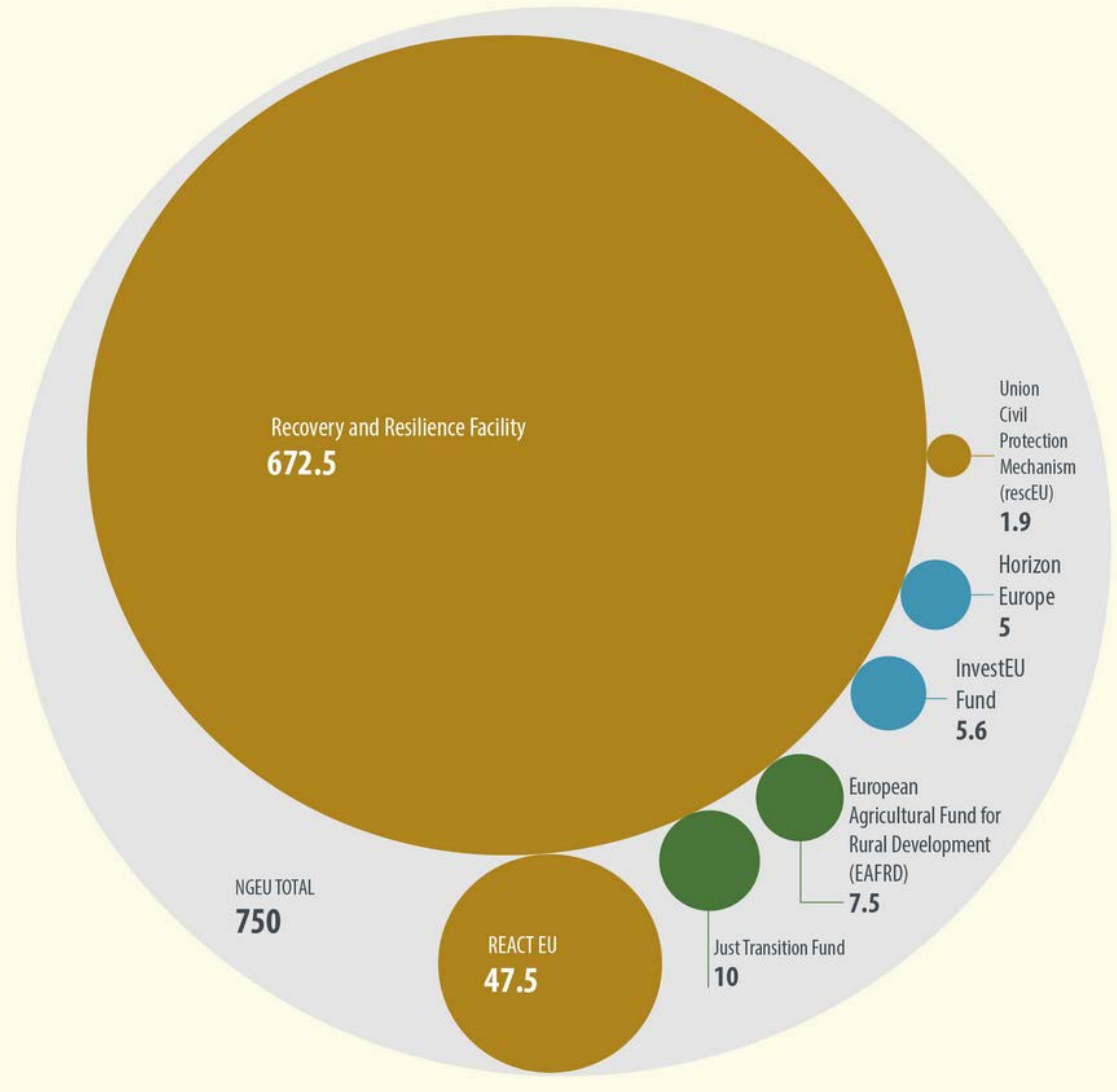
a new recovery instrument of €750 billion which will boost the EU budget with new financing raised on the financial markets for 2021-2024



A reinforced long-term budget of the EU
for 2021-2027

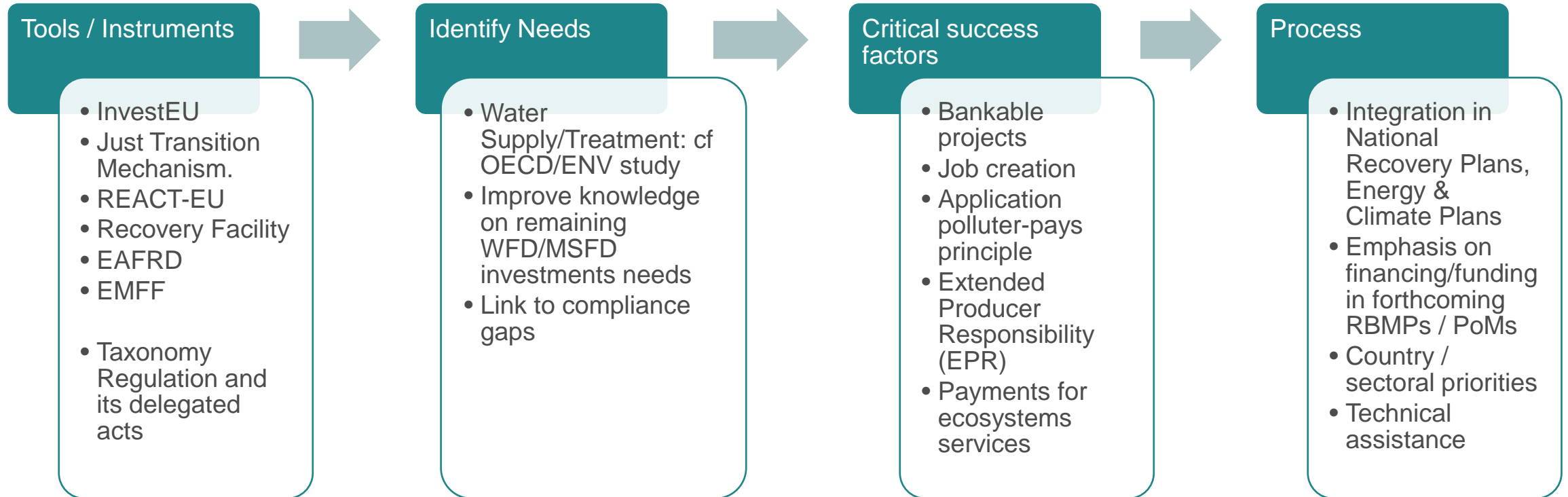
Recovery and Resilience Plans

All amounts in € billion (2018 prices)



- The EU's long-term budget and the “**Next Generation EU**” instrument: A total of **€1.8 trillion** to help rebuild a post-COVID-19 greener, more digital and more resilient Europe
- Next Generation EU (2021-24) = **EUR 750 billion**
- **30% of the EU funds to fight climate change**, the highest share ever of the European budget (NGEU, MFF).
- **MS Recovery and Resilience Plans** due on 30 April: reform and investment agenda (green and digital transitions, fairness, macroeconomic stability)

Investment opportunities for water



- Still a lot to be done at Commission and Member State levels to ensure good projects emerge and benefit from funding!

Examples of green investments in water sector

Ensuring supply of safe and clean drinking water, in line with the revised DWD

Improving water distribution networks /eliminating leakages

Promoting water saving and reuse, water-efficient technologies

Constructing wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure, complying with UWWTD

Upgrading existing wastewater installations, including on treatment of chemical substances (such as pharmaceuticals)

Promoting industrial symbiosis technologies and projects for reuse of wastewater in industry

Constructing eco-friendly water storage infrastructure

Removing outdated infrastructures or upgrading existing water infrastructure to render them environmental or climate friendly

Supporting preparation for implementation of the new Regulation on Water Reuse

Implementing coherent and tailored-made River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans

Improving implementation of the WFD and other water-related Directives

Investing in natural water retention measures

Investing into measures at source to counteract pollution

Promoting nature-based solutions

Optimising performance in green infrastructure and water infrastructure services

Promoting further synergies among water-related Directives

More published by the EC:

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/green_semester/index_en.htm

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/green_semester/pdf/Water_examples_projects_Oct2020.pdf

Water in Horizon Europe



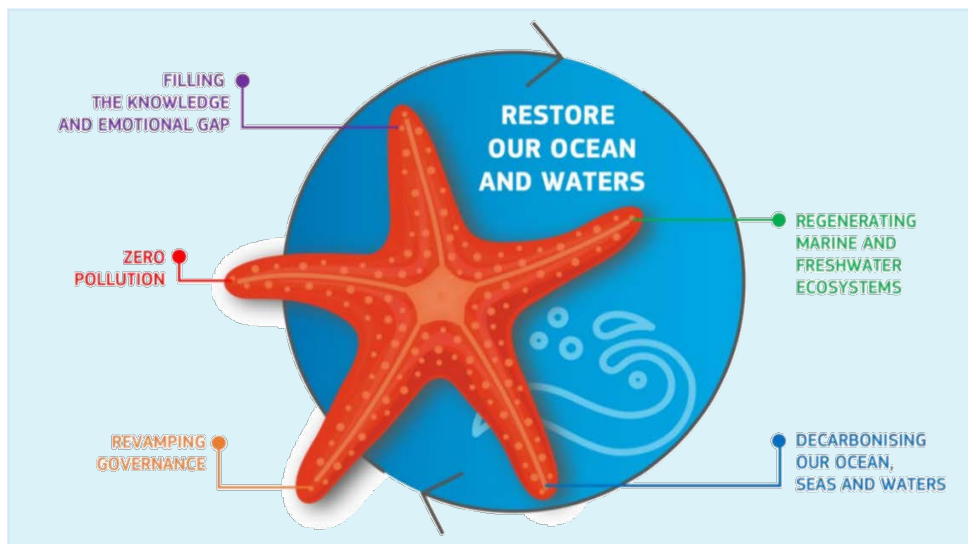
- **Horizon Europe:** 95.5 Bo € for 2021-2027 (incl. 5.4 Bo € NextGenerationEU) - 30% increase
 - [Political agreement](#) reached on 11 December 2020
 - EP and Council to adopt the legal acts
- Elements to highlight:
 - **6 Thematic clusters** → Collaborative research relating to societal challenges
 - **5 EU missions** → Ambitious, time-bound and achievable goals
 - EU mission on [Healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters](#)
 - **European Partnerships** → Research and innovation programmes jointly developed and implemented by the EU, private and public partners
 - Co-funded partnership → 'Water Security for the Planet' ([Water4All](#))
 - Co-programmed partnership → 'Zero-emission Waterborne Transport'

Water in Horizon Europe



EU mission on 'Healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters'

- Mission board's proposal in Set-2020: *Mission Starfish 2030, restore our oceans and waters*



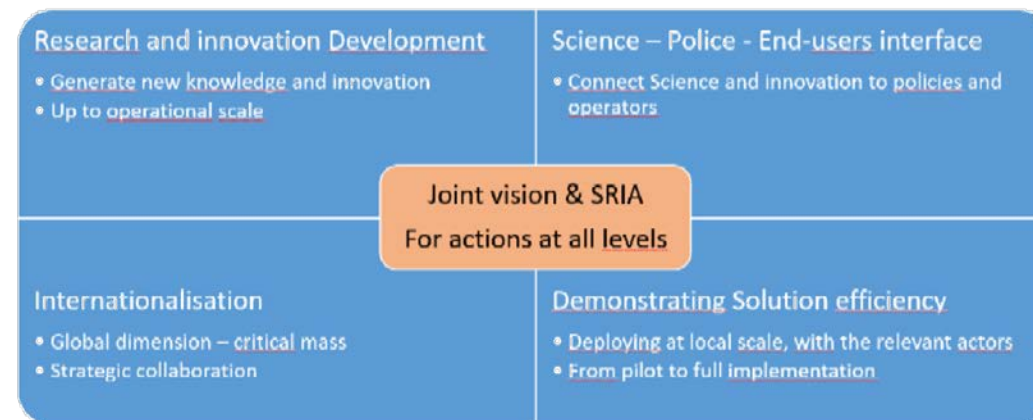
- 5 actions, 17 targets

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2345

European partnership 'Water Security for the Planet' (Water4All)

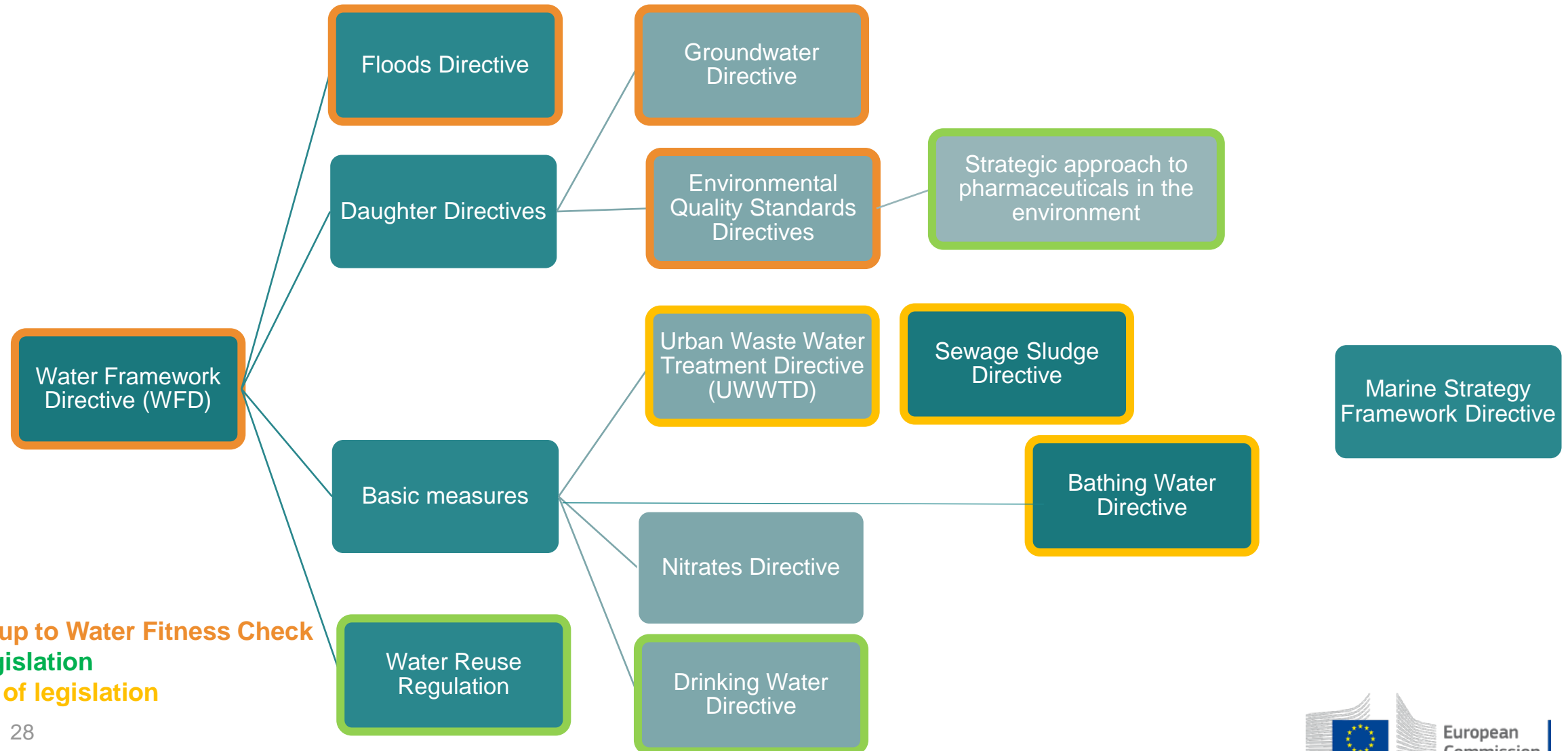


- Address freshwater security challenges as covered by EU water policies
- 4 pillars



https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/european-partnership-water4all-water-security-planet_en

EU water legislation



In COVID times

EU #CORONAVIRUS
RESPONSE



- The European Commission is coordinating a common European response to the coronavirus outbreak
 - To achieve this **we need** broad **engagement**, strong **collaboration**, lots of **innovation**, **creativity** and **good networking**.
 - **Water** takes a fundamental part on this effort, since it has a **great potential to promote economic growth and job creation in this crisis**. The **European Green Deal** provides the appropriate framework.
 - Recommendation (March 2021) on a common approach for the surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 and its variants in wastewater.



Have your say!

Consultation roadmaps open	
	<p>Water Framework Directive, FD, GWD and EQSD (Fitness Check follow-up)</p> <p>Review of the lists of priority substances and groundwater pollutants – Public consultation upcoming Q3 2021</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12662-Revision-of-lists-of-pollutants-affecting-surface-and-groundwater</p>
	<p>Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive</p> <p>Revision of the Directive - Public consultation open till 21 July 2021</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12405-Revision-of-the-Urban-Wastewater-Treatment-Directive</p>
	<p>Bathing Water Directive</p> <p>Revision of the Directive – Public consultation upcoming Q2-2021</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12658-Bathing-water-quality-review-of-EU-rules</p>
	<p>Sewage Sludge Directive</p> <p>Evaluation of the Directive – Public consultation closed on 5 March 2021</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12328-Evaluation-of-the-Sewage-Sludge-Directive-86-278-EEC-/public-consultation</p>
	<p>Industrial Emissions Directive</p> <p>Enhanced water efficiency/reuse in industrial processes to be explored – EC adoption planned for Q4 2021</p> <p>https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12306-EU-rules-on-industrial-emissions-revision</p>

Summing up

- The European Green Deal is instrumental for a shift towards a greener, a better Europe, and to become water-smart in our way of living within the boundaries of our wonderful blue planet
- Green Deal initiatives give many opportunities for water related actions
- Post-covid EU budget: *'Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation'*
- Have your say on ongoing and upcoming public consultations!
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say>