



European
Commission

Environmental Compliance Assurance

EU ACTION PLAN



Taking environmental rules seriously...

The European Union has put in place rules - legal do's and don'ts - to provide us all with environmental benefits that include clean water, breathable air and a healthy nature.

These rules need to be followed by businesses and others, otherwise society will suffer through increased health-care costs, lost government revenues and unfair business competition. The Commission has adopted a 9-point Action Plan to help public authorities promote, monitor and enforce compliance with them.

Promote means helping businesses and others to do the right thing;

Monitor means using inspections and other checks to collect information about levels of compliance and provide solid evidence for enforcement;

Enforce means stopping those who disregard the rules, sanctioning them and obliging them to rectify the damage.

This work of public authorities is known as environmental compliance assurance.

Examples of environmental rules

Don't:

- Dump waste in the countryside
- Operate an industrial installation without an environmental permit
- Hunt wild birds in the spring when they are breeding or migrating

Do:

- Hand over waste to those entitled to collect or treat it
- Respect conditions set out in an industrial or other permit
- Treat urban waste-water before discharging it to rivers or the sea

The actions aim to:

Help inspectors and law officers to combine forces

Environmental inspectors from across the EU already work together on joint inspections of waste shipments. The Commission will seek to reinforce such common efforts.



Encourage professional training

To be effective, environmental inspectors and other professionals require know-how and training. The Commission will support the identification of training needs.



Spread knowledge

Access to good information about environmental compliance assurance is important. The Commission will make more information available online.



Help the fight against waste and wildlife crime

Waste crime not only damages the countryside, it undermines the circular economy. Wildlife crime threatens endangered species. Guidance will be produced on the best ways to combat these problems.



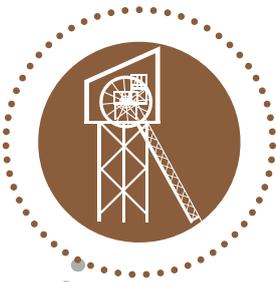
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Better ensure compl

Guidance will be produced to help ensure that... with environmental rules under EU nature a... water supplies, and rare habitats and sp



ACTIONS



Provide technical guidelines for inspections of extractive waste facilities

Guidelines will be produced on how to inspect facilities used to hold waste from mines and other extractive industries, as negligence can cause environmental disasters.



Improve the handling of citizen complaints

Guidance will be produced on how authorities can best respond to complaints from citizens. Citizens provide valuable information about wrong-doing, which can help authorities do their job better.



Develop use of satellites

Through the Copernicus programme, the Commission will promote the use of satellite images and other geospatial data sources to detect illegal disposal of waste, illegal land use and other breaches.



Provide Member States with better feedback on how they are doing

The Commission will provide Member States with tailored information regarding their performance, helping them to identify strengths and weaknesses.



Compliance in rural areas

Ensure that farmers and other land managers comply with agricultural and water laws so that our rivers and lakes, and biodiversity are protected for the benefit of all.

When, how and with who

Timeframe

The actions will be developed over the period 2018-2019.

New high-level forum

A high-level group of experts will serve as a forum to steer the Action Plan and related matters. This will bring together Member State administrators and professionals with responsibilities in this field.

Working closely with European networks of environmental inspectors, police, prosecutors, judges and auditors

The actions will build on the work of European networks of environmental inspectors (IMPEL), police officers specialised in combating environmental crime (EnviCrimeNet), environmental prosecutors (ENPE), judges (EUFJE) and environmental auditors (EUROSAI), who will be closely involved in implementing the Action Plan. These networks already play a vital role in knowledge-sharing.

Strengthening the compliance assurance chain

The Commission will work to strengthen the chain that links the roles of these different professionals.

In 2017, the networks of police officers, inspectors and prosecutors signed a memorandum of understanding in recognition of the value of close links between them in the fight against environmental crime.



More info:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/compliance_en.htm



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