



Press release

Environmental compliance: European Commission launches Action Plan to help Member States improve environmental protection

Brussels, 19 January 2018

Today the European Commission adopted tangible measures to help public authorities in Member States to promote, monitor and enforce compliance with EU environmental rules on activities that can cause pollution or environmental harm. The measures will enable all industrial operators, public utilities, farmers, foresters, hunters and others to better follow existing environmental rules. This will help to ensure a level playing field across the EU, and allow European citizens to enjoy cleaner water and air, safer waste disposal and a healthier nature.

Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries said: "*An [overwhelming majority of Europeans](#) want us to make sure that environmental rules are applied across Europe. With today's measures we are directly responding to this call. They will help national environmental inspectors, police and customs officers, prosecutors and judges to effectively address breaches of environmental rules, secure public confidence, and better protect our environment. We will work closely with all these professionals to successfully deliver the actions.*"

The nine actions, which will be implemented over 2018-2019, aim to help inspectors and law officers to combine forces, encourage professional training and improve information to Member States and practitioners. They will also address specific topics such as environmental crime.

To help improve compliance and governance, the Commission is also setting up the Environmental Compliance and Governance Forum – a high-level expert group made up of Member States officials and representatives of European networks of environmental agencies, auditors, inspectors, police officers, prosecutors and judges.

Background:

The Commission's 2017 [Environmental Implementation Review](#) highlighted implementation problems across the EU 28 linked to persistent problems such as water pollution, poor urban air quality, unsatisfactory waste treatment, and species and habitats in decline. There is also a serious incidence of environmental crime. Among the

root causes are weak mechanisms for ensuring compliance. The nine actions presented today are intended to strengthen such mechanisms.

More information:

[Communication "EU actions to improve environmental compliance and governance"](#)

[Commission Decision setting up a group of experts on environmental compliance and governance](#)

[Staff working document "Environmental Compliance Assurance – scope, concept and need for EU actions"](#)

[Compliance Assurance Factsheet](#)