



EEAC AUTUMN

NEWSLETTER

September 30 2025, EEAC Annual Assembly, Brussels



A message from the Board

Dear colleagues,

As we wrap up the final months of 2025, we reflect on a season filled with activity and engagement across the EEAC Network. This edition features highlights from our EEAC Assembly in Brussels, insightful webinars on Competitiveness and COP30, and our Annual Plenary Session, together with a selection of news and updates from our council members.

Wishing you all a joyful and restful Christmas season!

This newsletter has been prepared by the EEAC Secretariat and opens with an overview of recent EEAC activities. It highlights key events and engagements from September 2025 until December 2025, showcasing the breadth of EEAC's involvement across Europe. On the last pages, you can find some of the most recent publications of our councils and upcoming working group activities. If you would like us to include any specific reports/achievements from your council in the next newsletter, please send it to us by 15th March.

[Follow our linkedIn for upcoming activities](#)





September 15th – Competitiveness webinar

September was a busy time for the Sustainable Development and Climate and Energy Working Groups, who co-organised a webinar on competitiveness. The webinar, which was moderated by the co-chair of the Climate and Energy WG Folmer de Haan, was a great success with more than 60 participants from the EEAC Network and representatives of external councils attending. The first keynote, Maurits Pino from the European Commission, presented the new policies the EU is working on to improve our competitiveness. After his presentation, Sander de Bruyn, from the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, explored the integration of wellbeing into the discourse on competitiveness. Following the two excellent external speakers, the co-chair of the Sustainable Development WG Gábor Bartus looked at the methodological problems behind the concept of competitiveness.

JOINT WEBINAR
 WG Sustainable Development &
 WG Energy and Climate

Europe's new competitiveness focus: a sustainable path for the future?

Context

The new competitiveness-focus of the EU was introduced to prevent that the EU falls behind other global economic powers. It is meant to drive innovation and increase the attractiveness of the EU market by simplifying existing and future policies and ensuring policy coherence. To do this, the EU has announced several instruments and plans such as the Clean Industrial Deal and the Competitiveness Compass.

While the EU has repeatedly promised not to change its course towards rapid decarbonisation, the policy implications are unclear. Moreover, the competitiveness concept itself lacks a clear definition at the macro-economic scale. Hence there are concerns that focusing on indicators such as GDP will lead to unintended negative consequences.

This webinar will explore if and how the concept of broad welfare/prosperity can be integrated with the new policy focus. Additionally, the effects of competitiveness policies on the EU energy sector will be explored in the form of a case study.

Agenda

- 13:00** Opening remarks by WG co-chairs
- 13:05** **Setting the scene, using energy as a case study** - Folmer de Haan (Rijksinstituut voor Milieu, The Netherlands)
- 13:10** **Competitiveness, the new focus in Europe** - Maurits Pino Senior Expert, DG GROW, European Commission
- 13:40** **A critical look at the new developments: competitiveness vs broad welfare** - Gábor Bartus (Hungarian SD Council)
- 13:45** **How to define competitiveness in the context of broad welfare?** - Sander de Bruyn PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
- 14:15** Next steps and closing remarks by WG Co-chairs

15 September
 13:00 - 14:30 CET
 Via Teams

European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils Network

EEAC Network,
 Beethovenstraat 30
 The Hague, The Netherlands

www.eeac.eu
info@eeac.eu
twitter.com/eeac-network



September 29th – EEA SC Meeting in Brussels

On the 29th of September, a group representing the EEAC Network met with the European Environmental Agency Scientific Committee (EEA SC) in Brussels. During this meeting the potential cooperation between the EEAC and the EEA SC was discussed, focusing on the benefits it could bring to both parties.

September 29th – October 1st – Annual Assembly in Brussels

At the end of September, the EEAC members met in Brussels for the Annual EEAC Assembly. The event, titled “From Green to Clean”, was hosted at the Catalan Delegation and welcomed over 30 participants from 15 member councils. Additionally, the EEAC Network was joined by representatives of two external councils—The Swedish Climate Policy Council and the Spanish National Council on Sustainable Development. The event started with a council exchange session, where the councils elaborated on their current and upcoming activities. The second day was filled with informative presentations from both internal and external speakers.





The EEAC was especially interested to hear the Commission's perspective on the discussed topics, with professional insights from Pau Ruiz (DG International Partnerships), Ewa Malz (DG Environment) and Alex Mulet (DG Research and Innovation). Aside from the EU representatives, we were also joined by Josep M. Antó (Lancet Countdown Europe), who shared his expert opinion.

On the final day of the Assembly, working groups presented their achievements over the past year and outlined their future activities. The event concluded with a session for exchanging take-home messages. Overall, The Assembly was greatly productive, fostering meaningful connections among Network members and facilitating peer learning.

November 25th & 26th – ESDN Conference in Copenhagen

The ESDN Conference 2025 took place on 25-26 November in Copenhagen! The title of this year's conference was "Post-2030 Agenda: 10 Years of SDG Implementation and Ideas for a Future Agenda" and was organised together with Nordregio and the Nordic Council of Ministers at the Nordic Council of Ministers' headquarters in Copenhagen.

Wolfgang Lucht (SRU) represented the EEAC at the ESDN Conference 2025 with a keynote speech titled "Advisory Councils on Sustainability – Criteria for Re-Baselining the Post-2030 Agenda".



November 26th – EEAC Annual Plenary Session

The 2025 Annual Plenary Session took place online (via Teams) on the 26th of November. Representatives of 14 member councils had the opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the 2025 Assembly, the plans for 2026, working groups' decisions, including voting on new co-chairs, and approve the Network's financial statements for 2024. This official yearly Network meeting is the formal mechanism to enable the correct functioning of the Network and we appreciate everyone's time and contributions.



Changes in Working Groups



November 26th – New Co-Chair for WG Climate & Energy

On the 26th of November at the APS Aniek Linssen was officially appointed as the co-chair of the Climate and Energy Working Group, replacing Menno Ottens. Aniek is a policy advisor at the Netherlands Scientific Climate Council (WKR), where she has worked on advisory reports on industry and carbon dioxide removal, and liaises on international affairs.

November 26th – New Co-Chair for WG Sustainable Development

Additionally, Jürgen Janssen will replace Gábor Bartus as co-chair of the Sustainable Development Working Group. Jürgen is Secretary-General of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), and previously worked at the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).





From Paris to Belém: Reflections on COP30 & COP21

WEBINAR
WG Energy and Climate

Context

A key event in the international climate policy calendar, the latest conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30) took place from the 10th to the 21st November 2025 in Belém, Brazil. Ten years on from the Paris Agreement, overshoot of the 1.5C target is likely, but the outcome of the conference could determine by how much.

Several EEAC members attended the meeting, and in this internal event they will share their insights and experiences with the Network, to help determine the implications for the work of national advisory councils. We will also get behind-the-scenes insights from someone involved in the organisation of the event. The floor will then be opened up for an informal discussion to mark the 10 year anniversary of the Paris Agreement.

Agenda

- 13:00 Opening remarks by WG co-chairs
- 13:05 COP30 Press Overview - Zuzana Mária Chobotová (EEAC Secretariat)
- 13:15 The Brazilian Perspective on COP30 - Davi Neustein (Project Manager, COP30)
- 13:30 Insights from COP30 - Dr. Franziska Tanneberger & Prof. Dr. Mark Lawrence (German Council for Sustainable Development)
- 13:45 Insights from COP30 - Alexis Dall'Asta (Belgian Federal Council for Sustainable Development)
- 13:55 Open discussion - Are the COPs the way forward as effective policy instruments to tackle climate change?
- 14:15 Closing remarks by WG Co-chairs



01.12.2025
13:00-14:20 CET
Via Teams



European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils Network



EEAC Network,
Bersudenhoutweg 50
The Hague, The Netherlands

www.eeac.eu
secretariat@eeac.eu
linkedin.com/eeac-network

December 1st – From Paris to Belém: Reflections on COP30

From the 10th to 21st of November government leaders, academics, and representatives of the civil society met in Belém, Brazil for the annual COP summit. In light of the rainforest location, deforestation was high on the agenda, but it was climate finance that dominated discussions. Ten years on from the Paris Agreement, uncertainty around the 1.5C target cast a shadow over the negotiations. Three EEAC member councils were present in Belém, and in an informal internal exchange held online on Monday 1st December representatives of the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) and the Belgian Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO-CFDD) shared their experiences with the rest of the Network. They were joined by Davi Neustein, project manager for COP30, who provided valuable behind-the-scenes insights. The key takeaways from the webinar can be found on the EEAC website.



RECENT COUNCIL UPDATES



Our members have had a busy few months, working on a variety of inspiring projects. Although all work of our councils is important, for the purpose of keeping the newsletter concise, the Secretariat has highlighted a selection of the recent council activities and publications.

Cultural rights and sustainability

Advisory Council for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia, Spain, 30-09-2025

The Catalonia 2030 Alliance, coordinated by CADS, hosted the event “Promoting Culture, Transforming the World” on 30 September in Barcelona, within UNESCO’s Mondiacult 2025 Civic Agora. It gathered international cultural and sustainability leaders to reflect on the link between cultural rights and sustainable development. The initiative aims to draft a commitment charter on culture and sustainability, reinforcing calls for a global recognition of culture as a pillar of the SDGs.

Participation without dogmas

Council for the Environment and Infrastructure, Netherlands, 09-10-2025

At the beginning of October, the Rli published a report addressing the question: How can government participation in the domain of the physical environment contribute to safeguarding public interests? In this advice, the council highlighted the role of equity investments. In its recommendations Rli focused on two areas—strengthening collaboration between shareholders, policymakers, and equity investors, and making better use of the scope within the assessment framework for entering into or terminating participations.

Energising the Transition

The National Economic and Social Council, Ireland, 22-10-2025

On the 22nd of October NESC organized a conference titled “Energising the Transition”, which brought together diverse stakeholders ranging from energy experts to policymakers. Over 25 speakers and panelists contributed to the lively discussion on the event’s five key themes: delivering Ireland’s energy system; map, milestones, and destination; parts, puzzles, and possibilities; people and energy; action now, next, and later.



Biodiversity and Cross-sectoral Reviews

The Climate Change Advisory Council, Ireland, 13-10-2025 & 10-11-2025

In October, the CCAC published a report assessing biodiversity in Ireland. CCAC highlighted the need for more specialists on biodiversity and greater financing. The main recommendations of the council are centred on strengthening regulations, improving incentives and establishing targets and monitoring processes.

In November, the CCAC published the Annual Cross-sectoral Review. In this review, the council stresses that Ireland is off track to meet the 2030 national emission targets, which may negatively affect investments in communities and businesses. The recommendations of the report focus on Ireland's decarbonisation, compact growth and climate governance.

Advice on Strategic Drinking Water Plan

Environment and Nature Council of Flanders, Belgium, 30-10-2025

At the end of October, Minaraad published its recommendations regarding the Strategic Drinking Water Plan, which is yet to be developed. The provided recommendations focus on three areas of the Plan: transparency of processes, quantity aspects and quality aspects. The council is especially advocating for banning PFAS, which cause pollution at drinking water abstraction points.

RNE Annual Conference

German Council for Sustainable Development, Germany, 10-11-2025

The RNE hosted its annual conference on the 10th of November. The event was greatly successful, attended by around 500 participants. The main themes of the conference concerned international partnerships, competitive and sustainable economy and climate neutrality.

How much does climate change cost our economy?

Federal Council for Sustainable Development, Belgium, 19-11-2025

On the 19th of November FRDO-CFDD hosted a webinar on the effects climate change has on citizens and economy. During the event, Study Planning Bureau and CERAC presented the outcomes of their collaborative study, especially stressing the fact that climate change can lower the Belgium's GDP between 2.8% and 5% by 2050.

Upcoming EEAC Activities

Webinar on Futuring, TBA

Co-organised by the Energy and Climate and Sustainable Development working groups, this webinar will explore the importance and usage of futuring and strategic foresight in policy advice.

Councils' Roundtable, TBA

The EEAC will hold an online session where council members will get the opportunity to share their upcoming activities for 2026. This meeting will help to set common themes for EEAC activities in 2026 and strengthen the collaboration between member councils.

Strategic Board Meeting, January 15th

The Board will meet for its in-person strategic annual meeting. During this session the Board will discuss potential EEAC activities for 2026, considering the outcomes of the Roundtable session.

WG planning sessions, January 21st & TBA

In January 2026, the WGs will hold their annual planning sessions. During these meetings, each group will brainstorm potential activities for 2026. WG Ecosystem Services and Climate and Energy will meet on 21st January, while dates for WG Sustainable Development and WG Health will be announced shortly. This sessions will be the perfect opportunity for the new co-chairs to present their vision for the group.