Environment

What do I need to know before I start?

The concept of environmental policy emerged only in the early 1970s and was defined broadly to encompass all aspects of the relationship between humans and nature. It included the preservation of natural resources and energy, waste management, urban development, and the protection of ecosystems. European environment policy sparked from the European Council held in Paris in 1972, where the Member States' Heads of Governments recognized the need for an environment policy at the European level.

By the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, environmental policy had firmly established itself as a central component of European integration. The Single European Act of 1986 marked a turning point by officially recognizing environmental policy within the European Community's competence through Article 130r, albeit with qualifications that anticipated the principle of subsidiarity, ensuring decisions were made at the most appropriate level. This momentum continued with the Maastricht Treaty, which introduced qualified majority voting for most environmental matters and elevated the environment and sustainability to core objectives of the EU. Moreover, the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) introduced the concept of integrating environmental protection into all EU sectoral policies, as a way to promote sustainable development.

This period was particularly favorable for advancing environmental initiatives. The fourth (1987–1992) and fifth (1992–2000) Environmental Action Programmes reflected growing ambition, with the latter shaped by global developments such as the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. During these years, the EU began addressing critical issues like climate change, strengthened citizen and civil-society participation, and established the European Environment Agency to provide reliable, comparative data for informed policymaking. Collectively, these developments signaled a decisive shift toward integrating environmental concerns into the broader framework of European governance.

Being environment a multifaced and transversal topic, you might find useful to consult other Research guides, such as the one on Energy and Agriculture.

Languages:

Please note that most documents available in our Archives are in French, English, or German, some may also be in other official EU languages. To verify the languages used in a particular fond, please consult our holdings page. Additionally, some fonds may include a few files in languages not specified in the description.

What can I find at the HAEU?

Together with the EU institutions, it is possible to find individual fonds, corporate bodies and various extracts from private collections and agencies. Moreover, the HAEU has an extensive body of interviews that you can find in our Oral History repository. In the following list you can find some indications where to start when investigating agricultural-policy-related dossiers and documents in our fonds:

1) *EU institutions*

Council of Ministers

The fonds of the Council of Ministers being organized by years, you need to browse the sub-fonds of each separate year to access the specific section on energy. In the HAEU inventory, environment related matters discussed by the Council are grouped under the section "*Politique de l'environnement*". You can only find this specific section in the inventories for the years 1972-1974.

European Commission

The Commission fonds – and by extension that of the Directorates-General-, are divided into two distinct parts: the first refer to the period preceding the Merger Treaty (Commission of the European Economic Community, 1958–1967), and the second to the period following its entry into force (European Commission from 1967 onwards).

In the Commission's fonds, you will find the specific section on Environment under *Environnement et sécurité nucléaire,* which contains the documents of the DG Environment. The DG Environment was created only in 1981, however environmental issues were being discussed earlier, and it could be useful to look into the work of other DGs, for example Social Affairs and Agriculture.

During 1980s, a series of programs focusing on different aspects of environmental policy were added to the Environmental Action Programmes that had been initiated in the mid-1970s. The first of these was the Community Action for the Environment (ACE) in 1984: Initially covering a three-year period, it was renewed for two years in 1988. The second program was MEDSPA, for which discussions began as early as 1984, although it only became operational in 1989 after a two-year preparatory phase. That same year, the third program, NORSPA, was also launched. These were followed by the fourth program: ACNAT. You can find the documents related to these sets of programs in the section Programme pré-LIFE.

In addition, you might want to look into the sections on the Secretariat-General which also contains the minutes of the weekly Commission. Here, you can also find the "Coreper (Comité des représentants permanents) : procès-verbaux". In the same way, you can find

relevant information under Cabinet Jenkins, in the section Environnement, and Cabinet Ivor Richard under the Collège Thorn. In the Cabinet Delors, you can find the dossiers related to the environmental concerns in the sub-fonds Environnement, protection des consommateurs et énergie.

European Parliament

In the EP'S fonds you can find the proceedings and the reports of the parliamentary committee for environment, public health and consumer protection. The Parliament's fonds is divided by different legislatures, therefore you can find here the **"Commission de l'environnement, de la santé publique et de la protection des consommateurs"** for the Parliament's first (1979-1984); second (1984 – 1989); third (1989 – 1994), and fourth legislature (1994-1999).

In the collection of Press Cuttings (CPPE), you will find a specific section related to "Environnement, santé publique et protection des consommateurs" with a selection of articles regarding this topic.

European Court of Auditors

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) was established in 1975 by the Treaty of Brussels, which amended the founding treaties of the European Communities. It officially began operating in 1977. The ECA's annual reports (1977-1997), special reports (1978-1991) and opinions (1977-1997) may be of interest, as well as internal documents, including information documents (1977-1994) and working documents (1977-1994), where you will find documents dealing with environmental projects.

European Court of Justice

According to the nature of the ECJ, this fonds includes documents dealing with judicial affairs, namely original procedure files or case law. You might find it interesting to consult some of its dossiers dealing with environmental issues, such as the affaire 21/76 on the field of private international environmental law, concerning transboundary pollution, or case 91/79 . In this case the European Commission alleged that the Italian Republic failed to fulfill its obligations under the Treaty by not adopting, within the prescribed period, the necessary provisions to comply with Council Directive 73/404/EEC of 22 November 1973 concerning the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to detergents.

European Investment Bank

In this fonds you can find documents on EIB financial interventions in water; renewable energy sectors and protection of the environment in East and Central Europe. You might find

it interesting some "Projets" supported by the Bank that also deals with environmental concerns, (for example the documents concerning the monitoring of the project 1968-7027 Koninkl Ned Zoutindustrie I (NL). In the sections "Aides, dons et subsides exceptionnels" and "Publications et artéfacts", you can also find documents related to specific program of the BEI, such as the Programme pour l'environnement dans la Méditerranée (PEM/PM), and the Environnement Méditerranée - Programme d'assistance technique pour la protection de l'environnement méditerranéen (METAP).

European Environment Agency (EEA)

The European Environment Agency (EEA) was established in 1990 and started operations in Copenhagen in 1994. Its task is to provide information on the environment and climate; it works closely with national and European institutions. In this fonds you can find, amongst others, many interesting documents from its Early strategic papers and the State of the Environment in the EC at its establishment.

Economic and Social Committee

The Economic and Social Committee is an advisory body established by the Treaty of Rome, which participates in decision-making procedures by issuing opinions, but without legislative influence on the final decision. Similarly to the fonds of the Council of Ministers, the inventory is organized by years and it does not include a specific section for environment in the earlier years, considering that environmental policy did not develop before the 1970s. However, for the year 1972, you will find a specific section related to a sub-committee 'Sous-comité 'Environnement', and for the following years from 1973 onwards, you will find a specific section 'Section spécialisée pour l'environnement, la santé publique et la consommation'.

European Committee of the Regions

Created in 1994 following the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) is an advisory body representing the interests of regional and local authorities within the European Union. It issues opinions on their behalf to the Council, the Commission, and the European Parliament. Its members include, for example, leaders of regional authorities, mayors, or other elected and non-elected representatives of regions and cities from EU Member States. In its fonds you can find interesting information under the sub-series "Opinions", issued at the earliest stage in the European legislative process on policy areas that directly affect the local and regional authorities. Here an example concerning environmental issues.

2) ***Corporate bodies***

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Non-EU Organisations

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC) and the "Comité de contact des consommateurs de la Communauté européenne" (CCCCE) were created in 1962 thanks to European Commissioner and Vice-President of the EEC Sicco Mansholt. The aim was to have consumer organizations from the member states represented in the Commission's decision-making process of CAP. BEUC was to act as an umbrella organization for member States' consumer associations, ensuring representation for its affiliated member countries' consumer associations. This fonds contains a range of documents regarding environmental concerns in relation to consumers, such as the European Consultative Forum on the Environment and Sustainable Development; or the series on the European Eco-label and Eco-design, which concerns the BEUC's position and expertise in the elaboration of criteria for the European ecological scheme.

Commission internationale pour la protection du Rhin

The documents cover the period from the creation of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine in 1950 up to around 2004. The fonds contains the first three decades of the ICPR, starting from the constitutive meeting held in Basel on July 11, 1950. This period is richly documented through the correspondence of the early presidents and the technical secretariat, as well as through ministerial meetings (beginning in 1972) and those of the governing bodies. The fonds contains meetings and activities of the various technical working groups, as well as the documents attesting the legal foundation and conventions. Here you might find interesting documents on environmental concerns especially regarding the rivers' levels of pollutions, as, for example, the *'Convention concernant la Commission Internationale pour la protection du Rhin contre la pollution'*, and the *Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement* and *Lutte contre la pollution du Rhin et de la Moselle.*

European Free Trade Organization

The creation of EFTA saw the establishment of a free trade area for industrial goods by some European countries which had not joined the EEC when it was formed in 1957. Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland and Portugal were the original Seven who signed the Treaty of Stockholm in 1959, that came into force a year later. Finland became an associate (and later full) member in 1961, and Iceland joined in 1970. The aim of the Stockholm Convention was to reduce tariffs between member states in phases, as in the EEC, a process completed in 1966. You can find relevant documents regarding the environmental concerns in various sub-fonds, for example in the Compulsory Technical Regulations: Measures to Protect the Environment.

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European Space Agency (ESA)

On 30 May 1975, the ESA Convention was signed by 10 founding Member States and has since now expanded to 23 Member States, three Associate Members, one Cooperating State and Cooperation Agreements with four other EU states. The ESA fonds contains minutes and correspondence files emanating from the various ESA bodies and departments, as well as from bodies established for occasional projects. Here you can find documents related to the Baveno Iniative in the field of environment monitoring from space. The consequent Manifesto of Baveno aims to reach a "European Strategy for Space" with a collaboration between the EC/EU and ESA.

Pro-European Movement

Ligue européenne de coopération économique

The European League for Economic Cooperation is a non-governmental and apolitical organization. Founded in 1946 under the name Independent League for European Cooperation, it took its current name in 1947. The League was one of the founding organizations of the European Movement in 1948. In its sub-fonds "Environnement", it is possible to find documents regarding the debate surrounding environmental policies and concerns, especially related to the common agricultural policy.

Femmes d'Europe

The FDE collection includes documentation gathered by the Women's Information Service (between 1977 and 1992) for its publications "Femmes d'Europe," "Suppléments," and "Cahiers". You can find interesting documents under ***Documentation sur les politiques communautaires*** in the section Environnement.

Political Groups of the European Parliament

The fonds of **EPP Group (PPE)** include a section for the Standing Working Group on **Environment, Public health, Food safety**. You will find Minutes of the committee's meetings and Plenary notes for 1999 to 2004.

The fonds of **Groupe de l'Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe au Parlement européen** includes the documents of the Commission de l'environnement, de la santé publique et de la politique des consommateurs (ENVI). Amongst the various ENVI responsibilities, the Committee is responsible for issues related to environmental policy, including climate change, pollution control, waste management, biodiversity protection, sustainable development, civil protection, and oversight of agencies such as the European Environment Agency and the European Chemicals Agency.

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The **Groupe parlementaire du Parti des socialistes européens fonds** includes dossiers of the _**Commission de l'Environnement, de la santé publique et de la protection du consommateur**_. Please note that only part of the fonds is now available due to the 30-year accessibility rule.

3. Collections

Conférence des régions de l'Europe du Nord-Ouest (CRENO)

The CRENO collection consists of archival documents, a collection of cartographic works, and a set of geographical maps. In these documents - related to the activities of **István Béla Ferenc Kormoss** as cartographer, legal expert, and administrator - is possible to find documents related to environmental concerns in the sub-fonds _Institutions et organisations européennes_, as for example the Programme, Coordination de l'information sur l'environnement' (CORINE) lancé par la Commission européenne and the 'Institut pour une politique européenne de l'environnement' de la 'Fondation européenne de la culture'.

Nicola Di Gioia Collection

This collection consists of posters, slides and positives on paper produced from 1957 to 2003 by EU institutions. The posters were designed to promote events, projects and awareness campaigns on social issues, economy, education, culture, research, technology and environmental issues of the European Union. In this collection you can find an interesting series on Environmental Issues which consists of posters promoting EU environmental policies to protect natural habitats, other than the posters for the event "Settimane Ecologiche Europee" organized by the European Commission and held in Itay from 1981 to 1991.

Private fonds

Robert Hull

Hull's private fonds address his role in developing European environment policy in the section 'Environment Policy', as he was a member of the Environment Advisory Council and later became the Head of Division for Policy Coordination, responsible for the integration of environment into other policies and for the development of action programmes for the environment.

Emile Noël

In his private fonds, you might find the specific series _Environnement, régions, industrie/technol., santé, éducation, citoyen 1970-1988_. The fonds includes also Noel's notes on the European Council's and the Commission's meetings during his time as

Secretary-General of the Commission. Here you can find the documents related to his work for different DGs of the commission, including DG XI - Environment.

Altiero Spinelli

Altiero Spinelli is one of the fathers of European environmental policy. As quoted in some of the interviews that you can find below in the Oral History section (for example the one of Michel Carpentier), Spinelli first proposed the idea of creating a Community environmental policy, when the term "environment" was barely known and absent from the Treaties. In February 1971 the "environmental work group" was established and chaired by Spinelli, who was at the time the commissioner for industrial policy. In his fonds you can find several interesting files, such as the 1972 *Speech at the Ministerial Conference on European Environmental Policy* and several other documents and notes during his time as Commissioner.

4. *Oral History*

The HEAU is a repository for more than 900 interviews, part of various oral history programs, launched to preserve the voices of European politicians and officials. Below you can find the list of interviews that mention environmental concerns. Be sure to browse our Oral History database for more information.

Abate, Antonio and Waegenbaur, Rolf
Atkinson, Harry
Bourdeau, Philippe
Brusasco-Mackenzie, Margaret
Carpentier, Michel
Chevallard, Giancarlo
Contzen, Jean-Pierre
Day, Catherine
Davignon, Etienne
Defraigne, Pierre
Díez De Rivera Icaza, Carmen
Fouere, Erwan
Hoeck, Fernand Van
Johnson, Stanley
Junger, Jean-Marie
Krämer, Ludwig
Moltke, Heinrich Von
Mombelli, Gerardo
Moussis, Nicolas

O'Dwyer, Una
Pflimlin, Pierre
Pleinevaux, Claude
Rocca, Gianfranco
Rohrsted, Tue
Stief-Tauch, Peter
Testori Coggi, Paola
Verstrynge, Jean-Francois

4. Audiovisual Collections

From our website you can access our Audiovisual collections. Here an example of the material you can find

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