

What has the EU done for the environment?

- EU regulation has improved the quality of the air we breathe with various pieces of legislation implemented since the 1970's.
- In the future, the creation of a European supergrid has the potential to turn the UK into a net exporter of energy and significantly reduce the cost of investing in renewable energy technology bringing long-term environmental benefits.
- The EU Bathing Water Directive has improved the quality of UK inland and coastal waters. The level of pollution and waste water management has improved by such an extent the UK now has a water quality of 98.4%.
- The Water Framework Directive, implemented in 2000, ensures sustainable water use and reduces water pollution by limiting contaminants from industrial and municipal facilities.
- The Environmental Liability Directive introduced the principle of 'polluter pays' and aims to prevent and remedy any damage to protected species, nature, water and soil.
- REACH Regulation controls the manufacture and safe use of chemicals for the EU market.
- Vehicle Emission Standards have reduced emissions by over 80% in the past 20 years.
- Recognising the need for international protection, the EU has adopted two legal instruments to protect nature, the Birds Directive (1979) and the Habitats Directive (1992). The Birds and Habitats Directives are two solid and visionary pieces of legislation, which have proven to be the strongest legal working tool to protect nature in the EU.
- Following international commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the EU has also adopted a Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, a commitment by the EU and its Member States to take several additional actions to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. The Strategy has quantitative targets to restore a specific part of species and habitat to a better status. Also it resulted in new legislation on Invasive Alien Species, and increased action to save biodiversity in developing countries.
- The Birds Directive provides a legal framework, binding for all Member States, for the protection of all wild birds in the EU, including their eggs, nests and habitats.