

Workshop

Enhancing the EU's efforts to combat environmental crime – the path ahead

22 October 2015, London

Background Information

This is the last in a series of nine workshops that the EU-funded research project “European Union Action to Fight Environmental Crime” (EFFACE, www.efface.eu) has organized. This workshop serves to discuss the final conclusions and recommendations, which the project is developing, with experts and stakeholders. The conclusions and recommendations will address issues at both the EU and national levels.

Our EFFACE research has involved several components:

- The strengths and weaknesses of instruments and institutions involved in fighting environmental crime at the national, EU and international level have been analysed.
- Case studies on different types of environmental crimes have shed light at the causes and mechanisms of environmental crime and developed recommendations for action in specific fields.
- Research on the costs and impacts of environmental crime has looked into the availability of data on environmental crime and provided estimates of the costs of some types of environmental crime.

On this basis, the researchers involved in EFFACE have identified the following areas where further action could be taken:

1. **Further harmonisation of substantive environmental criminal law** at EU level: Would it be desirable (and potentially effective) to move to a further harmonisation of environmental criminal law?
2. **System of sanctions:** Should the EU's environmental crime directive be complemented by rules on administrative sanctions and civil remedies in addition to criminal sanctions? Should criminal sanctions be harmonized at the EU level? Should specific sanctions be used for environmental crime, with the focus on restoring harm done in the past and preventing future harm.
3. **Functioning of enforcement institutions and cooperation between them:** How can environmental enforcement networks be strengthened? What measures could the EU and Member States take to put environmental crime higher on the political agenda and address the lack of specialisation of enforcement bodies? Are further regulatory changes

needed to facilitate transboundary cooperation in cases of environmental crime?

4. **Data and information management:** What are the types of data that should be collected in order to obtain good insights into the implementation deficit and enable smart responses? What are practical options to improve EU-wide data collection?
5. **The role of NGOs, communities and victims:** To what extent could NGOs, communities and victims play an even stronger role in fighting environmental crime and how could their role be strengthened through interventions by the EU and its Member States?
6. **External dimension of environmental crime:** Since environmental crime is often transboundary, which instruments of development cooperation can be improved? Is there a potential for improvement of border controls at EU external borders, in particular with regard to wildlife crime and organised environmental crime?
7. **Use of environmental liability:** Do steps need to be taken to improve the current framework on environmental liability so as to better address environmental crime in conjunction with criminal law?
8. **Organised environmental crime:** To what extent is it desirable to focus specifically on environmental crime committed in an organised manner? Are specific criminal provisions, but also specific enforcement efforts needed in situations where environmental crime is the result of organized crime?
9. **Corporate responsibility and liability:** What steps could be taken on corporate responsibility and liability to more effectively deter EU companies from committing environmental crime?

For all of these areas conclusions and recommendations have been developed that will be presented in the workshop. The workshop will be highly interactive and will focus on improving, prioritising and enriching the recommendations on the basis of feedback from experts and stakeholders.

This workshop is part of a series of similar one-day EFFACE workshops that both present and invite feedback on EFFACE research from academic experts, policy-makers and practitioners. If you are interested in participating, please contact the EFFACE coordinator at envcrime@ecologic.eu indicating your background and interest relating to the topic; the number of participants is limited.