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The OECD evaluates Belgium's environmental performance

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published its report on Belgium's environmental performance today. More than 250 Belgian experts from regional and federal administrations answered the OECD's questions. Ministers of Environment Alain Maron (Brussels-Capital), Zuhail Demir (Flanders), Céline Tellier (Wallonia) and Zakia Khattabi (Federal) welcomed this extensive co-ordination exercise between the Regions and the Federal State and stressed that several of the OECD's major recommendations correspond to the current approaches and priorities in Belgian policies.

The Environmental Performance Review (EPR) is a recurring cycle of analysis and exchange between the OECD and, in this case, the Belgian authorities. The last review was conducted in 2007. The current report takes stock of Belgium's policies over the past 13 years. It covers the themes:

- water and air quality,
- waste and circular economy,
- biodiversity,
- climate change,
- sustainable development and green growth,
- compliance with legislation and governance (access to information and justice for citizens),
- coordination of the environmental policies of the Regions and the Federal Government.

Rodolfo Lacy, Director of the OECD's Environment Directorate, presented the OECD's main recommendations to Belgium in a virtual conference. Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency (EEA), drew on the analyses developed in the European Union State of the Environment Report ([SOER](#)) to highlight the reforms that need to be implemented to achieve a sustainable transition in Europe and Belgium.

Alain Maron, Céline Tellier and Zakia Khattabi took part in the press conference together with Rodolfo Lacy and Hans Bruyninckx. Zuhail Demir was unable to join her colleagues. Each of the ministers present spoke about the OECD recommendations and gave their responses.

Alain Maron, Brussels Minister for Climate Transition, Environment, Energy and Participatory Democracy, said, *"Together with the Brussels Government, we have been working for almost two years to develop a greener, more sustainable and more resilient city-region. It is with great interest that we have taken note of the body of work and the recommendations made in the report. These will fuel our work and enable us to measure our progress on the way to our environmental and climate goals."*

According to Céline Tellier, Walloon Minister for the Environment, Nature, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Animal Welfare, *"Biodiversity is a particularly important issue, and is at the heart of the Walloon Government's work; we have already launched the 360° Biodiversity Strategy and the revision of the Nature Law in this respect. In addition, in the context of the Recovery Plan, we have a very important brief for biodiversity. It includes four major projects, namely the creation of two national parks, the*

strengthening of protected areas, the adaptation of Walloon forests to climate change, and stream and river remeandering to combat drought and flooding. The circular economy has not been forgotten, as the Walloon Government is investing heavily in this area through various projects."

Zuhal Demir, Flemish Minister for Justice and Enforcement, Environment, Energy and Tourism, stated, *"The fact that Flanders is trying to get on track with its environmental policy has not escaped the OECD's attention. Flanders is stepping up its efforts, in particular with the Blue Deal, the fight against drought, our approach to manure fraud and our position as a leader in the circular processing of materials and soil. Of course, the OECD also points out important areas for improvement. Enforcing environmental regulations, reducing nitrogen precipitation and improving air quality are extremely important issues and already high on the Flemish Government's list of priorities. Flanders still has a lot of work to do but improving our living environment is a task that I consider essential."*

Zakia Khattabi, Federal Minister for Climate, Environment, Sustainable Development and the Green Deal, explained, *"The green transition is at the heart of the Federal Government's declaration and my work programme. I was therefore extremely interested to note that the OECD and the EEA also place climate ambition, the fight against biodiversity loss and the intensification of the circular economy at the centre of the green transition. This resonates with me and reinforces my desire to set ambitious targets for the Federal State to ensure a fair and sustainable transition for Belgian citizens."*

The trends identified for Belgium by the OECD are set out in the Belgian authorities' press kit. The OECD reviewers have made recommendations for all the major environmental issues. The Regions and the Federal State have commented on these recommendations in the press kit.

For more information, please email sustainablebelgium@health.fgov.be to request the press documents available to journalists:

- the press kit of the Belgian authorities,
- the full OECD report (EN only), a summary of the report ("Highlights for Belgium"), the OECD press kit (FR/NL/EN)
- the summary of the EEA report on the state of the environment in the EU.

Contacts:

Brussels-Capital Region, Pascale Hourman, Brussels Environment, spokesperson: 0490/52.37.89, phourman@environnement.brussels

Walloon Region, Nicolas Yernaux, Wallonia Public Service, WPS spokesperson: 0486/95.99.40, nicolas.yernaux@spw.wallonie.be

Vlaams Gewest, Brigitte Borgmans, Departement Omgeving, spokesperson: 0473/73.28.30, brigitte.borgmans@vlaanderen.be

Federal State, Wendy Lee, FPS Public Health, spokesperson: 0477/98.01.02, sustainablebelgium@health.fgov.be

For an interview with the relevant ministers, please contact:

For Alain Maron, Minister for the Environment of the Brussels-Capital Region, Simon Vandamme, spokesperson: svandamme@gov.brussels, 0479/66.03.23.

For Céline Tellier, Minister for Nature of the Walloon Region, Gilles Schobbens, spokesperson: gilles.schobbens@gov.wallonie.be, 0479/65.26.84.

For Zuhail Demir, Flemish Minister for Justice and Enforcement, Environment, Energy and Tourism, Andy Pieters, spokesperson: andy.pieters@vlaanderen.be, 0499/17.35.84.

For Zakia Khattabi, Federal Minister for the Environment, Mélusine Baronian, spokesperson: melusine.baronian@khattabi.fed.be, 0477/55.83.32.

For an interview with Rodolfo Lacy (OECD) or Hans Bruyninckx (EEA), please contact:

For Rodolfo Lacy, Director of the OECD Environment Division, Catherine Bremer, Press Officer: catherine.bremer@oecd.org, +33603/48.34.56.

For Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Director, Constant Brand, Press Officer: constant.brand@eea.europa.eu, +4521/74.18.72.

FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment
Eurostation II
Place Victor Horta 40 box 10
1060 Brussels
Belgium
+32 2 524 97 97
<http://www.health.belgium.be>

Wendy Lee
Spokesperson (NL)
+32 524 91 69
+32 477 98 01 02
wendy.lee@health.fgov.be

Vinciane Charlier
Spokesperson (FR)
+32 475 93 92 71
+32 2 524 99 21
vinciane.charlier@health.fgov.be