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Environmental policy in the European Semester: assessing progress to date

A report prepared by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) for the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament

The European Semester was introduced in 2010 as a mechanism of economic and fiscal policy coordination, bringing together reporting under the Europe 2020 Strategy with reporting under the Stability and Growth Pact. It offers a novel and potentially powerful tool through which to monitor Member States' progress on various issues, including environmental issues, and recommends improvements to better align national efforts with EU policy objectives. Given the economic and financial context over the past three years, ensuring a successful exit from the economic crisis has been the dominant focus of the European Semester process to date. Although some environmental issues are covered in country-specific recommendations (CSRs), in particular environmental tax reform, energy (and electricity) and transport infrastructure, renewable energy and energy efficiency, better energy market design, and progress towards GHG emission reduction targets; others such as biodiversity, recycling, eco-innovation, air pollution, water management, and waste are side-lined or entirely absent.

This Greens/EFA study draws a critical analysis of environmental policy in the current European Semester and discusses avenues for greening the EU semester process.

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