

From the Community to the EU, From a Single Market to Sustainable Development.

Contribution of the **European Environmental Bureau** during Raymond Van Ermen 's term as Secretary General, 1988-1996 Itinerary, in an historical perspective. 12/04/2020.

Introduction.

The activities promoted and developed by the EEB, even if sometimes we do not realize it, have had a significant impact on NGOs, European institutions and European society in general. Armando Montanari., EEB Past President.

Hubert David, EEB Founder and first Secretary General had been in charge while

- 'TOWARDS A NEW APPROACH OF EUROPE'S ECONOMIC GROWTH' was drafted by the British members (mainly The Conservation Society) and endorsed by all EEB members. It became the narrative of what is later called "sustainability "

- The EEB developed the 'defence' of a sustainable energy policy and was the spokes group of this approach at the nuclear hearings or Brunner hearings.. It was also the public recognition by the Commission of the environmental movement and of the EEB as its spokes group.

Ernst Klatte, as EEB Secretary General, initiated in particular the NGOs campaign Greening the Treaty.

From 1988 to 1996.

Since the European Year of the Environment 1987 inaugurated by the EEB with a reception at the City Hall of Brussels, environmental NGOs have been at the heart of many issues:

- Globalization, in particular through the 5 United Nations Conferences of the 1990s, including the 1992 Rio conference (WWF, Green Peace, FOE open offices in Brussels)
- The development of the theme of acid rain and then of climate since the 1980s (Climate Change Network begins as an entity of the BEE) with the growing impact on energy policy, transport and housing
- The transformation of global trade, within the EU (the single market) and at the global level (WTO) and their impact on the environmental standard (major movements of civil society in particular in connection with the G7 and the meetings of the 'WTO: Seattle etc)
- The collapse of communism and in particular the enlargement of the EU, the impact on civil society, environmental policy and democracy (The BEE welcomes new members)
- The evolution of the economic and financial model of the EU (Thirty Glorious, Reagan-Thatcher era and entry of UK in EU, Delors white paper, 2008 crisis), towards the Millennium Goals, the SDGs and climate agreements of 2015

- Financialization of the economy with the consequence of the rise of populism and the impact on the environment
- The evolution of the concept of European citizenship and civil society and the relationship between public authorities, companies, trade unions, civil society in Europe and worldwide
- The evolution of the European Community and the EU's field of competence (from consumer protection to the environment, urban issues, climate towards the Green deal)
- The force of multilateralism from WWII to the Clinton and Blair Obama era towards the crisis of multilateralism in the Trump era and Brexit era
- The change in governance from hierarchical to network in the digital age, access to information on the environment, recourse to European justice
- Mediterranean; From the Barcelona Convention to Euro-Mediterranean relations
- The evolution of products, technologies, materials,
- Scientific knowledge of the impact of products, including pesticides, on health (from the eco-label, eco-innovation, to the circular economy)

As developed below, the EEB contributed in the period 1988-1996 to the debate on issues as :

- EU Treaties (greening, sustainable development)
- Partnership between Environmental NGOs networks in Brussels (G4 which became G10)
- East-West environmental ngo's cooperation post 1989
- Euro-Mediterranean NGO's cooperation (MIO)
- Ngo's cooperation at UNEP level (ELCI in Nairobi)
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships and Partnership with Trade Unions (co-founders of the EPE)
- Towards the Aarhus Convention (UNCEE and EU)
- Towards the Charter of Fundamental Rights (with the European Movement)
- The EU policies and Central and Eastern European Countries towards a sustainable Europe.
- EU growth and competitiveness
- Green taxes, CO2 Tax
- Climate Change (hosting CCN) and Acid Rain
- Chemical Products
- European ecological label (member of the Commission experts group)
- Urban renewal
- Nature protection and tourism
- Religions and the Environment.

This large spectrum is reflected i.a. in the EEB's memorandum to the EU rotating presidency. The merit goes to many and in particular to the EEB Presidents Michael Scoullos and Armando Montanari, Karola Taschner, Christian Hey, Jaromir Sibl, Helmut Röscheisen, David Rehling, Tom Burke, Christian Garnier, Jacqueline Miller, Geraldine Walsh, Jeremy Wates and the support of Margaret Sweeney, Hubert David, Desideria Pasolini, Regina Schneider.

Itinerary.

Environmental protection in a European Community, a Common Market.

The [Single European Act \(PDF\)](#) was signed in February 1986 and entered into force on 1 July 1987. It marked a shift away from dealing with the past (the aftermath of war). Its aim was to create a single market and an area without borders in which the free movement of goods, people, services and capital could take place. It also aimed to reform the EU institutions in light of Portugal's and Spain's impending membership, and to speed up decision-making in preparation for the single market. The main changes introduced by this Treaty were an extension of qualified majority voting in the Council of the EU (making it harder for a single country to veto proposed legislation), and the creation of the cooperation and assent procedures, giving the European Parliament more influence.

The EEB published a report on the pros and cons of a single market for the environment drafted by Christian Hey.

The EEB worked on Acid Rains and hosted the Climate Action Network facilitated by Annie Roncerel.

Although the European Economic Community (EEC) decided to adopt an environmental policy as long ago as 1972, it was not until 1985 that an opportunity came to write environmental provisions into the Treaty. The amending Treaty, known as the Single European Act, was drafted quickly and with little discussion. Its main purpose was to give an impulse to the completion of the internal market by the end of 1992. However, it also provided a legal base for environmental policy and introduced the important principle that the environment was to be a component of the EC's other policies. Despite this important change, the Articles of the Treaty which set out the Community's tasks and activities still use the language of the 1950s - when economic expansion was thought a goal in itself, without any concern about the quality of that expansion, or for what we bequeath to future generations.

Changes to the Treaty of Rome introduced by the 1987 Single European Act brought big advances in the field of environmental protection. For the first time, the EC's environment policy was given legal underpinning and was reinforced by the pledge that 'environmental protection requirements shall be a component of the Community's other policies'. But despite this big step forward, the job was left unfinished. The ethos of the Treaty remains firmly pro-economic growth, and the way in which the Community's environment policy is decided, implemented and enforced is not sufficiently effective to meet the unprecedented challenges facing the Community, and indeed, the planet.¹

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GREENING THE TREATY, Strengthening environmental policy in the Treaty of Rome, A review of amendments put forward for discussion by the Intergovernmental Conference to be convened by the Italian Government in December 1990, David Wilkinson IEEP

- Campaign Greening the Treaty

The EEB launched a campaign 'greening the treaty' prepared by Ernst Klatte, before leaving the position of EEB Secretary General.

In December 1990, two parallel Intergovernmental Conferences - one on Economic and Monetary Union, the other on Political Union - convene in Rome to examine ways of securing closer integration within the European Community. The decision to hold the conferences followed agreement by Community Heads of Government at their April 1990 meeting in Dublin that 'a point has been reached where the further dynamic development of the Community has become an imperative not only because it corresponds to the direct interest of the twelve Member States, but also because it has become a crucial element in the progress that is being made in establishing a reliable framework for peace and security in Europe'.

In the run-up to these conferences - especially the one on Political Union - a number of proposals for change have been put forward by national Governments, the European Parliament and non-governmental organisations, - **The EEB Greening the Treaty Campaign** - many of them with direct or indirect implications for the Community's environment policy. For completion of the internal market in 1992 promises to give a major boost to economic development in the Community, and, as EC Heads of Government observed at Dublin in June 1990: 'There must be a corresponding acceleration of effort to ensure that this development is sustainable and environmentally sound'.²

1992

- February. Maastricht Treaty

The [Maastricht Treaty](#) (the Treaty on European Union) was the next important Treaty change. It was signed on 7 February 1992 and entered into force on 1 November 1993, marking the change from the EEC to the EU. This Treaty aimed to prepare the EU for European Monetary Union and introduced elements of a political union – citizenship, and common foreign and internal affairs policy. The main changes introduced by this Treaty were the establishment of the EU and the introduction of the co-decision procedure, which gave Parliament more of a voice in decision-making. New forms of cooperation between EU governments – for example on defence and justice and home affairs – were also introduced. The Maastricht Treaty was seen as an interim measure as it was clear that a number of changes were likely to occur in the very near future, such as the accession of up to 12 new Member States from northern, central and eastern Europe.³

1989 **Falling down of the Berlin wall**

² IEEP

³ Eurofound. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

1990

- From Vienna to Budapest, *Bridging the Gap* A EEB initiative prepared by Tom Burke, Green Alliance UK.

First East/West Environmental NGO's conference on a boat from Vienna to Budapest.

1990-1996 Globalisation and Environment.

- December 1991. The Roots of the Future, Paris, Global civil society pre- Rio 92 conference hosted by ELCI (RVE Treasurer as board member representing the EEB) following regional conferences in Rio, Tunisia, Nairobi, Bergen.

1991-1996. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships.

The UN Agenda 21 adopted in conclusion of the Rio conference was focused on major groups 'commitments' and 'partnerships'.

Collaboration with the other stakeholders, as cities, trade unions, companies were regarded with suspicion by other European NGOs.

While the Commission and Governments were more inclined to receive and to listen to companies representatives (shaping largely the EU agenda) the preparation of the Rio Conference led to a multi-stakeholder approach, reflected in the way the Commission experts groups were constituted with participation of the EEB.

Under the patronage of UNEP, on the basis of this cultural change, the EEB is, together with the ETUC and Companies, one of the co-founder of *European Partners for the Environment*, towards multi-stakeholder partnership.

In 1996, by joint decision of the boards of respectively the EEB and EPE, RVE moved from the position of EEB Secretary General to EPE Executive Director

1993 Environmental NGOs recognized by the Commission.

It is only during the eight year of its 10 years Commission presidency that President Jacques Delors received environmental NGOs. The EEB is facilitating on behalf of the G4, the first meeting of environmental NGO's with the President of the Commission Jacques Delors. NGO's delegation chaired by Michael Scoullos. Geneviève Pons is Jacques Delors advisor.

Euro-Mediterranean environment.

Under the leadership of Michael Scoullos, the MIO is established in Athens with a strong support of the EEB

The EEB participated in several Euro-Mediterranean conferences.

1994 Urban environment.

Under the leadership of Armando Montanari, the EEB worked during years on the recognition by the EU of the importance of having an urban policy, at that time considered as outside EU competence. The EEB hosted several experts seminars on this issue with experts as Jacqueline Miller.

During the annual meeting with the President of the Commission, Armando Montanari shared with President Delors the need to address environment in cities where most European citizens are living. The protection of the environment on that occasion went from an exclusively "technological" dimension to an economic and social agenda

1995 Growth and Competitiveness. Delors White Paper

The EEB is facilitating on behalf of the G4, the annual meeting of environmental NGO's with the President of the Commission Jacques Delors. NGO's delegation chaired by Armando Montanari. On the agenda the white paper.

The white paper entitled "Growth, Competitiveness and Employment", dated 5 December 1993, is known as COM(700). Although the title might sound conventional, the subtitle hints at a broader ambition, broaching no less a topic than "the challenges and ways forward into the 21st century". While some analysts define the Commission as a "teleological" institution bent on justifying its initiatives with a vision of a common future, this was how the Commission, chaired at the time by Jacques Delors who was then in the ninth year of his three successive mandates, illustrated its calling to be forward-looking. The reception afforded to this original initiative by the national governments at the time was one of only moderate enthusiasm. Yet twenty years later it is clear that a sizeable proportion of the paper's innovative aspects has been de facto consolidated and subsequently implemented in a methodical fashion. Above and beyond the changes in the political ethos, and above and beyond the dual shock of enlargement and of the acceleration of the globalisation process that has rocked the European Union, the white paper has thus been used as a kind of template for the further development of European Union policy in the economic and social spheres. It laid the groundwork for a framework that was subsequently to take root without any major changes being made to it.

The final element consisted of the long-term view leading towards a new development model for the Community. This was the famous "Chapter 10" which was configured as a kind of appendix to the white paper. The idea was that in the medium term the economies of the Union's member countries would be caught on the horns of a dilemma: the more successful they were in rediscovering the path leading to traditional employment and growth, the greater the distance they would be placing between themselves and the new conditions of prosperity and of the quality of life demanded by their citizens. But as long as those economies worked together, they might not find it impossible to succeed both in creating jobs and in pursuing a different kind of growth with a better standard of living,

consisting in “the cre-ation of more challenging jobs” “as well as “the valorisation of human capital in local networks, fostering individual responsibility and social participation.⁴

1993-1999. Sustainable development, an overarching objective

Thanks to Geraldine Walsh Dublin Civic Trust, the EEB delegates (Ralph Hallo and RVE) met during the Irish Presidency 1996 the Irish Prime Minister advisor on the Treaty revision, the secretary to the Dept. Of Foreign Affairs Noel Dore, to present our proposed Treaty articles related to the greening of the treaty. the morning of the 26th September 1996.

The [Treaty of Amsterdam \(PDF\)](#), signed on 2 October 1997 and entering into force on 1 May 1999, aimed to reform the EU institutions in preparation for the arrival of future Member States. It amended and updated the other Treaties and made a number of politically significant changes, particularly in the areas of fundamental rights, employment and the free movement of persons. Its main changes included the amendment, renumbering and consolidation of EU and EEC treaties. It also introduced more transparent decision-making through the increased use of the ordinary legislative procedure.

For nearly 20 years, sustainable development has been one of the fundamental objectives of the European Union since it was included in the Treaty of Amsterdam as an overarching objective of EU policies. The Treaty of European Union sets out the EU vision for a sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment.

1995- 1998 Access to information. Aarhus Convention prepared by the Sofia Guidelines

The ECE Guidelines on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making endorsed in the Ministerial Declaration were adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 25 October 1995. At this occasion, as NGO delegate RVE addressed the ministerial meeting and proposed to transform the guidelines in a convention. This statement had been prepared with Jeremy Wates, presently EEB Secretary General.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) [Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters \(pdf ~50K\)](#) was adopted on 25 June 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus (Århus) at the Fourth Ministerial Conference as part of the "Environment for Europe" process. It entered into force on 30 October 2001.

⁴ Jérôme Vignon – Notre Europe.

1995- 2001 – Charter of Fundamental Rights

The EEB joined the European Forum of Civil Society initiated by Virgilio Dastoli, Secretary General of the European Movement.

RVE acted as rapporteur of the civil society drafting process of a European Citizens Charter.

The Charter was presented at a European Council during a German Presidency. The Council decided to launch the drafting of a Charter of Fundamental Rights and to convene a 'Convention'.

A month after the Treaty of Amsterdam had come into force, negotiations on the Treaty of Nice had begun. The main purpose of the Treaty of Nice was to prepare for EU enlargement and to deal with matters left over from the Treaty of Amsterdam negotiations, such as changing the structure and decision-making processes in preparation for the expansion of the number of EU Member States to 25. It was considered no longer practical to carry on using the same systems that had been in place since the Treaty of Rome. The [Treaty of Nice](#) was signed on 26 February 2001 and entered into force on 1 February 2003. The main changes introduced by this Treaty were changes to the methods for changing the composition of the European Commission and redefining the voting system in the European Council.⁵

1996- Dialogue religion environment.

The environment is a fundamental element of monotheistic religions:

In June 1996, Pope John Paul II received in audience an environmental NGO's delegation composed of members of the EEB and Mediterranean NGOs representatives belonging to other monotheistic religions.

On their behalf, the Pope was asked by Armando Montanari to publish an Encyclical Letter on the environment . 'Laudato Si' has been published by Pope Francis in 2015.

⁵ Eurofound