



Council of the
European Union

107072/EU XXV. GP
Eingelangt am 09/06/16

Brussels, 9 June 2016
(OR. en)

10080/16

ENV 402

NOTE

| | |
|----------|---|
| From: | General Secretariat of the Council |
| To: | Delegations |
| Subject: | High-Level Meeting "Make it Work" (Amsterdam, 4 April 2016) |
| | - Information by the Presidency |

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Presidency on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 20 June 2016.

**Report on the High-Level Meeting "Make it Work" and its follow-up
(Amsterdam, 4 April 2016)****- Information from the Presidency -****Delivering better results for a better environment**

One of the environmental priorities of the Dutch Presidency of the EU is “Delivering better results for a better environment”. This includes organising a dialogue between Member States and with the Commission to explore jointly how we can achieve environmental goals more effectively and efficiently in Europe: how can we improve and facilitate the implementation of current and future EU environmental law, both by making EU environmental legislation more effective, consistent and innovation friendly and by using additional policy instruments?

Combined High-Level Meeting Make it Work (MiW) and Circular Economy

On 4 and 5 April, the Dutch Presidency organised a joint meeting in Amsterdam on two of its environmental priorities, Make it Work and Circular Economy. The reason for combining these subjects is that the MiW approach can support the transition towards the circular economy. Also, on the other hand, circular economy can serve as a concrete example for the necessity of more modern and innovation friendly legislation; and for the necessity of an additional range of instruments, such as for example the green deals or innovation deals.

Make It Work

The MiW project identifies concrete opportunities for improving EU environmental legislation, making it easier to implement the rules in practice. MiW is a practical bottom-up initiative that stimulates cross-sectoral cooperation and aims at increasing coherence. The approach MiW takes is to bring together policy makers and practitioners from Member States and Commission, organise workshops and use the combined knowledge and practical experiences to make recommendations for simpler, more effective rules through a horizontal, cross cutting approach to ensure consistency and coherence. Make it Work aims at delivering environmental outcomes more efficiently and effectively, without lowering existing protection standards. Recommendations ensure the protection of the environment. Work to date has focused on the issues of compliance assurance and environmental reporting as well as sharing experiences between Member States of the challenges of streamlining, integrating and improving national environmental law.

High-Level Meeting MiW

During the MiW session on 4 April the *Directors-General* from 25 Member States and the Commission discussed the specific MiW topics (reporting, compliance assurance) and the interaction between different directives and regulations. During break-out discussions, participants discussed the way forward for MiW: working methods, status and topics.

Discussions

Main conclusions from the break out discussions:

- Broad support for the different areas of work of MiW: compliance assurance, reporting and coherence of legislation.
- It is important within these to focus on the most important issues (such as reporting) to ensure that critical messages are made and the workload is manageable.
- It is essential to draw upon the practical experiences of the Member States in implementing EU legislation, to learn from each other and to feed into the Commission's working process on new and revised EU environmental legislation.

- It is useful to draw upon experiences in other policy areas (for example: how IT / business intelligence tools are used in financial/tax policies).
- On reporting it is important to ensure full value is made of information and that the latest IT tools are used. Also it is important to ensure that we take advantage of future IT innovation in reporting systems and obligations.

On the process of MiW, the following was stressed:

- The bottom-up, Member State-driven approach of MiW is important and complements the usual top-down approach of EU policy making.
- The informal nature of participation of Member States (and Commission) is strongly valued, including the openness in the process.
- It is important to ensure as much participation of different Member States as possible.
- It is therefore important to find a more structural form for MiW.

Plenary conclusions

In plenary, it was concluded that

- There is strong support for the overall objectives of MiW and for it to continue with the present work themes.
- MiW is a good, practical bottom-up initiative that stimulates cross-sectoral cooperation and can increase coherence.
- Member States are encouraged to participate in MiW activities and MiW is encouraged to ensure Member States are informed and provided with the opportunities for participation.
- MiW provides an opportunity for learning outside of the usual procedures at EU level.
- MiW is supported by the European Commission, which recognises its role in helping to improve the implementation of EU environmental law by examining needs for streamlining, etc., as well as exchanging experience between Member States and the Commission.
- Work on compliance assurance and reporting is welcomed by the Commission and new issues should be looked into such as how EU environmental law can enable innovation while fully respecting existing protection standards and the precautionary principle (and so contribute to the circular economy).

Way forward

- Overall it is felt that it is valuable and important to continue the MiW process as a Member State driven initiative, taking a horizontal, cross-sectoral approach and identifying concrete opportunities to simplify and harmonise EU environmental rules.
- It is equally important to underline that MiW respects the institutional balance, especially the Commission's right of initiative and aims at delivering environmental outcomes more efficiently and effectively, without lowering existing protection standards.
- The MiW initiative seeks the participation of all Member States. To achieve this, it is important that the Commission expresses its support for MiW and actively helps to ensure that all Member States can take part in meetings of the project.
- It is also key that MiW addresses concrete and current topics such as streamlining environmental reporting and newly suggested topics, like securing the smooth interaction between directives and modernising legislation to give room for innovation. Recommendations from MiW should be in line with the Commission better regulation principles and first and for all provide practical input to the Commission's work on improving EU environmental legislation.
- Therefore close cooperation between MiW and Commission is needed so that the right topics are taken up and deliverables are indeed useful.
