EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 7.7.2025
SWD(2025) 322 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

2025 Environmental Implementation Review
Country Report - ROMANIA

Accompanying the document

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

2025 Environmental Implementation Review for prosperity and security

{COM(2025) 420 final} - {SWD(2025) 300 final} - {SWD(2025) 301 final} - {SWD(2025) 302 final} - {SWD(2025) 303 final} - {SWD(2025) 304 final} - {SWD(2025) 305 final} - {SWD(2025) 306 final} - {SWD(2025) 307 final} - {SWD(2025) 308 final} - {SWD(2025) 309 final} - {SWD(2025) 310 final} - {SWD(2025) 311 final} - {SWD(2025) 312 final} - {SWD(2025) 313 final} - {SWD(2025) 314 final} - {SWD(2025) 315 final} - {SWD(2025) 316 final} - {SWD(2025) 317 final} - {SWD(2025) 318 final} - {SWD(2025) 319 final} - {SWD(2025) 320 final} - {SWD(2025) 321 final} - {SWD(2025) 323 final} - {SWD(2025) 324 final} - {SWD(2025) 325 final} - {SWD(2025) 326 final}

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Executive summary

In May 2016, the European Commission launched the Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), a regular reporting tool based on analysis, dialogue and collaboration with EU Member States to improve the implementation of existing EU environmental policy and legislation ([1]). Following previous cycles in 2017, 2019 and 2022, this report assesses the progress made while describing the main outstanding challenges and opportunities regarding environmental legal implementation in Romania. The purpose of this report is to provide information on the implementation performance and highlight the most effective ways to address the implementation gaps that impact human health and the environment and hamper the economic development and competitiveness of the country. The report relies on detailed sectoral implementation reports collected or issued by the Commission under specific environmental legislation.

The main challenges set out below have been selected from Part I of this report, 'Thematic areas', taking into consideration factors such as the gravity of the environmental implementation issue in light of the impact on the quality of life of citizens, the distance to target, and financial implications. In Romania, such challenges have been lingering since the first EIR in 2017 and require urgent action.

Urgent reforms and investments on **waste and circular economy** remain insufficient. Further efforts are urgently needed to reduce Romania's reliance on waste disposal in landfills, which remains significant. Despite Romania having made some progress on closing substandard or illegal landfills, progress has been too slow and it is paying the consequent financial sanctions. There has been some progress in improving and extending the separate collection of waste, and using economic instruments such as the extended producer responsibility. Nevertheless, Romania is in the category of Member States at risk of missing both the municipal waste and the packaging waste targets for 2025. Romania is also at risk of not meeting the 2035 target of municipal waste landfilled.

Urban wastewater collected in Romania is not adequately treated as required by EU law. Given the slow progress of compliance with the Wastewater Treatment Directive, in November 2024 the Commission referred Romania to the Court of Justice of the European Union for its failure to comply with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive in relation to agglomerations of above 10 000 population equivalent, which benefited from a transitional period in accordance with Romania's Treaty of Accession. Romania should fully use the financial support provided by the cohesion policy and the Romanian recovery and resilience plan to make progress on reforms and building the necessary infrastructure, as the investment gap remains significant.

The **air quality** in Romania continues to give cause for concern in some parts of its territory, with severe consequences on the health of the population. Romania submitted its first national air pollution control programme (NAPCP) with significant delay, but the measures taken to address air pollutants are still insufficient. The latest reported data show continued non-compliance with the 2020–2029 emission reduction commitments for NO_x and $PM_{2.5}$. Although Romania has made some progress, exceedances above the limit values remain for NO_2 and PM_{10}, which require further action. Despite some progress in the air quality monitoring network, gaps remain concerning the appropriate number and type of the air quality sampling points and the data quality objectives.

Romania's overall **environmental investment gap** is EUR 5.4 billion per year, representing 1.9 % of the national GDP, being significantly higher than the EU average (0.77%). The highest shares are for biodiversity and ecosystems and water management, and pollution prevention and control. It is necessary to ensure an increased level of financing, and further exploit opportunities in private financing to close investment gaps.

On **environmental governance**, Romania has made some progress with the implementation of the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community Directive, but it should still make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise the environmental datasets. Romania has developed national guidelines on the preparation of environmental impact assessment reports specifically for hydropower projects. However, further efforts are needed

([1]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Delivering the benefits of EU environmental policies through a regular environmental implementation review, COM(2016) 316 final of 27 May 2016, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2016%3A316%3AFIN.

with regard to the process of providing information concerning strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment, as well as information provided to the public on their right to access to justice and improved access to courts.

On the positive side, some **good practices** for nature protection and restoration can be identified. The financial instrument for the environment (LIFE) programme has supported only a few nature conservation projects in recent years, but these have proved to be of paramount importance for the protection of habitats, species and forests in Romania. These include the creation of a wilderness reserve in the Southern Carpathians, the conservation of saproxylic beetles in the Eastern Carpathians, and developing a cooperative approach for the good management of Natura 2000 grasslands. LIFE projects on sturgeons have also been instrumental.

Part I: Thematic areas

1. Circular economy

Transitioning to a circular economy

Advancing the transition to a circular economy in the EU will reduce the environmental and climate impact of our industrial systems by reducing input materials, keeping products and materials in the loop for longer and reducing waste generation, thus decoupling economic growth from resource consumption. A circular economy has considerable potential to increase competitiveness and job creation and will also promote innovation and provide access to new markets. With the 2020 circular economy action plan (CEAP) (2) measures either in place or legislatively advanced, Member States will now have to focus on a swift and effective implementation.

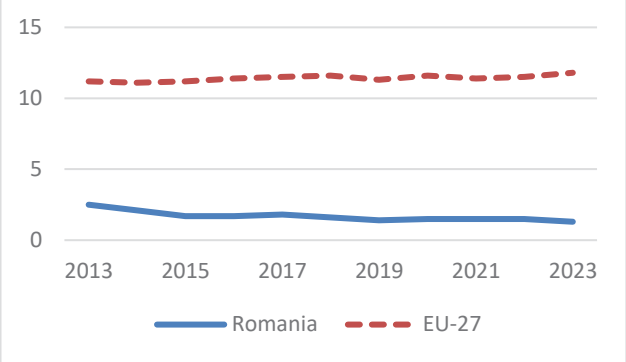
The 2020 CEAP launched the legislative process for a set of initiatives that will now have to be implemented by national governments across the EU. These initiatives were all introduced following a holistic life-cycle approach, with measures addressing the different stages of a product's life cycle, from design through use to end of life.

In the CEAP, the EU sets as its overarching objective the doubling of its circular material use rate (CMUR) by 2030.

The CMUR is a measure of one aspect of circularity: the share of the total amount of material used in the economy that is accounted for by recycled waste. A higher CMUR value means that more secondary materials were used as a substitute for raw materials, thus reducing the environmental impacts of extracting primary material.

Romania's circular use of materials has been slowly declining since 2012 and stood at 1.3 % in 2023. This is the lowest rate in EU, considerably below the EU average of 11.8 % (Figure 1).

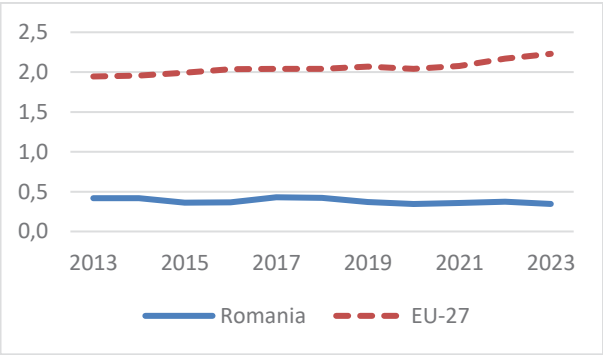
Figure 1: CMUR (%), 2013–2023



Source: Eurostat, 'Circular material use rate', env_ac_cur, last updated 13 November 2024, accessed 10 December 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/product/view/env_ac_cur.

Resource productivity measures the total amount of materials directly used by an economy in relation to gross domestic product (GDP). Improving resource productivity can help to minimise negative impacts on the environment and reduce dependency on volatile raw material markets. As shown in Figure 2, with EUR 0.34 generated per kg of material consumed in 2023, Romania's resource productivity remains well below the EU average of EUR 2.23 per kg.

Figure 2: Resource productivity (EUR/kg), 2013–2023



NB: The unit of measurement used is EUR/kg chain-linked volume (2015). Chain-linked volumes focus on changes on quantities and prices of commodities in previous years, taking account of inflation, and are indexed to the nearest appropriate year, in this case 2015.

Source: Eurostat, 'Resource productivity', env_ac_rp, last updated 7 August 2024, accessed 9 December 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/product/view/env_ac_rp.

(2) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A new circular economy action plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe, COM(2020) 98 final of 11 March 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A98%3AFIN.

Policies and measures

In parallel with European initiatives under the CEAP, Member States are encouraged to adopt and implement circular strategies at the national, regional and city levels. These should be tailored to each national and local reality, to harness the proximity economy's ([3]) potential, while following the principles of a holistic whole-value-chain approach.

Since the launch of the online European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform in 2017 ([4]) national, regional and local authorities have used the platform to share their strategies, roadmaps and good practices, for example alternative business models and innovative technologies.

Romania adopted its national action plan promoting the circular economy in 2023 ([5]) as part of the 2022 national strategy for the circular economy ([6]).

Both the action plan and the strategy were developed within the framework of the national recovery and resilience plan (RRP) ([7]), with the support of the European Commission's technical support instrument (TSI).

The action plan sets a clear general direction for accelerating the transition from a linear to a circular economy model in Romania. It provides an overview of 14 economic sectors in terms of their circularity potential and identifies 52 priority actions concentrated in 10 sectors.

These are introduced in parallel with cross-cutting actions, which include measures on education and vocational training; research, development and innovation; green procurement; and encouragement of digitisation. The action plan provides objectives, implementation deadlines and tables for monitoring and evaluating progress in the implementation of actions. To further improve the monitoring of implementation, a monitoring and evaluation plan is being developed.

Green public procurement

Public procurement accounts for a large proportion of European consumption, with public authorities' purchasing power representing around 14 % of EU GDP. Public procurement using green or circular criteria (life-cycle analysis, PaaS (platform as a service), second hand) can help drive the demand for sustainable products that meet reparability and recyclability standards.

Environmental criteria have been included in public procurement in Romania since the publication of Law No 69/2016 on green public procurement. A green public procurement guide, which includes minimum requirements for environmental protection for certain groups of products and services, was produced in 2018, but has since been repealed. The most recent environmental criteria have been in place since August 2024. In 2022, the legislation on public procurement and sectoral procurement was amended and supplemented with provisions on environmental evaluation factors. In addition, to prevent duplication of legislative provisions, Law No 69/2016 was repealed.

More recently, the national strategy for public procurement (2023–2027) was adopted with the aim to develop a national green procurement plan establishing multiyear targets for contracting authorities/entities to implement green public procurement in selected categories of products, services or works for which the European Commission has developed ecological criteria. On 24 April 2025, the government approved the national green procurement programme 2025-2030.

The EU Ecolabel and the eco-management and audit scheme

The number of EU Ecolabel product groups and the number of eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS)-licensed organisations in each country provide some indication of the extent to which the private sector and national stakeholders in that country are actively engaged in the transition to a circular economy. The EU Ecolabel is awarded to products with best-in-class environmental performance. EMAS is a voluntary environment management scheme aimed at reducing the environmental impacts of organisations.

As of September 2024, Romania had 123 Ecolabel products out of the EU total 98 977 (goods and services) awarded with the EU Ecolabel, and 70 Ecolabel licences out of 2 983 awarded, indicating low take-up of the products and licences, but an increase since the last report nevertheless ([8]). Moreover, 20 organisations from

([3]) European Commission, 'Proximity and social economy ecosystem', European Commission website, https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy_en.

([4]) Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en/strategies).

([5]) Department for Sustainable Development, *Planul de acțiune pentru Strategia națională privind economia circulară*, Bucharest, 2023, https://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/planul-de-actiune-pentru-strategia-nationala-privind-economia-circulara-10519261.

([6]) Strategia națională privind economia circulară https://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/strategia-nationala-privind-economia-circulara-13409762 .

([7]) https://mfe.gov.ro/pnrr/.

([8]) European Commission, 'EU Ecolabel facts and figures', European Commission website, accessed 6 February 2025, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel/businesses/ecolabel-facts-and-figures_en.

Romania are currently registered in EMAS, an increase of 15 organisations since October 2021 ([9]).

With regard to the evolution since the 2022 EIR, the CMUR of Romania decreased by 0.2 percentage points in 2023, remaining the lowest in EU. This does not represent any progress towards the 2022 priority action to take measures to increase the rate.

The priority action for 2022 to adopt a circular economy policy framework has been fulfilled.

2025 priority actions

- Adopt measures to increase the circular material use rate.
- Speed up the transition to a circular economy by implementing an updated national strategy and the EU framework and recommendations, in particular to complement it with upstream circularity measures.

Waste management

Turning waste into a resource is supported by:

(i) addressing the full life cycle of products, from conception to end of life, by setting requirements on the design of products to ensure that they are more sustainable;
(ii) fully implementing EU waste legislation, which includes the waste hierarchy, the obligation to ensure separate collection of waste, landfill diversion targets, etc.;
(iii) reducing waste generation per capita and in absolute terms;
(iv) increasing the recycling rates of waste containing critical raw materials (CRMs), with a view to reducing dependencies and building resilient value chains, and stimulating demand for recycled content in all products;
(v) limiting energy recovery to non-recyclable materials; and
(vi) phasing out landfilling of recyclable or recoverable waste.

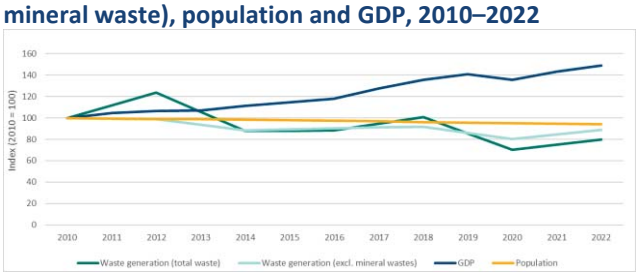
One of the main objectives of the EU Waste Law is to decouple economic growth from its environmental impacts.

The EU's approach to waste management is based on the waste treatment hierarchy: prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, recovery and, as the least preferred option, disposal (which includes landfilling and incineration without energy recovery).

All legislative proposals in the field of waste management put forward by the Commission since 2021 are intended to encourage Member States to promote better product design, to require producers to cover the costs of managing the waste resulting from their products and to ensure that waste is managed at the higher levels of the waste hierarchy.

Romania has seen a decrease in the total amount of waste generation over the past 12 years (Figure 3). This trend is primarily driven by the largest waste category, other mineral waste, which is mainly generated in the mining and quarrying sector. When excluding mineral waste, the trend is similar to those in previous years, and the largest shares of waste include combustion waste, recyclable waste and mixed ordinary waste. The trend seems to be mainly influenced by a decrease in combustion waste, which nearly halved from 2018 to 2020, before increasing again. This decrease happened while Romania's GDP showed steady growth (except for a drop in 2020, which is most likely to be due to the COVID-19 outbreak) and the population slightly decreased, indicating a decoupling of economic growth and waste generation.

Figure 3: Generation of waste (total and excluding major mineral waste), population and GDP, 2010–2022



Sources: Eurostat, 'GDP and main components (output, expenditure and income)', nama_10_gdp, accessed 15 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10_gdp__custom_9301905/default/table; Eurostat, 'Generation of waste by waste category, hazardousness and NACE Rev. 2 activity', env_wasgen, last updated 30 September 2024, accessed 22 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env_wasgen/default/table?lang=en; Eurostat, 'Population change – Demographic balance and crude rates at national level', demo_grind, accessed 15 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo_gind/default/table?lang=en&category=demo.demo_ind.

Critical raw materials

Romania addresses CRMs and CRM-rich products in several national laws and initiatives. The main categories of CRMs and CRM-rich products are, however, not clearly listed in the scope covered by specific Romanian legislative tools. These tools are, in particular, the Romanian strategy

([9]) As of October 2024. European Commission, 'Eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS)', European Commission website, November 2021, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/emas_registrations/statistics_graphs_en.htme.

for the circular economy ([10]) and the Romanian CEAP ([11]), which have been supported under the Romanian RRP; some sectoral legal acts, such as Decision No 1132/2008 on the regime of batteries, accumulators and waste batteries ([12]); Government Emergency Ordinance No 5/2015 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) ([13]) and Law No 212/2015 on the management of end-of-life vehicles ([14]); and the national research, innovation and smart specialisation strategy for 2022–2027 ([15]), which also addresses clean industry, circular economy and the security of supply of raw materials.

It should be noted that Romania is developing a national strategy for non-energy mineral resources, Horizon 2035 ([16]), that will tackle the circularity of CRMs and other CRM-related aspects.

Romania's efforts to moderate the expected rise in demand for CRMs also include increased investments in research and development and education through its national CEAP. Envisaged actions include training activities on circular economy. The national strategy on raw materials has been adopted by the end of 2024.

Construction and demolition waste

Construction and demolition waste accounts for almost 40 % of all waste generated in the EU. A recent study ([17]) by the Joint Research Centre shows that preparing for reuse and recycling operations are preferred over incineration and landfilling from an environmental perspective for most of the difference streams of construction and demolition waste. However, the economics are often unfavourable for preparing for reuse and recycling compared with incineration and landfilling. If available technology were to be applied, it is estimated that the increase in preparing for reuse and recycling of construction and demolition waste would lead to 33 Mt of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission savings annually (more than the combined annual GHG emissions from Estonia, Latvia and Luxembourg).

The preparing for reuse and recycling rate of mineral construction and demolition waste in Romania in 2022 was 52 % compared to the EU average of 79.8 %. Measures to further increase the rate of recycling and preparation for reuse of construction and demolition waste include separate collection at source – for instance, through digitalised pre-demolition audits ([18]) ('resource assessments'); extended producer responsibility (EPR) and other economic instruments; and upstream measures such as increasing the recycled content in construction products and the circular design ([19]) of construction works. Various proposals for normative acts are considered in view of better regulating the sector.

Boosting implementation – the 2023 *Waste Early Warning Report*

This section focuses on the management of municipal waste ([20]), for which EU law sets mandatory recycling targets. In June 2023, the Commission published the *Waste Early Warning Report* ([21]) identifying the general trends in waste management and the Member States at

([10]) Circular Economy Strategy for Romania, 18 July 2022, https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/document/download/aa105e25-b9e6-464e-92af-7dcf39bbeb50_en?filename=CE%20Strategy%20RO_18072022_Final_EN.pdf&prefLang=el

([11]) Circular Economy Action Plan for Romania, 29 November 2023, https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d73ac95f-6868-4747-8235-11864114ecb3_en?filename=CE%20Action%20Plan%20Romania_EN_clean.pdf&prefLang=bg.

([12]) https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/97608. This includes rules on the collection, treatment, recycling and disposal of waste batteries and accumulators, to promote high levels of collection and recycling.

([13]) https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/167211. This includes measures for preventing or reducing the negative effects of the generation and management of WEEE by reducing the overall effects of resource use and by improving the efficiency of the use of these resources.

([14]) https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/170043. This includes measures to prevent the generation of waste from end-of-life vehicles, and the reuse, recycling and other recovery of end-of-life vehicles and components to reduce waste disposal.

([15]) https://www.mcid.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/strategia-na-ional-de-cercetare-inovare-i-specializare-inteligent-2022-2027.pdf.

([16]) https://economie.gov.ro/structura-organizatorica/resurse-minerale-neenergetice.

([17]) European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Cristobal Garcia, J., Caro, D. et al., *Techno-economic and environmental assessment of construction and demolition waste management in the European Union*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC135470.

([18]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, *EU Construction & Demolition Waste Management Protocol including guidelines for pre-demolition and pre-renovation audits of construction works – Updated edition 2024*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d63d5a8f-64e8-11ef-a8ba-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

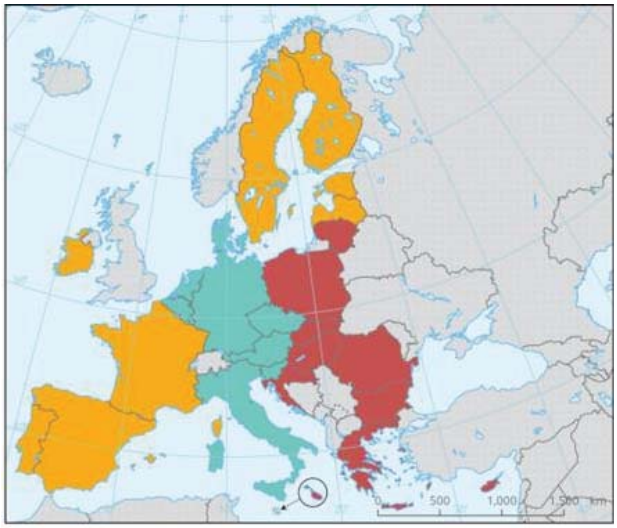
([19]) European Commission, *Circular Economy – Principles for buildings design*, Brussels, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39984.

([20]) Municipal waste consists of (i) mixed waste and separately collected waste from households, including paper and cardboard, glass, metals, plastics, biowaste, wood, textiles, packaging, WEEE, waste batteries and accumulators, and bulky waste, including mattresses and furniture; and (ii) mixed waste and separately collected waste from other sources, where such waste is similar in nature and composition to waste from households (Directive 2008/98/EC, Article 3.2b).

([21]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/waste-early-warning-report_en.

risk of missing 2025 waste targets (see Figure 4). Romania is at risk of missing the municipal waste and packaging waste targets. Romania is also at risk of not meeting the 2035 target of having a maximum of 10 % of municipal waste landfilled.

Figure 4: Member States' prospects of meeting the preparing for reuse and recycling targets for municipal waste and packaging waste



- Member States not at risk of missing the 55 % preparing for reuse and recycling target for municipal waste and the 65 % recycling target for packaging waste
- Member States at risk of missing the preparing for reuse and recycling target for municipal waste but not at risk of missing the recycling target for packaging waste
- Member States at risk of missing both targets
- Outside coverage

Source: European Environment Agency (EEA), 'Many EU Member States not on track to meet recycling targets for municipal waste and packaging waste', briefing No 28/2022, Copenhagen, 2023. Reference data © ESRI.

Under certain conditions, EU waste legislation enables some Member States to postpone the deadlines for reaching certain waste management targets for municipal and packaging waste. Member States that want to use this possibility have to notify the Commission 24 months in advance of the deadline and submit an implementation plan laying down the steps they envisage to reach the postponed targets within a new time frame. Regarding the 2025 targets, 11 Member States, including Romania, have used this prerogative.

On 20 November 2023, Romania notified the Commission of its intention to postpone the attainment of the preparing for reuse and recycling target for municipal waste and submitted an implementation plan laying down the measures necessary to attain the target within a postponed time frame (i.e. by 2030 instead of 2025).

In the *Waste Early Warning Report*, the Commission recommended that Member States accelerate their efforts to improve their recycling performance. The Commission is, on one hand, working together with the national authorities and stakeholders to speed up the implementation of measures necessary to meet the targets, including through dedicated financing. On the other hand, the Commission is pursuing enforcement actions against those Member States that, based on data submitted to the Commission, do not achieve the targets of the Waste Framework Directive ([22]), the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive ([23]) and the Directive on WEEE ([24]).

The data submitted by Romania show that it missed the 2020 municipal waste targets, the packaging and waste targets and the WEEE target. Hence, an infringement procedure was launched in July 2024 ([25]).

Municipal waste

Romania's municipal waste generation has slightly increased in recent years (Figure 5). In 2022, Romania generated 303 kg per capita of municipal waste, which is significantly below the estimated EU-27 average of 513 kg per capita.

Romania had a low recycling rate of 12 % in 2022, which is significantly below the estimated EU-27 average of 49 %, and the trend has stagnated since 2010. The landfill rate was 74 % in 2022, with no progress made since 2010 (Figure 6).

Romania also reported data to show compliance with the preparing for reuse and recycling target of 55 % for 2025. The difference between these (provisional) data, following the reporting obligation of the Waste Framework

([22]) Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives, Directive - 2008/98 - EN - Waste framework directive - EUR-Lex.

([23]) European Parliament and Council Directive 94/62/EC of 20 December 1994 on packaging and packaging waste (OJ L 365, 31/12/1994, p. 10–23), Directive - 94/62 - EN - EUR-Lex.

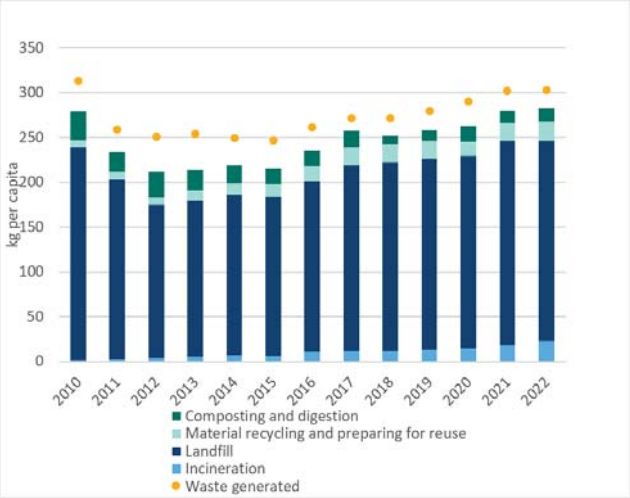
([24]) Directive 2012/19/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 38), Directive - 2012/19 - EN - EUR-Lexhttps://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32012L0019.

([25]) INFR(2024)2136; see also European Commission, 'July infringement package: Key decisions', European Commission website, 25 July 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_24_3228.

Directive, and the data shown in Figure 6 (voluntary reporting) was less than 1 percentage point for the preparing for reuse and recycling rate in both 2021 and 2022 ([26]).

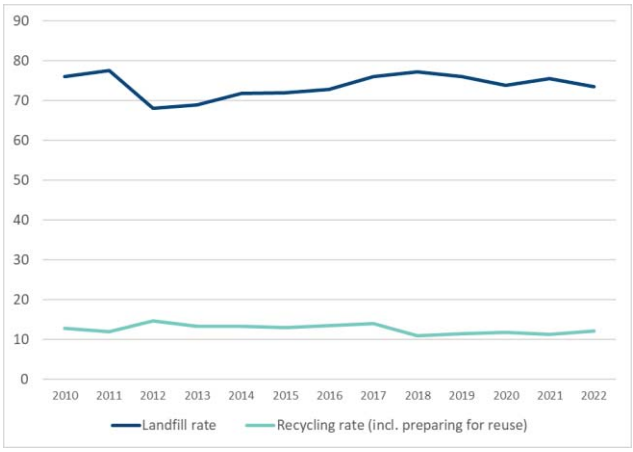
One key reason for the low recycling rate is the low composting and anaerobic digestion rate, as Romania does not have enough capacity for the separate collection and adequate treatment of biowaste ([27]). The estimated current capacity for composting or digesting separately collected biowaste can only treat about 27 % of the generated amount (estimated to be about 1.7 million t) ([28]). The incineration rate in Romania is low but increasing and currently stands at 8 %.

Figure 5: Municipal waste management and recycling (including preparation for reuse), 2010–2022



Source: Eurostat, 'Municipal waste by waste management operations', env_wasmun, accessed 22 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASMUN/default/table.

Figure 6: Recycling (including preparation for reuse) and landfill rates (%), 2010–2022



Source: Eurostat, 'Municipal waste by waste management operations', env_wasmun, accessed 22 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASMUN/default/table.

Packaging waste

Romania's packaging waste generation has increased during recent years (Figure 7), especially since 2017. It rose from 72 kg per capita in 2017 to 127 kg per capita in 2021, which is still significantly below the estimated European average of 189 kg per capita in the same year.

In 2021, the overall recycling rate for packaging waste was 38 %, which is significantly below the estimated EU-27 average of 64 % in the same year. The packaging waste recycling rate fluctuated between around 40 % and 60 % throughout 2010–2021 (Figure 8). The recycling rate is mainly driven by the recycling of paper and cardboard packaging and wooden packaging, as these represent the largest shares of packaging waste. However, there are data quality issues regarding packaging waste ([29]). There is a large discrepancy between the low recycling rate for municipal waste and the moderate recycling rate for packaging waste, and thus the datasets on municipal waste and packaging waste indicate inconsistency ([30]). Recently, improvements in the data collection and quality assurance system have been initiated (e.g. external auditing of EPR schemes) ([31]).

([26]) Eurostat, information provided by Eurostat on provisional data in response to the reporting obligation under Article 37(1) of the Waste Framework Directive related to the target on the preparing for reuse and recycling of municipal waste (Article 11(2c)), 2024.

([27]) Commission staff working document – The early warning report for Romania, SWD(2023) 199 final of 8 June 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=SWD:2023:199:FIN.

([28]) European Environment Agency (EEA), *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

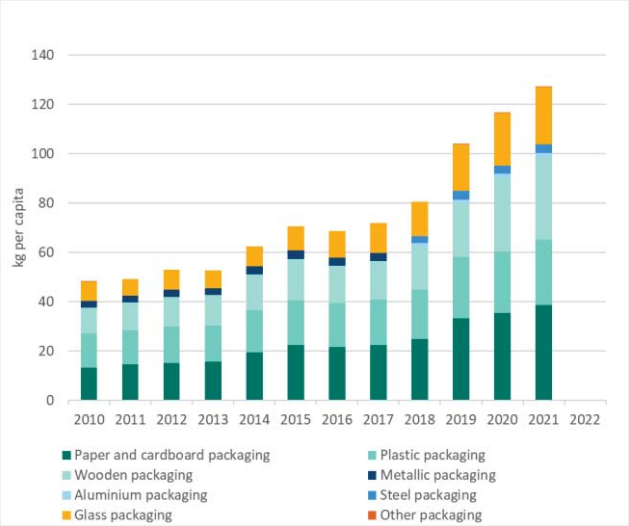
([29]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([30]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([31]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

In 2018, national legislation on packaging and packaging waste (Law No 249/2015) underwent important changes ([32]), which led to a break in the time series, indicated for reference year 2019. These changes resulted in a strong increase in the recorded packaging waste generated, while the recycled volumes stayed relatively stable ([33]), leading to a drop in the recycling rates for all packaging materials.

Figure 7: Packaging waste generation, 2010–2022



Source: Eurostat, 'Packaging waste by waste management operations', env_waspac, last updated 23 October 2024, accessed 28 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASPAC__custom_842634/default/table?lang=en.

No data available for 2022. In 2018 the national legislation on packaging and packaging waste (Law 249/2015) underwent important changes by Emergency Ordinance 74/2018. Break in series indicated for 2019. As of reference year 2020 the rules for calculating recycled packaging waste have changed, pursuant to Article 6a of Directive 94/62/EC. The new reporting rules have been applied in Romania for reference year 2020 onwards.

Figure 8: Packaging waste recycling rates (%), 2010–2022

Source: Eurostat, 'Packaging waste by waste management operations', env_waspac, last updated 23 October 2024, accessed 28 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASPAC__custom_842634/default/table?lang=en.

No data available for 2022. In 2018 the national legislation on packaging and packaging waste (Law 249/2015) underwent important changes by Emergency Ordinance 74/2018. Break in series indicated for 2019. As of reference year 2020 the rules for calculating recycled packaging waste have changed, pursuant to Article 6a of Directive 94/62/EC. The new reporting rules have been applied in Romania for reference year 2020 onwards.

Policies to encourage waste prevention

Waste management plans and waste prevention programmes are instrumental to the full implementation of EU waste legislation. They set out key provisions and investments to ensure compliance with existing and new legal requirements (e.g. on waste prevention, on separate collection for certain waste streams, on recycling and on landfill targets).

Overall, Romanian waste legislation follows EU waste legislation. EU waste management legislation was transposed into national law through a number of laws, including Government Emergency Ordinance No 92/2021 on the waste regime; Government Emergency Ordinance No 195/2005 on environmental protection; the Sanitation Law (Law No 101/2006), which sets out objectives, organisational principles and obligations for the administrative territorial units; the Environment Fund on defining economic instruments for (inter alia) waste management and landfill diversion, as well as provisions for administration of the fund; and various other legal norms covering specific waste streams, such as packaging,

([32]) Eurostat, *Country-specific notes referring to data on packaging and packaging waste*, Luxembourg, 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/env_waspac_esms_an_3.pdf.

([33]) Eurostat, 'Packaging waste by waste management operations', env_waspac, last updated 23 October 2024, accessed 28 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASPAC__custom_842634/default/table?lang=en.

WEEE, batteries, tyres, single-use plastic and the deposit return system.

Romania's national waste management plan (NWMP) and national waste prevention programme are valid until the end of 2025 ([34]). The NWMP needs to be revised to cover the years beyond 2025 and to ensure compliance with European waste legislation.

The priority waste streams for prevention are food and organic waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste, household and municipal waste, paper and cardboard, packaging, WEEE and batteries and manufacturing waste ([35]).

Quantitative waste prevention targets are specified, along with proposed indicators for follow-up. Notably, these include reducing household waste per capita by 10 % by 2027 compared with 2017 levels and decoupling packaging waste generation from economic growth (i.e. the increase in packaging waste should be at least 10 % lower than GDP growth in 2017–2025).

To reduce household waste, food waste is addressed in public procurement and through awareness raising, date marking food packaging and introducing waste prevention topics into pre-university education ([36]). Actions to target the reduction of packaging waste are established through design and redesign, and the optimisation of packaging to minimise resource use ([37]).

In 2018, Romania established Law No 217/2016, on food waste reduction, which aims to reduce food waste throughout the food supply chain. The law simplifies the donation of surplus food. Several food waste prevention projects have been initiated, such as the 'Food bank' project, which aims to redistribute food waste in three cities in Romania ([38]).

The 2014–2020 NWMP was the first national document addressing waste prevention, though the impacts of these measures have not been evaluated yet. Information regarding budget or financial incentives are not specified in the current national waste prevention programme (covering 2018–2025) ([39]).

The NWMP is underpinned by 41 county waste management plans and the Bucharest municipality waste management plan.

Policies to encourage separate collection and recycling

The separate collection system does not distinguish between household and non-household waste. Separate collection for non-household packaging waste streams is mandatory. The system relies on bring banks for recyclables. Romanian legislation lacks a clear definition of the separate collection service that is to be provided to residents, and no enforcement measures are expected. In 2020, the National Environmental Guard identified deficiencies in the implementation of the requirements on waste collection services. More detailed information is not available on the degree of service provision for separate collection ([40]).

Romania has firm plans to increase separate collection services in 2024–2026 for at least biowaste, wood, WEEE, paper, metal, plastic and glass waste ([41]). The aim is for the capture rates of separate collection to be increased by extending the coverage of the bring point system, establishing civic amenity sites, and providing composting units for households in rural areas. Investments in the infrastructure for separate collection and recycling facilities is supported by the EU not only through the cohesion policy but also the recovery and resilience facility (RRF), and it is planned for these investments to be in place by mid 2026 ([42]).

In Romania, EPR applies to the main packaging waste streams for both households and non-households, and no

([34]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([35]) Government of Romania, *Planul Național de Gestionare a Deșeurilor* [National waste management plan], 2017, https://anpm.ro/documents/16755/42624324/Planul+National+de+Gestionare+a+Deseurilor.pdf/49fb72f1-81e2-4892-b0a9-669c74ce95e4; EEA, *Waste Prevention Country Profile – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-prevention/countries/2023-waste-prevention-country-fact-sheets/romania_waste_prevention_2023.

([36]) EEA, *Waste Prevention Country Profile – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-prevention/countries/2023-waste-prevention-country-fact-sheets/romania_waste_prevention_2023.

([37]) EEA, *Waste Prevention Country Profile – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-prevention/countries/2023-waste-prevention-country-fact-sheets/romania_waste_prevention_2023.

([38]) EEA, *Waste Prevention Country Profile – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-prevention/countries/2023-waste-prevention-country-fact-sheets/romania_waste_prevention_2023.

([39]) EEA, *Waste Prevention Country Profile – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-prevention/countries/2023-waste-prevention-country-fact-sheets/romania_waste_prevention_2023.

([40]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([41]) As noted in the reply to the infringement case INFR(2024)2136.

([42]) Council of the European Union, 'Annex to the Council implementing decision amending the implementing decision of 29 October 2021 on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Romania', 2023/0428(NLE), 22 November 2023, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15833-2023-ADD-1/en/pdf.

advanced fee modulation is applied (i.e. fee modulation beyond the broad material categories, such as higher fees for difficult-to-recycle plastic types or combinations of materials). Romania does not apply packaging taxes except for those on plastic carrier bags. A deposit return system is mandatory for refillable glass bottles. At the end of 2023, a system was launched to cover non-refillable primary packaging made of glass, plastic and metal ([43]).

In order to incentivise sorting at the source, Romania has implemented a volume-based, pay-as-you-throw scheme in around two thirds of the administrative territorial units.

Policies to discourage landfilling or incineration

In 2019, Romania introduced a ban on the landfilling of recyclables and a landfill tax of RON 80/t (EUR 16/t) in 2020, which does not distinguish between residual and biodegradable waste. The landfill tax is considerably lower than the average landfill tax applied across Member States. Romania has no tax on waste incineration, as Romania has low incineration capacity ([44]).

Romania has to speed up its progress towards reaching the 2025 target for the preparing for reuse and recycling of 55 % for municipal waste, the 2025 target for recycling of 65 % for packaging waste, and the 2035 target to reduce landfill to 10 % of the generated municipal waste ([45]). Until 2022, Romania had not made progress on improving its preparing for reuse and recycling rate for municipal waste or on reducing the landfilling of municipal waste.

Romania is currently involved in four ongoing infringement procedures. Two concern its failure to close and rehabilitate landfills; for the first infringement proceedings Romania is paying penalties since the end of 2023. So far, Romania has paid EUR 4 816 200.00. Another infringement ([46]) concerns the obligation to treat waste before landfilling. Romania does not yet have a waste network infrastructure to treat all the waste generated in the country. Finally, another infringement, as mentioned, concerns Romania's failure to attain the 2020 recycling target for municipal waste, the 2021 recycling target for packaging waste and the 2020 collection target for WEEE ([47]).

In the 2022 Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), the Commission recommended that Romania ensure the closure and rehabilitation of substandard landfills, and take action against illegal landfills and fly-tipping; improve and extend the separate collection of waste, including biowaste; use economic instruments; set mandatory recycling targets for municipalities; and improve the functioning of EPR systems, in line with the general minimum requirements on EPR ([48]). Romania has made some progress on closing substandard or illegal landfills, with more than half of the landfills subject to infringement case INFR(2017)2024 already closed; to date, 29 landfills remain open, with Romania paying the consequent financial sanctions. Romania has made good progress on the implementation of the NWMP and waste prevention programme, although Romania still needs to revise/update the NWMP for the period after 2025. It has made some progress on improving and extending the separate collection of waste, and use of economic instruments. No clear assessment can be made of the development and running of implementation programmes for municipalities regarding organising separate collection and improving recycling performance. Finally, Romania has made good progress on improving the functioning of EPR.

Romania has not yet ratified the Hong Kong Convention on Ship Recycling.

2025 priority actions

In response to the results of the EEA's early warning assessment for Romania ([49]), the Commission issued a number of policy recommendations to improve Romania's waste management performance ([50]).

- Complete closure of non-compliant landfills.
- Improve separate collection at source e.g. through economic instruments, investing in infrastructure for separate collection, sorting and recycling, and increasing public awareness.

([43]) https://returosgr.ro/en; see also EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([44]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([45]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([46]) INFR(2020)2355, Judgment in case C-109/22

([47]) INFR(2024)2136

([48]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Romania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([49]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/romania/view.

([50]) Commission staff working document – The early warning report for Romania, SWD(2023) 199 final of 8 June 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=SWD:2023:199:FIN.

- Increase reuse of products and scale up waste recycling infrastructure associated with the higher steps of the waste hierarchy. In particular, improve collection and increase treatment capacity for bio-waste.
- Improve municipal waste preparation for reuse and recycling.
- Increase the recycling rates of packaging waste.
- Increase the collection and recycling rate of waste electronic and electric equipment (WEEE).
- Improve the system for managing the quality of data on packaging waste in order to build coherent and verifiable data sets.
- Invest in waste prevention measures to reduce the total amount of waste generated.
- Ensure the achievement of the 2025 waste targets, following the recommendations made by the Commission in the early warning reports where applicable.
- Ensure the achievement of the 2025 waste targets, following the recommendations made by the Commission in the Early Warning Reports where applicable.
- Ratify the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships.

2. Biodiversity and natural capital

Global and EU biodiversity frameworks

Biological diversity and healthy ecosystems are critical for our societies, underpin our economies and well-being and are essential for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Kunming–Montreal global biodiversity framework (GBF), adopted in December 2022, sets comprehensive and measurable targets to tackle biodiversity loss by 2030. To implement this global framework and integrate biodiversity considerations into national decision-making, the EU – as well as all Member States – had to submit national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), or to communicate national targets aligned with the global targets, by the end of 2024. The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (BDS) aims to put EU biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. It sets quantified targets intended to protect and restore nature and manage ecosystems in a sustainable manner, as well as measures to enable implementation and commitments to support global biodiversity. A BDS actions tracker ([51]) and a dashboard of indicators ([52]) provide information on implementation progress. The recently adopted EU Nature Restoration Regulation ([53]) is the first EU-wide, comprehensive law of its kind and a key instrument for the EU to deliver on the global biodiversity targets for 2030. It lays down an overarching objective at the EU level to put in place effective restoration measures on 20 % of EU land and sea by 2030 and for all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. To achieve this, it sets binding targets for Member States to restore and maintain ecosystems, as well as an effective implementation framework based on national restoration plans.

The BDS is the main instrument used by the EU to deliver on its obligation under the GBF. The Commission has submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) its report on GBF-aligned EU targets that stem from the BDS and from other policy instruments under the European Green Deal.

Member States' NBSAPs need to provide coherent frameworks for national delivery on the global and EU 2030 biodiversity targets. In line with the global obligations, NBSAPs should also include a biodiversity financing plan and a capacity-building plan, based on needs assessments, as well as an overview of the national indicators used to measure progress.
Romania has not yet submitted to the CBD an updated NBSAP or national targets following the adoption of the GBF.

The EU aims to allocate to biodiversity objectives at least 7.5 % of annual spending under the EU budget in 2024, rising to 10 % in 2026 and 2027. Details on the Romanian situation for biodiversity financing are in Chapter 5.

2025 priority action

- Submit to the CBD an updated NBSAP or national targets following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Nature protection and restoration – Natura 2000

Natura 2000 ([54]), the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world, is key to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Birds and Habitats Directives. These objectives are to ensure the long-term protection, conservation and survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats and the ecosystems they underpin. Key milestones towards meeting the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives are (i) the setting up of a complete and coherent Natura 2000 network; (ii) the designation of sites of community importance (SCIs) as special areas of conservation (SACs) ([55]); and (iii) effective management of all Natura 2000 sites through the setting of site-specific conservation objectives and measures.

Setting up a complete and coherent network of Natura 2000 sites

The setting up of a complete and coherent network of

([51]) EU Biodiversity Strategy Actions Tracker (https://dopa.jrc.ec.europa.eu/kcbd/actions-tracker/).
([52]) EU Biodiversity Strategy Dashboard (https://dopa.jrc.ec.europa.eu/kcbd/EUBDS2030-dashboard/?version=1).
([53]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024), http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj; see also the Commission web page on the law (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-law_en).
([54]) Natura 2000 comprises sites of community importance (SCIs), designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive, as well as special protection areas (SPAs), classified pursuant to the Birds Directive. Numbers of protected areas in Figure 9 do not add up to the total of SCIs plus SPAs, because some SCIs and SPAs overlap. An SAC is an SCI designated by a Member State.
([55]) SCIs are designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive, whereas SPAs are designated pursuant to the Birds Directive. Figures of coverage do not add up because some SCIs and SPAs overlap.

Natura 2000 sites is a cornerstone of the EU's international commitments, under the BDS and GBF, to legally protect a minimum of 30 % of its land area and 30 % of its sea area by 2030.

Meeting these commitments requires the full implementation of Article 3 of the Habitats Directive. The Natura 2000 network should represent a complete and coherent ecological network composed of sites hosting natural habitat types and species of community interest. Natura 2000 shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored to a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

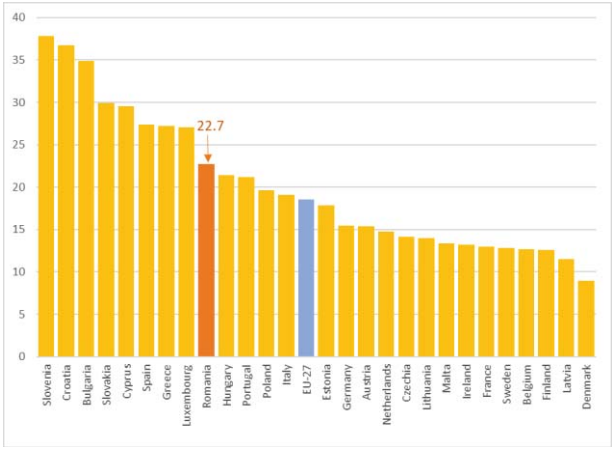
Romania hosts 87 habitat types ([56]) and 245 species ([57]) covered by the Habitats Directive. The country also hosts populations of 148 bird taxa listed in the Birds Directive Annex I ([58]).

As shown in Figure 9, in 2023, 22.7 % of the Romanian national land territory was covered by Natura 2000 sites (EU coverage: 18.6 %). Special protection areas (SPAs) classified under the Birds Directive covered 15.6 % (EU coverage: 12.8 %) and SCIs designated under the Habitats Directive covered 16.9 % of the territory (EU coverage: 14.3 %).

There are 606 Natura 2000 sites in Romania, including 9 marine sites. The latest assessment of the SCI part of the Natura 2000 network shows that there are a number of insufficiencies, meaning that Romania still has to complete its Natura 2000 network. An infringement procedure has been open since July 2019 ([59]).

Considering both areas covered by Natura 2000 and other nationally designated protected areas, Romania legally protects 23.5 % of its terrestrial areas (EU-27 coverage: 26.1 %) and 21.4 % of its marine areas (EU-27 coverage: 12.3 %) ([60]).

Figure 9: Natura 2000 terrestrial protected area coverage per Member State (%), 2023



Source: European Environment Agency (EEA), 'Natura 2000 Barometer', 2023 data, accessed March 2025, https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/dashboards/natura-2000-barometer.

Designating special areas of conservation and setting site-specific conservation objectives and measures

In order to ensure that SCIs contribute to the objectives of the Habitats Directive, Member States must designate them as SACs, setting site-specific conservation objectives based on the ecological needs of the species and habitats present on the sites. The site-specific conservation objectives must be defined in terms of attributes and targets that cover the properties of the feature of interest that are necessary to describe its condition as either favourable or unfavourable. These objectives must address the key pressures and threats present on the site. Article 6 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to establish and implement conservation measures for the realisation of the objectives of the site.

As Romania had not designated SCIs as SACs and had failed to set site-specific conservation objectives and measures, the Commission opened an infringement procedure in July 2020 in relation to 383 sites ([61]). In 2023 and 2024, Romania designated 213 SCIs as SACs as part

([56]) EEA, 'Number of habitats and species per Member State', Article 17 dashboard, Annex I total, 19 December 2019, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/general-information-on-habitats-and-species-article-17-national-summary-dashboards-archived

([57]) EEA, 'Number of habitats and species per Member State', Article 17 dashboard, 19 December 2019, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-17-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-habitats-and-species.

([58]) EEA, 'Number of bird species/populations per Member State', Article 12 dashboard, Annex I total, last updated 11 May 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-12-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-bird-species-populations. This counting only takes into account bird taxa for which information was requested.

([59]) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/INF_19_4251.

([60]) Eurostat dataset env_bio4, protected area percentage for 2022, accessed March 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env_bio4/default/table?lang=en.

([61]) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/INF_20_1212.

of the infringement proceedings and designated 9 further sites that were not covered by the procedure.

Out of a total of 606 Natura 2000 sites, 339 already have approved management plans, while 267 still lack them. Romania has committed to continuing the work of drafting management plans for the sites without management plans. There has been a significant delay in preparing and approving the management plans. There is also a need to update the existing and outdated management plans.

Cohesion policy funds for 2014–2020 financed, through the large infrastructure operational programme, the preparation of 243 management plans and the implementation of active conservation measures for 45 sites (covering 243 735 ha). Those projects, which were not finalised at that time, have been phased into the 2021–2027 programming period within the sustainable development programme. In addition, the programme is supporting the preparation of new management plans for Natura 2000 sites, the preparation of species action plans and the implementation of measures for the maintenance/improvement of the conservation status of species and habitats. Support is also provided by the Romanian RRP for updating management plans.

In August 2024, the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests announced the merger of the National Agency for Protected Natural Areas, the National Environmental Protection Agency and their subordinate bodies. The newly established National Agency for the Environment and Protected Areas (ANMAP) has assumed responsibility for managing most Natura 2000 sites, previously overseen by the National Agency for Protected Natural Areas, which had long faced capacity challenges. However, the agency only became operational on 3 April 2025. It will be necessary to build up its administrative capacity so that protected areas benefit from solid management.

2025 priority actions

- Complete the Natura 2000 site designation process.
- Ensure the effective implementation of Natura 2000 management plans and sufficient administrative capacity and financing for both Natura 2000 and the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation. Ensure the implementation of Prioritised Actions Framework 2021–2027 PAF.
- Enhance efforts to collect reliable data on the conservation status of habitats and species as well as their prevalence at the site level. In view of this, consider the creation of a body in charge of monitoring and reporting, to ensure that data are not provided only ad hoc on a contract basis.

Recovery of species

One objective set by the BDS is that, by 2030, there should be no further deterioration in conservation trends or the status of any protected species. The BDS also states that Member States should ensure that at least 30 % of species not currently in favourable conservation status achieve that status or show progress towards doing so (e.g. by exhibiting positive population dynamics or stable or increasing range and habitat size), by 2030. According to the European Environment Agency (EEA), based on reporting required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, a quarter of species in the EU were of good conservation status as of 2018 ([62]).

One of the primary objectives of the Habitats Directive is the maintenance of or restoration to favourable conservation status of all species of community interest. Moreover, the Birds Directive also aims to ensure that all wild birds in the EU enjoy a secure status. In order to achieve these objectives, it will be necessary to address key pressures and threats. The Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive lay down a framework of species protection rules and rules on the conservation of habitats and species in order to combat these threats.

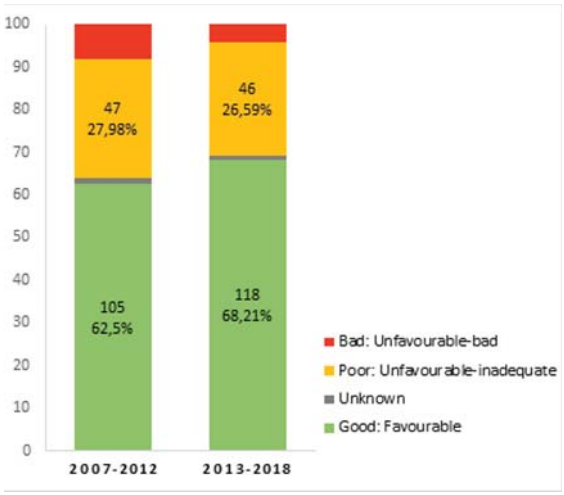
According to the report submitted by Romania on the conservation status of habitats and species covered by Article 17 of the Habitats Directive for 2013–2018, the conservation status of around 68 % of the habitats and 46 % of species was good. Regarding birds, about 19 % of the breeding species showed short-term increases or stable population trends (for wintering species, the figure was 15 %).

However, for the 2013-2018 report there were problems with the reported data, in particular uncertainties regarding the true extent and condition of ecosystems in Romania. Romania adopted a guidance document for monitoring birds of Community interest in 2021 and another for monitoring habitats of Community interest in 2023.

Under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, Member States are required to report on the conservation status of habitats and species every six years. The current reporting cycle, covering the years 2019 to 2024, is due for submission in July 2025. Figures 10 and 11 show the latest available conservation status data.

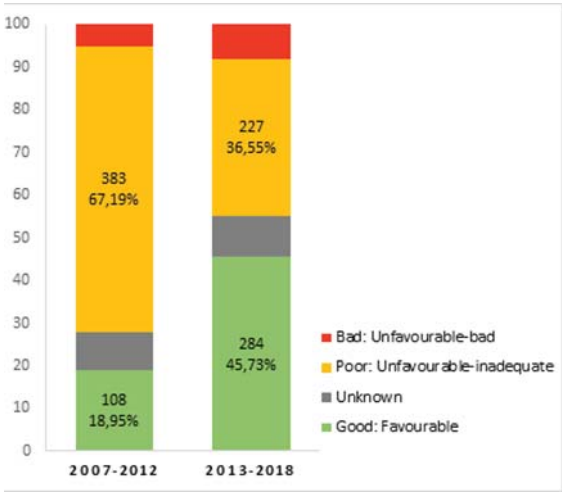
([62]) EEA, *State of Nature in the EU: Results from reporting under the Nature Directives 2013–2018*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-nature-in-the-eu-2020.

Figure 10: Assessments of conservation status of habitats for the 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 reporting periods



NB: The values shown for 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 are not necessarily directly comparable because changes in area conservation status in a Member State may result from changes to methods or use of better data, rather than reflecting genuine changes. The assessments were carried out at the level of biogeographical regions.
Source: EEA, 'Conservation status and trends of habitats and species', 19 December 2019, accessed February 2025, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/conservation-status-and-trends-article-17-national-summary-dashboards-archived.

Figure 11: Assessments of conservation status of species for the 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 reporting periods



NB: The values shown for 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 are not necessarily directly comparable because changes in area conservation status in a Member State may result from changes to methods or use of better data, rather than reflecting genuine changes.
Source: EEA, 'Conservation status and trends of habitats and species', 19 December 2019, accessed February 2025, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/conservation-status-and-trends-article-17-national-summary-dashboards-archived.

Agriculture is by far the greatest pressure on habitats. For species, the development, construction and use of infrastructure and the extraction and cultivation of living resources are the main pressures. Romania has made progress on adopting management plans for Natura 2000 sites, but nearly half of the plans are still missing. It also needs to make a lot of progress on effectively managing these sites.

The financial instrument for the environment (LIFE) programme has supported only a few nature conservation projects in recent years ([63]). The number is particularly low for a country like Romania. Nonetheless, the projects include the protection and restoration of forests in the Southern Carpathians (LIFE Carpathia) ([64]), the conservation of saproxylic beetles in the Eastern Carpathians (LIFE Rosalia) ([65]) and the development of a cooperative approach to the good management of Natura 2000 grasslands (LIFE TransilvaCooperation) ([66]).

Under the Romanian RRP, a reform was introduced in relation to the system of managing protected natural areas for the coherent and effective implementation of the BDS. The reform's objective is to operationalise the current framework for designating protected nature areas, in particular by establishing a mechanism for interlinking legislation specific to individual sectors that have an impact on biodiversity – namely, education, agriculture, forestry, hunting, tourism, spatial organisation, transport and energy.

In the 2022 EIR, Romania received a number of priority actions. While it has made some progress on the implementation of measures included in the prioritised action framework (PAF) and drafting site-specific conservation objectives, progress in most areas has been scant or non-existent. Therefore, most of the previous priority actions are still relevant.

Recovery of ecosystems

Agricultural ecosystems

The BDS works alongside the common agricultural policy (CAP) to support the transition to sustainable agriculture. The strategy has set five common agriculture-related targets for 2030, namely to:

— reduce by 50 % the overall use of – and risk from – chemical pesticides;

([63]) Council of the European Union, 'Annex to the Council implementing decision amending the implementing decision of 29 October 2021 on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Romania', 2023/0428(NLE), 22 November 2023, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15833-2023-ADD-1/en/pdf.
([64]) https://www.carpathia.org/ro/life-carpathia/.
([65]) https://liferosalia.ro/.
([66]) https://fundatia-adept.org/projects/life-transilvacooperation/.

— reduce by 50 % the use of more hazardous pesticides;
— reduce by 50 % losses of nutrients from fertilisers (which will result in a 20 % reduction in the use of fertilisers) while ensuring that there is no deterioration of soil fertility;
— restore at least 10 % of agricultural area to have high-diversity landscape features; and
— increase the area under organic farming to at least 25 %.

The "Vision for agriculture and food" ([67]), adopted by the European Commission in February 2025, sets a roadmap to an agri-food system that is attractive, competitive, sustainable and fair for current and future generations. To ensure a sustainable future for EU agriculture, it is crucial that these four priority areas are pursued together, and that public and private support are adequately targeted toward this objective.

The CAP and national CAP strategic plans are key instruments to facilitate and strengthen the efforts of European farmers to protect biodiversity and the environment at large. The Commission approved Member States' CAP strategic plans in 2022 for the 2023-2027 programming period. The CAP is the largest source of funding dedicated to supporting biodiversity and plays a significant role in implementing EU environmental policy. Strategic plans should continue to support the protection of soil, water, air quality and biodiversity.

While certain CAP result indicators focus on interventions favouring sustainable agriculture practices that regenerate ecosystems, the impact of these measures is difficult to assess. The uptake of eco-schemes is voluntary for farmers.

The utilised agricultural area in Romania increased from 13 733 140 ha in 2012 to 13 904 640 ha in 2013, and then decreased to 12 677 580 ha in 2022 ([68]).

Landscape features are small fragments of non-productive and typically – but not exclusively – semi-natural vegetation present in or adjacent to agricultural land. They provide ecosystem services and support for biodiversity. The indicator 'share of agricultural land covered with landscape features' is the ratio between the area covered by landscape features and the area covered by agricultural land. Based on the Land Use/Cover Area Frame Survey landscape features estimates, the share of agricultural land covered by non-productive landscape features in Romania is 3.4 %, below the EU average. At the EU level, landscape features cover 5.6 % of agricultural land.

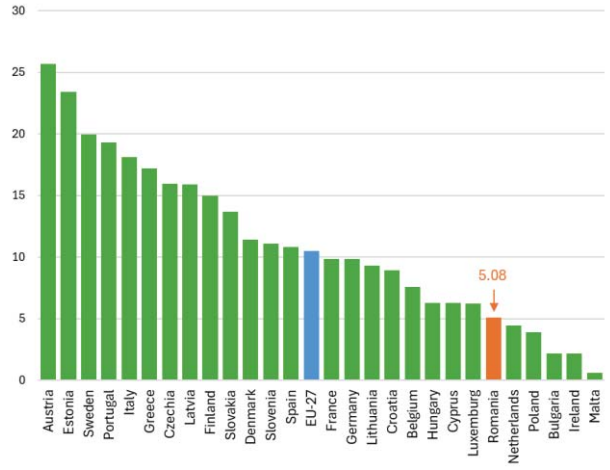
In 2024, the CAP basic regulations were amended ([69]) regarding, inter alia, the standards for good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) of land. These changes removed the obligation for farmers benefiting from CAP area-related support to have a minimum share of 3–4 % of non-productive areas or landscape features in their farm. The amended regulations do not remove the obligation under GAEC 8 to retain existing landscape features, but they do set out an obligation for Member States to establish and provide support for eco-schemes covering practices for the maintenance of non-productive areas, such as land lying fallow, and for the establishment of new landscape features on arable land.

The recently adopted Nature Restoration Regulation ([70]) focuses on the restoration of agricultural ecosystems and requires Member States to put in place measures that aim to achieve an increasing trend at the national level in at least two out of three indicators for agricultural ecosystems ([71]). One of these indicators is the 'share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features'.

Organic farming practices are highly beneficial to biodiversity. As shown in Figure 12, it is estimated that 5.08 % of Romania's land area is used for organic farming. This is the sixth lowest result in the EU and well below the EU average of 10.50 % ([72]). Romania is not sufficiently contributing to achieving the target of 25 % of the EU's agricultural land being used for organic farming by 2030.

([67]) https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/overview-vision-agriculture-food/vision-agriculture-and-food_en .
([68]) Eurostat, 'Utilised agricultural area by categories', tag00025, accessed 5 December 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tag00025/default/table?lang=en.
([69]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1468 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 amending Regulations (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards good agricultural and environmental condition standards, schemes for climate, environment and animal welfare, amendment of the CAP strategic plans, review of the CAP strategic plans and exemptions from controls and penalties (OJ L, 2024/1468, 24.5.2024), http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1468/oj.
([70]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024), http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj.
([71]) The three indicators are 'grassland butterfly index', 'stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils' and 'share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features'.
([72]) This is based on the latest available information from Eurostat, which is currently under review; European Commission, *Agriculture biologique au sein de l'Union européenne*, factsheet, Brussels, 2024, https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c67458ed-ec50-4762-ae68-341763ab93c2_fr?filename=factsheet-organic-farning_fr.pdf&prefLang=en.

Figure 12: Share of total utilised agricultural area occupied by organic farming per Member State (%), 2022



Source: Eurostat, 'Area under organic farming', sdg_02_40, accessed 5 December 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_02_40/default/table?lang=en.

Romania is the Member State with the highest number of farms (some 2.9 million farm holdings); 9 in every 10 farms (90.3 % or 2.6 million farms) were smaller than 5 ha, but the 0.9 % of farms of 50 ha or more in size farmed a little over half (54.0 %) of all the utilised agricultural area in the country. The combination of intensive agriculture by large farms and subsistence agriculture by small farms results in a relatively good overall situation in terms of GHG emissions, nitrate levels in groundwater and the state of biodiversity. Among the key challenges for the environment and land management are the dual pressures of the risk of abandonment of agricultural activities in some areas, and pressures from intensification in others. Large agricultural areas are affected by soil degradation phenomena (erosion, landslides and desertification), risks that are expected to intensify as the effects of climate change increase. The irrigation systems are mostly degraded and function poorly ([73]).

2025 priority actions

- Implement environmental eco-schemes and agri-environmental measures and practices to address the environmental needs of Romania.
- Implement and scale up the uptake of organic farming practices.

Soil ecosystems

Soil is an essential, finite and extremely fragile resource. Its increasing degradation poses a threat to EU food security and climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation.

The EU soil strategy, adopted in November 2021, aims to support soil protection, sustainable soil management and the restoration of degraded soils to achieve the Green Deal objectives as well as land degradation neutrality by 2030.

This entails:

— preventing further soil degradation;
— making sustainable soil management the new normal;
— taking action for ecosystem restoration.

The proposed directive on soil monitoring and resilience ([74]) aims to introduce the first comprehensive legislation on the protection of all soils in the EU. Should the directive be adopted, Member States will have to transpose it into national legislation and implement it, starting with putting in place the governance systems and a sound monitoring framework building on existing national soil monitoring frameworks. The objective of the proposed directive is to provide better and more comparable soil health data with the view of attaining healthy soils by 2050.

Degradation of soil ecosystems encompasses several aspects. The proposed directive requires Member States to assess soil health according to a set of common indicators and to define the necessary regeneration measures. The area of soil that is sealed is an important factor in monitoring land-use change and represents an important pressure on nature and biodiversity. Other soil issues related to land degradation are soil erosion, soil compaction, loss of soil organic carbon, soil contamination, soil salinisation and the presence in soil of nitrogen and phosphorus in excess. The impact assessment accompanying the proposal, which builds on the data available in the EU Soil Observatory, points to the following soil degradation issues in Romania ([75]).

([73]) Commission staff working document – Commission recommendations for Romania's CAP strategic plan, SWD(2020) 391 final of 18 December 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0391.

([74]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law), COM(2023) 416 final of 5 July 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023PC0416.

([75]) Commission staff working document – Impact assessment report: Annexes – Accompanying the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law), SWD(2023) 417 final of 5 July 2023,

The greatest contributor to Romania's unhealthy soils is loss of soil organic carbon in mineral soils ([76]), which affects 31 % of the national territory and 71 % of cropland and grassland areas. 22 % of the land experiences unsustainable soil erosion by water, wind, tillage and harvest, which represents 59 % of the total cropland area. 8 % of the national territory has a high or very high susceptibility to topsoil compaction.

Grasslands

Grasslands are among the most diverse ecosystems in the EU; they can contain as many as 80 different plant species per square metre and are home to a large variety of animals, ranging from small insects, birds and rodents to large herbivores. Grasslands are essential for agriculture and livestock herding. Natural grasslands also play an important role in storing carbon. However, changes in agricultural practices and land uses have caused grasslands to disappear at an alarming rate, making them one of Europe's most threatened ecosystems. Extensively managed grasslands include meadows, mountain pastures, dry calcareous grasslands and steppic grasslands..

Romania hosts 15 grassland types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive. These include some of the most biodiversity-rich grasslands in Europe and have been linked to traditional land stewardship and management. Changes over the past decades have endangered these grasslands, including ploughing up, overgrazing and abandonment. To prevent their continuing loss, it is imperative that Romania's grasslands are appropriately managed.

Wetlands/peatlands

Wetlands act as water sources and purifiers; they are the planet's greatest natural carbon stores and they are crucial to agriculture and fisheries. Peatlands are a special type of wetland dominated by peat-forming plants such as *Sphagnum* mosses. Nearly all peatlands in the EU are habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive. Drained peatlands under intensive agricultural use constitute only 3 % of the EU's utilised agricultural area. At the same time, they are responsible for 25 % of the GHG emissions from the EU's agricultural sector. Restoring peatlands brings multiple benefits, as peatlands improve water retention and quality, store carbon, reduce GHG emissions and increase biodiversity.

Among bogs, fens and mires, eight habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive are protected in Romania. Of these, only one has favourable conservation status. The modification of hydrological conditions, mixed-source pollution, drainage and land reclamation are some of the threats to these habitats.

Romania has worked on actions to restore some of the degraded peatlands, for instance the peatlands identified through projects "Strategies for the restoration of degraded peatland ecosystems in Romania (PeatRO)", funded under the RO02 Programme "Biodiversity and ecosystem services", by an EEA Grant 2009-2014, and the project "Restoration of degraded bogs and peatlands in the North-East 2 region of Romania (PeatRO3)", supported by an EEA and Norway Grant 2014-2021. Romania will consider these peatlands priorities for the designation of new SCIs.

2025 priority action

- Implement peatland conservation and restoration measures and include such measures and objectives in the national restoration plan.

Forest ecosystems

Forests are important carbon sinks, and conserving them is vital if the EU is to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The EU forest strategy for 2030, adopted in July 2021, is a plan of actions to promote the many services that forests provide. Its key objective is to ensure healthy, diverse and resilient EU forests that contribute significantly to the achievement of the EU's biodiversity and climate ambitions. About 27 % of the forest area in the EU is covered by habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive. Moreover, forests host several species protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives, including those for which there is a requirement to designate Natura 2000 sites and to protect breeding sites and resting places.

Several guidelines on forestry management were published in 2023. They covered biodiversity-friendly afforestation, reforestation and tree planting; closer-to-nature forest management; and defining, mapping, monitoring and strictly protecting primary and old-growth forests. Further guidance on payment schemes for ecosystems services has also been published.

In 2023, the Commission proposed a new forest monitoring law ([77]) that aims to create a comprehensive

https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ANNEXES SWD 2023 417 part4.pdf.

([76]) De Rosa, D., Ballabio, C., Lugato, E. et al., 'Soil organic carbon stocks in European croplands and grasslands: How much have we lost in the past decade?', *Global Change Biology*, Vol. 30, No 1, 2023, e16992, https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.16992.

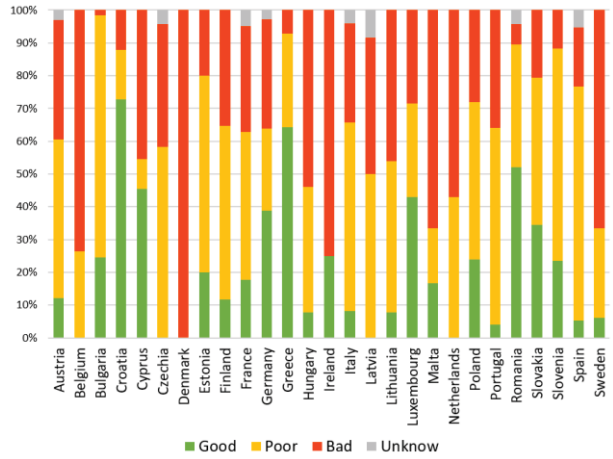
([77]) Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the

forest knowledge base, address information gaps and enable a better response to growing pressures on forests.

Assessments show that, of the 27 % of EU forest area protected under the Habitats Directive, less than 15 % is of favourable conservation status ([78]). The share of forested areas in the EU with a bad conservation status increased from 27 % in 2015 to 31 % in 2018.

In Romania, forests covered 30 % of the territory in 2020 ([79]) and more than 40 % of the assessments reveal a bad or poor status ([80]). Primary forests cover a total of 165 000 ha ([81]).

Figure 13: Conservation status of forests protected under the Habitats Directive per Member State (% of assessments), 2013–2018



Source: Commission staff working document – New EU forest strategy for 2030, SWD(2021) 652 final of 16 July 2021, p. 24, eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0652.

The EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) ([82]) prohibits the placing on the EU market of illegally harvested timber.

On 29 June 2023, the Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) ([83]) entered into force ([84]). The regulation seeks to guarantee that products in the EU that are made using any of seven listed commodities have no links to deforestation. The EUDR repeals the EUTR.

In the framework of its RRP, Romania has initiated some reforms in the forestry sector. It has adopted a national forest strategy for 2020–2030, some legally binding acts laying down the rules on afforestation and reforestation set out in the national forest strategy for 2020–2030, and acts amending and supplementing the existing legislation on forests with the aim of streamlining the legal framework, combating illegal logging and improving forest management. These will have to be checked in light of the new EUDR and the new Environmental Crime Directive (ECD).

In the 2022 EIR, Romania received priority actions to urgently take further action against illegal logging activities, to carry out efficient and appropriate checks to verify operators' compliance with the obligations imposed by the EUTR and to apply appropriate penalties and remedies for damage done to Natura 2000 sites. Although some progress has been registered since then, the priority actions are reiterated, as more needs to be done. The 2022 EIR also identified the need to adopt a national forest strategy and to ensure genuine protection of what should be 'protected forests' under EU and national law. It was mentioned that specific national guidelines are needed on managing protected forests and should offer guidance to all those involved in forest planning and management. Finally, the need to ensure that afforestation and reforestation projects are subject to the relevant environmental legislation and in line with the requirements of the national forest strategy was stressed. On this front, some progress could be observed thanks to the adoption of the national forest

Council on a monitoring framework for resilient European forests, COM(2023)728, 22 November 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2023)728&lang=en

([78]) EEA, *State of Nature in the EU: Results from reporting under the Nature Directives 2013–2018*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-nature-in-the-eu-2020.

([79]) Forest information system for Europe, 'Countries – FISE country factsheets', forest information system for Europe website, accessed 7 February 2025, https://forest.eea.europa.eu/countries.

([80]) Commission staff working document – Stakeholder consultation and evidence base, SWD(2021) 652 final of 16 July 2021, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/NL/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0652.

([81]) European Commission: Joint Research Centre, *Mapping and assessment of primary and old-growth forests in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, p. 13, https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC124671.

([82]) Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market (OJ L 295, 12.11.2010, p. 23), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32010R0995.

([83]) Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2023 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 (OJ L 150, 9.6.2023, p. 206), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023R1115&qid=1687867231461.

([84]) The law will apply to large and medium-sized companies starting on December 30, 2025, and to micro and small enterprises starting on June 30, 2026.

strategy and legal acts on afforestation and reforestation.

2025 priority action

- Take action against illegal logging activities and apply appropriate penalties and remedies for damage done to Natura 2000 sites.

Marine ecosystems

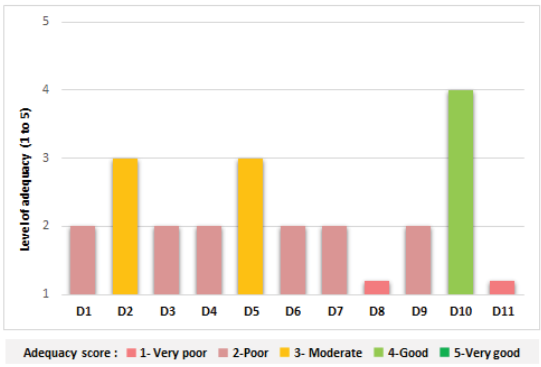
The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) requires Member States to achieve good environmental status (GES) for their marine waters. To that end, Member States must draw up marine strategies for their marine waters and cooperate with other Member States sharing the same marine region or subregion. These marine strategies comprise different steps to be developed and implemented over six-year cycles.

Since the 2022 EIR report, no additional data regarding Member States' set of GES characteristics for each descriptor in the MSFD have become available. Nevertheless, Member States had to report updates by 15 October 2024, and these are being assessed by the Commission. In the context of this round of reporting, in accordance with the MSFD and the Commission GES decision ([85]), Member States must include as part of their set of GES characteristics any threshold values for the descriptors in the MSFD that may have been established in cooperation with other Member States at the EU or regional level ([86]). Romania reported the Article 8, 9 and 10 data required by Article 17 of the MSFD, which are now under the assessment of the Commission.

The Commission assessed the updated monitoring programme reported by Member States in 2020 ([87]). At that time their updates on the elements, features and parameters identified monitoring gaps. The Commission recommended that Member States should prioritise work to address those gaps at all levels of implementation of the MSFD.

Member States also reported their updated programmes of measures, which are required under Article 13 of the MSFD and which must be updated every six years. The Commission has assessed Member States' programmes of measures.

Figure 14: Level of adequacy of Romania's updated programme of measures under Article 13 of the MSFD (2022 reporting exercise)



Source: Technical assessment carried out by the European Commission, pursuant to Article 16 of the MSFD, based on the data reported by Romania in March and April 2023.

The assessment of Romania's updated programme of measures reveals persisting gaps for most descriptors, although some progress has been made in some areas.

While measures on litter (D10) address input from activities like fisheries, tourism and shipping, they do not include riverine litter, which is still a prominent pressure.

For food webs (D4), sea-floor integrity (D6) and hydrographical changes (D7), most measures focus on monitoring activities rather than direct actions to tackle important pressures.

For non-indigenous species (D2), eutrophication (D5) and contaminants (D8), despite the gap analysis showing that environmental objectives had not been reached, no new MSFD-specific measures were developed for these descriptors.

Prevention and management of invasive alien species

Invasive alien species (IAS) are a major cause of biodiversity loss in the EU. Besides inflicting direct and indirect damage on nature and the economy, some IAS also carry and spread infectious diseases, posing a threat to humans and wildlife. Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 (the IAS Regulation) aims to prevent, minimise and mitigate the adverse impacts of IAS on biodiversity. It

([85]) Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 of 17 May 2017 laying down criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters and specifications and standardised methods for monitoring and assessment, and repealing Decision 2010/477/EU (OJ L 125, 18.5.2017, p. 43), http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2017/848/oj.

([86]) Communication from the Commission of 11 March 2024 – Commission notice on the threshold values set under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC) and Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 (OJ C, C/2024/2078, 11.3.2024), http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/2078/oj.

([87]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/C_2023_2203_F1_COMMUNICATION_FROM_COMMISSION_EN_V5_P1_2532109.PDF.

focuses action on a list of IAS of EU concern (the 'Union list'), which is regularly updated ([88]).

The third update of the Union list entered into force on 2 August 2022 ([89]). The fourth update is in preparation.

The IAS Regulation ([90]) currently lists 88 species subject to restrictions on keeping, importing, selling, breeding, growing and releasing into the environment. Member States are required to take measures to (i) prevent the introduction of IAS, (ii) ensure early detection and rapid eradication of IAS and (iii) manage species that are already widespread on their territory.

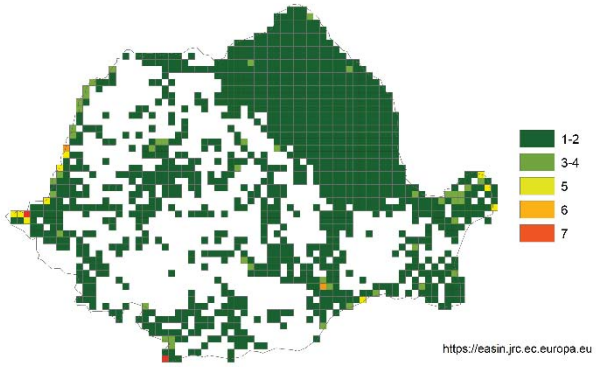
This aligns with target 6 of the GBF to reduce the introduction of IAS by at least 50 % by 2030 and minimise their impact.

Preventing the introduction and spread of IAS, and managing them, including through eradication and control, can result in a substantial cost saving. Studies estimate that the total cost of IAS in Europe (damages and management) amounted to EUR 116.61 billion between 1960 and 2020 ([91]). More recent studies have put this cost at USD 28 billion per year in the EU, increasing to USD 148.2 billion by 2040 ([92]), and at USD 423 billion annually at the global level ([93]).

There are 22 IAS of Union Concern in Romania according to data collected and reported in the framework of a project supported by the Large Infrastructure Operational Programme under EU cohesion policy, which relates to the adequate management of invasive species in Romania. Some IAS, previously reported for Romania have not been confirmed during the field research (e.g. Cabomba caroliniana, Myriophyllum aquaticum).

Romania has not yet ratified the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments of 2004 (BWM Convention).

Figure 15: Number of IAS of EU concern, based on available georeferenced information for Romania, 2024



In the 2022 EIR, Romania received a priority action on IAS, stressing the need to draw up and implement an action plan or a set of action plans to fulfil the requirements of the IAS Regulation.

Romania has taken appropriate measures to comply with Article 13 of the IAS Regulation related to action plans on the pathways of IAS.

2025 priority action

- Step up implementation of the IAS Regulation, including with regard to enforcement and capacity of inspection authorities.
- Ratify the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments of 2004 (BWM Convention).

([88]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 of 13 July 2016 adopting a list of invasive alien species of Union concern pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 189, 14.7.2016, p. 4), as amended by Commission Implementing Regulations (EU) 2017/1263, (EU) 2019/1262 and (EU) 2022/1203, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02016R1141-20220802&from=EN.

([89]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1203 of 12 July 2022 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 to update the list of invasive alien species of Union concern (OJ L 186, 13.7.2022, p. 10), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R1203.

([90]) Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35).

([91]) Haubrock, P. J., Turbelin, A. J., Cuthbert, R. N. et al., 'Economic costs of invasive alien species across Europe', *NeoBiota*, Vol. 63, 2021, pp. 153–190.

([92]) Henry, M., Leung, B., Cuthbert, R. N. et al., 'Unveiling the hidden economic toll of biological invasions in the European Union', *Environmental Sciences Europe*, Vol. 35, No 1, 2023, p. 43.

([93]) IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), *Summary for Policymakers – Invasive alien species assessment*, Bonn, 2023, https://www.ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/summary-policymakers-invasive-alien-species-assessment.

Ecosystem assessment and accounting

The BDS calls on Member States to better integrate biodiversity considerations into public and business decision-making at all levels and to develop natural capital accounting.

Similarly, target 14 of the GBF ([94]) aims to ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policy and planning and, as appropriate, national accounting. This requires effective and coherent biodiversity observation and reporting on ecosystem condition in the EU ([95]).

The amended Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts ([96]) introduces new requirements for Member States to report on the condition of ecosystems including urban ecosystems, croplands, grasslands, forest and woodlands, coastal beaches, dunes and wetlands. Data reported by the Member States will feed into the second European ecosystem assessment, due in 2027, and can also be used to support policy decisions.

An ecosystem assessment is an analysis of the condition of ecosystems and the pressures acting on them, as well as the benefits that they provide to people, either directly or indirectly through the economy.

An increasing number of platforms, networks and communities of practice involve businesses in protecting biodiversity, including the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform ([97]). These platforms and communities are key tools for promoting and facilitating natural capital assessments among businesses and financial services providers.

The project 'Demonstrating and promoting natural values to support decision-making in Romania' implements the ecosystem assessment process in the country. Public policy analysis aims to assess the level of integration of the concept of ecosystems and ecosystem services into public policy for 2014–2020 in order to develop recommendations on integrating the results of mapping and biophysical assessments into decision-making processes. An inventory of the responsible institutions, an institutional map and a questionnaire aiming to identify institutional needs related to the ecosystem assessment process have been created.

Romania's major achievements in this area have been the mapping of ecosystems at the national level, achieving 'Ecosystems classification in Romania EUNICE 3' (intermediate version) and the development of tools for updating this classification (land field guide on identifying ecosystems, methodological guide on assessing ecosystem services). The selection of methods for assessing the ecosystem services based on the matrix of indicators and on the comparative analysis of existing methods is also a major achievement.

Natural capital assessments help private businesses to better understand both the negative and positive impacts that they have on nature, and to appreciate how nature contributes to their success. Such understanding contributes to the implementation of the EU's BDS.

An increasing number of platforms, networks and communities of practice involve businesses in protecting biodiversity, including the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform ([98]). These platforms and communities are key tools for promoting and facilitating natural capital assessments among businesses and financial services providers.

There is no Romanian business and biodiversity network member of the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform.

In 2022, Romania received a priority action on supporting the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services, and ecosystem accounting development, as well as on supporting the development of national business and biodiversity platforms. While there has been progress on the mapping of ecosystems at national level and on assessing the ecosystem services, there is no progress on the creation of a Romanian business and biodiversity network member of the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform.

([94]) Decision 15/4 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity: Kunming–Montreal global biodiversity framework (https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf).

([95]) European Commission: Joint Research Centre and EEA, *EU Ecosystem Assessment – Summary for policymakers*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/81ff1498-b91d-11eb-8aca-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

([96]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 as regards introducing new environmental economic accounts modules, COM(2022) 329 final of 11 July 2022, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:329:FIN.

([97]) The EU Business & Biodiversity Platform (https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/business-and-biodiversity_en) aims to promote the business case for biodiversity to businesses and financial institutions through workshops, seminars, reports and a cross-media communication strategy.

([98]) The EU Business & Biodiversity Platform (https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/business-and-biodiversity_en) aims to promote the business case for biodiversity to businesses and financial institutions through workshops, seminars, reports and a cross-media communication strategy.

2025 priority action

- Support the development of the national business and biodiversity network.

3. Zero pollution

Clean air

EU clean air policies and legislation have successfully reduced emissions of key air pollutants and significantly improved air quality, which is now moving towards the levels recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). This has resulted in clear health benefits and reduced adverse impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity. However, to achieve the WHO-recommended levels, more efforts are needed, including full compliance with EU legislation. To guide these efforts, the EU zero pollution action plan sets targets for 2030 relative to 2005. These are to reduce the health impacts of air pollution by 55 % and to reduce the EU ecosystems threatened by air pollution by 25 %.

The EU has developed a comprehensive suite of air quality policies ([99]). These set health-based EU air quality standards ([100]) and stipulate Member States' national emission reduction commitments ([101]) for several air pollutants.

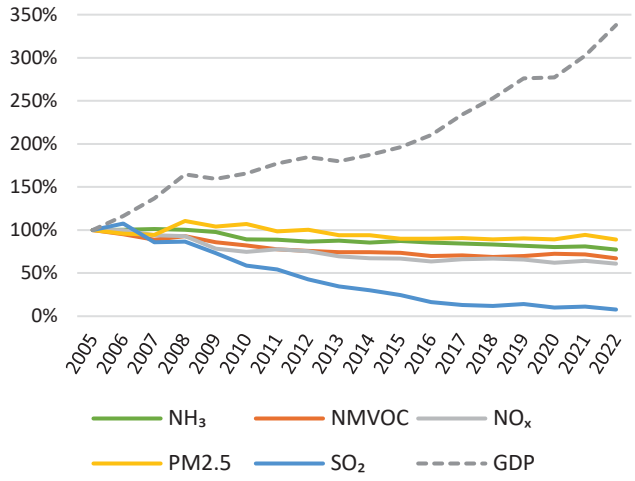
The air quality in Romania continues to give cause for concern in some parts of its territory.

The latest available annual estimates (for 2022) by the EEA ([102]) for Romania attribute 17 900 deaths each year (or 185 100 years of life lost (YLL)) to fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) ([103]), 3 600 deaths each year (or 36 900 YLL) to nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) ([104]) and 2 800 deaths each year (or 28 700 YLL) to ozone ([105]).

The emissions of several air pollutants have decreased significantly in Romania since 2005, while GDP growth has continued (see Figure 17). According to the inventories submitted under Article 10(2) of the National Emission Reduction Commitments Directive (NECD) ([106]) in 2024, Romania has met its emission reduction commitments for 2020–2029 for air pollutants non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and ammonia (NH_3), and has not met them for nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and $PM_{2.5}$. According to the latest projections submitted under Article 10(2) of the NECD, Romania is projected to meet its emission reduction commitments for 2030 onwards for NO_x, NMVOC, SO_2, NH_3 and $PM_{2.5}$.

Romania submitted its first national air pollution control programme (NAPCP) on 15 February 2023, after the Commission referred Romania to the Court of Justice of the European Union ([107]).

Figure 16: Emission trends of main pollutants / GDP in Romania (%), 2005–2022



([99]) European Commission, 'Air', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air_en.

([100]) European Commission, 'EU air quality standards', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/air-quality/eu-air-quality-standards_en.

([101]) European Commission, 'Reducing emissions of air pollutants', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants_en.

([102]) EEA, *Harm to human health from air pollution in Europe: Burden of disease 2024*, briefing No 21/2024, Copenhagen, 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/harm-to-human-health-from-air-pollution-2024.

([103]) Particulate matter (PM) is a mixture of aerosol particles (solid and liquid) covering a wide range of sizes and chemical compositions. PM_{10} refers to particles with a diameter of 10 µm or less. $PM_{2.5}$ refers to particles with a diameter of 2.5 µm or less. PM is emitted from many human sources, including combustion.

([104]) Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) here pertains to a group of gases called NO_x, which also comprises nitrogen monoxide (NO). NO_x is emitted during fuel combustion – for example, from industrial facilities and the road transport sector.

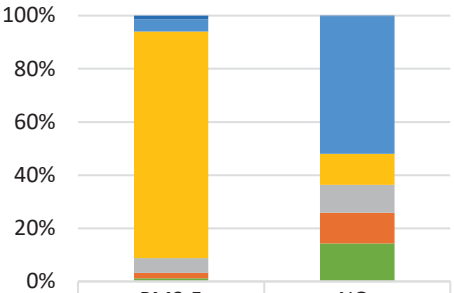
([105]) Low-level ozone is produced by photochemical action on pollution. This year, for the first time, the impact of long-term exposure to ozone has also been taken into account. In previous analysis by the EEA, only the impact of short-term exposure was estimated.

([106]) Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC (OJ L 344, 17.12.2016, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2016.344.01.0001.01.ENG.

([107]) European Commission, 'Air quality: Commission decides to refer Romania to the Court of Justice of the European Union for failure to comply with EU clean air and industrial emissions legislation', European Commission website, 2 December 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6264.

Source: EEA, 'National air pollutant emissions data viewer 2005–2022', 25 June 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution/national-air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-2005-2022.

Figure 17: $PM_{2.5}$ and NO_x emissions by sector in Romania (%), 2022



	PM2.5	NO_x
Waste	1,38%	0,22%
Transport	4,62%	51,79%
Residential, commercial & institutional	85,27%	11,59%
Manufacturing and extractive industry	5,53%	10,56%
Energy supply	2,02%	11,54%
Agriculture	1,19%	14,29%

Source: EEA, 'National air pollutant emissions data viewer 2005–2022', 25 June 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution/national-air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-2005-2022.

In 2023, exceedances above the limit values set by the Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) ([108]) were registered for NO_2 in one air quality zone ([109]) and for PM_{10} in four air quality zones ([110]) in Romania ([111]).

Persistent breaches of air quality requirements, which have severe negative effects on health and the environment, are being followed up by the European Commission through infringement procedures covering all Member States concerned, including Romania for exceedances of PM_{10} and NO_2 limit values. The Court of Justice of the European Union delivered a judgement on exceedances of PM_{10} limit values in 2020 ([112]), confirming the non-compliance of Romania with Directive 2008/50/EC. The aim is for appropriate measures to be put in place to bring all air quality zones into compliance. To date, Romania has still not adopted an air quality plan for Bucharest. Furthermore, an infringement procedure is ongoing for significant shortcomings in the air quality monitoring system of Romania. Infringement procedures have also been opened for Member States not meeting the emission reduction commitments for 2020–2029; this includes a procedure for Romania for NO_x and $PM_{2.5}$.

In the 2021–2027 programming period, cohesion policy funds, through the sustainable development programme, provide financing to measures aiming to equip the national network for monitoring air quality with new equipment by replacing or upgrading existing equipment (including relocation /new stations), also ensuring complementarity with the investments from the previous programming period. Hence, Romania is advised to make the most of the available support. For more information on financing, see Chapter 5.

In the 2022 EIR, Romania received three priority actions. The first priority action was to urgently adopt the NAPCP. Romania has fulfilled this, as the first NAPCP was adopted on 15 February 2023. However, the latest reported data show continued non-compliance with the 2020–2029 emission reduction commitments for NO_x and $PM_{2.5}$. The second priority action was to ensure full compliance with EU air quality standards and maintain downward emission trends. Based on the latest data, Romania has made some progress in this regard. Since 2019, downward emission trends have been reported for all main pollutants. However, exceedances above the limit values remain for NO_2 and PM_{10}, which require further action. The third priority action received by Romania was to improve its air quality monitoring network. Romania has made some progress, as some monitoring stations have been added to the network; however, gaps remain concerning the appropriate number and type of the air quality sampling points and the data quality objectives.

2025 priority actions

- As part of the NAPCP, take actions towards reducing emissions of air pollutants.
- Ensure full compliance with the current AAQD standards, also in light of future stricter requirements under the revised AAQD.
- Upgrade and improve the air quality monitoring network, and ensure timely reporting of air quality data.

Industrial emissions

The main objectives of EU policy on industrial emissions are to:

(i) protect air, water and soil and to prevent harmful effects on human health and the environment;

([108]) Directive 2008/50/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (OJ L 152, 11.6.2008, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008L0050.

([109]) Specifically, it affects Bucharest.

([110]) The four are Iași, Gorj, Constanța and Ilfov.

([111]) EEA, Eionet Central Data Repository (https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/).

([112]) INFR(2009)2296, Judgment in case C-638/18

(ii) prevent and manage waste;
(iii) improve energy and resource efficiency;
(iv) clean up contaminated sites.

The cornerstone of the policy is the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), which was revised in 2024 ([113]). The revision improves the directive's contribution to the zero pollution objective. It has a strong focus on innovation, and builds solid links between depollution, decarbonisation and circularity, making it a key regulatory tool to accompany the green transformation of EU industry by 2050.

The overview of industrial activities regulated by the IED below is based on data reported to the EU Registry in 2022 ([114]).

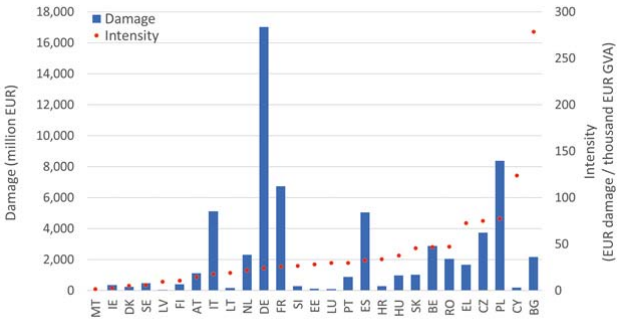
In Romania, around 1 100 industrial installations ([115]) are required to have a permit based on the IED.

The industrial sector in Romania with the most IED installations in 2022 was the sector for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs (48 %), followed by the waste management sector, including landfills (14 %), the chemical sector (8 %) and the metals sector (8 %).

Figure 19 shows the damage to health and the environment due to the main industrial air pollutants. As this depends on, among other factors, the size of the industrial sector in each Member State, the figure also shows the ratio between the damage and the industrial activity (expressed in gross value added (GVA)), which gives an indication of the emissions 'intensity'. Although Romania has the 10th highest damage in the EU, it comes 6th for emissions intensity, above the EU average of EUR 27.5/EUR 1 000 GVA. The main industrial contributors to emissions to air ([116]) are the energy sector and the mineral industry for NO_X emissions, the waste management and chemical sector for dust emissions, and the energy sector, metals sector and mineral sector for SO_2 and heavy metals.

The EEA has identified Liberty Galati SA, the installation for the production of iron and steel in Galati, Romania, as one of the 30 industrial facilities in Europe with the highest absolute damage costs from emissions of the main air pollutants and GHG over the 10-year period covering 2012–2021.

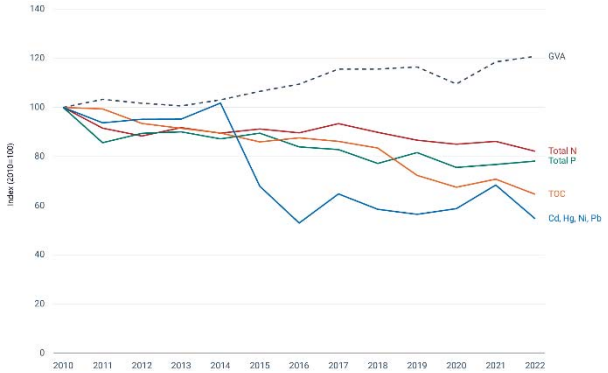
Figure 18: Industrial air pollution damage and intensity per Member State, 2021



Source: EEA, 'Industrial pollution intensity indicators – EU large industry air pollution damage costs intensity', European Industrial Emissions Portal, 2024, https://industry.eea.europa.eu/analyse/industrial-emissions-indicator.

Overall, the industrial emissions to water in the EU have decreased over time for all the main pollutants. On average in the EU, they appear to be decoupled from the industrial activity, which has increased over the same period (expressed in GVA), as shown in Figure 20.

Figure 19: Industrial releases of pollutants to water and industrial activity in the EU-27



NB: Cd, cadmium; Hg, mercury; Ni, nickel; Pb, lead; TOC, total organic carbon; total N, total nitrogen; total P, total phosphorous.

Source: EEA, 'Industrial pollutant releases to water in Europe', 30 May 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/industrial-pollutant-releases-to-water.

Concerning Romania in particular, Figure 20 shows the industrial emissions of heavy metals to water, taking into account the human toxicity of each metal, as well as the emissions intensity, based on its ratio with industrial

([113]) Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial and livestock rearing emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) (OJ L 334, 17.12.2010, p. 17), as amended by Directive (EU) 2024/1785 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02010L0075-20240804&qid=1725983863299.

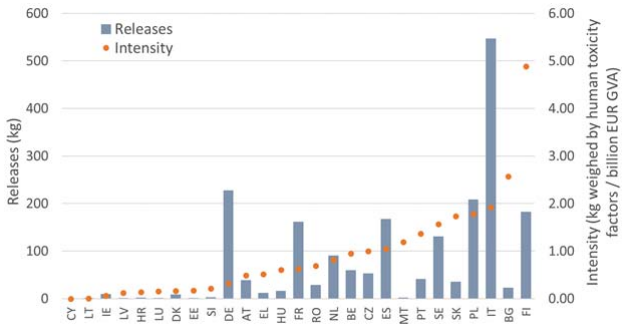
([114]) EEA, European Industrial Emissions Portal, https://industry.eea.europa.eu/, 2022 being the baseline year for all reports.

([115]) Note that 2022 is used as the baseline for all Member States.

([116]) European Environment Agency, LRTAP, Air pollutant emissions data viewer (Gothenburg Protocol, LRTAP Convention) 1990-2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution/air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-1990-2022.

activity (expressed in GVA). Romania has the 14th highest emissions of heavy metals to water and is in 13th position for emissions intensity (below the EU average of 0.864 kg/EUR 1 billion GVA).

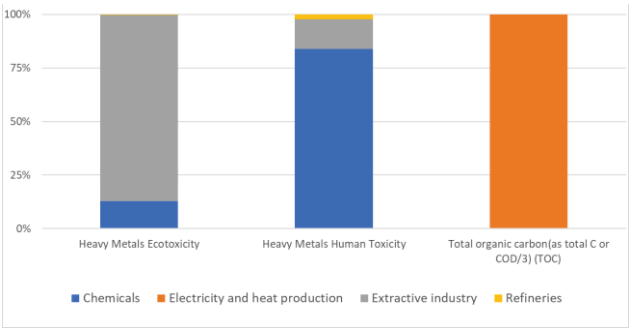
Figure 20: Industrial releases and intensity of heavy metals to water per Member State, 2022



Source: EEA, 'Industrial pollution intensity indicators – EU large industry water pollution intensity', European Industrial Emissions Portal, 2024, https://industry.eea.europa.eu/analyse/industrial-emissions-indicator.

As shown in Figure 21, the main industrial contributors to emissions to water in Romania are the mineral extractive industry for heavy metals, refineries for phosphorus and chemicals for total organic carbon.

Figure 21: Relative releases to water from industry in Romania (%), 2022



Source: EEA, 'Industrial reporting under the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU and European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 – ver. 12.0 Sep. 2024 (tabular data)', EEA Geospatial Data Catalogue, 13 September 2024, https://doi.org/10.2909/cf5e54c1-be99-4426-bcad-baa26c4f27a0.

IED provisions on public information and participation require Member States to adopt transposition legislation enabling members of the public to have access to relevant information and participate in the approval process for potentially polluting installations. Thus, the public and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), alongside competent authorities, play a role in ensuring compliance of these permits with EU legislation. The IED contains mandatory requirements on environmental inspections, requiring a site visit to take place at least every 1–3 years, using risk-based criteria. In addition, IED enforcement provisions require Member States to determine effective, proportionate, and dissuasive penalties applicable to infringements of IED-based national provisions. In the revised directive, the provisions set that worst infringements can be sanctioned by fines of at least 3% of the annual EU turnover of the legal person. The revised IED also introduces a right to compensation for people whose health has been harmed by such infringements.

The development of best available techniques (BATs), BAT reference documents and BAT conclusions ensures effective collaboration between stakeholders and enables better implementation of the IED.

Since the 2022 EIR, the Commission has adopted BAT conclusions on (i) ferrous metal processing, (ii) the textiles industry, (iii) common waste gas management and treatment systems in the chemical sector and (iv) smitheries and foundries.

The Commission relies on the efforts of national competent authorities to implement the legally binding BAT conclusions and associated BAT emission levels specified in environmental permits. This should result in considerable and continuous reductions in pollution.

In 2022, Romania received priority actions to review permits to ensure that they comply with the newly adopted BAT conclusions and to continue addressing pollution from the energy sector. Considering the data reported in the Industrial Emission Portal, some progress is evident regarding the energy sector. The level of NO_x in the air has reduced by 30 % since 2017, despite total organic carbon releases to water from waste management increasing by 10 % since 2017.

2025 priority actions

- Reduce industrial air pollution damage and intensity.
- Reduce industrial releases to water and their intensity.
- Engage with industry and environmental NGOs to ensure proper contribution to and implementation of BAT conclusions and ensure timely updates to permits following the publication of BAT conclusions.
- Ensure effective public participation and access to justice in relation to the IED.

Major industrial accidents prevention – Seveso

The main objectives of EU policy on the prevention of major industrial accidents are to:

(i) control major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, especially chemicals;
(ii) limit the consequences of such accidents for human health and the environment;
(iii) continuously improve the prevention of, preparedness for and response to major accidents.

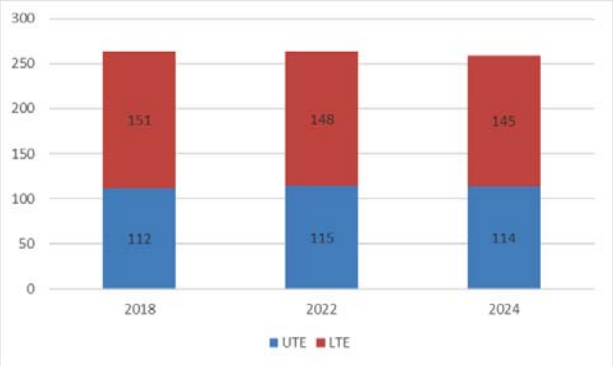
The cornerstone of the policy is Directive 2012/18/EU (the

Seveso III Directive) ([117]).

The overview below of industrial plants regulated by the Seveso III Directive ('Seveso establishments') is based on data reported on eSPIRS (e-Seveso Plants Information Retrieval System) for 2022–2024) ([118]) and the report by Romania on the implementation of the Seveso III Directive for 2019–2022 ([119]).

In 2024, out of the 259 Seveso establishments in Romania, 145 are categorised as lower-tier establishments and 114 as upper-tier establishments (UTEs), based on the quantity of hazardous substances likely to be present. UTEs are subject to more stringent requirements. The change in the number of Seveso establishments is presented in Figure 23.

Figure 22: Number of Seveso establishments in Romania, 2018, 2022 and 2024



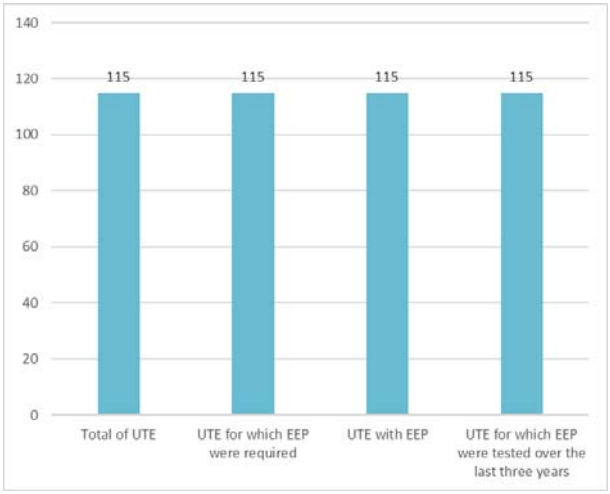
NB: LTE, lower-tier establishment.

Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

Member States are required to draw up external emergency plans (EEPs). These EEPs are essential to allow proper preparation and effective implementation of the necessary actions to protect the environment and the population should a major industrial accident occur.

According to Romania, in 2018, an EEP was required for all 115 UTEs. At that time, all of them had been established and tested over the last three years. The summary is shown in Figure 24.

Figure 23: Situation regarding EEPs in Romania, 2018



Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

The information for the public referred to in Annex V to the Seveso III Directive – especially about how the public concerned will be warned if there is a major accident, the appropriate behaviour in the event of a major accident, and the date of the last site visit – is permanently available for all UTEs in Romania.

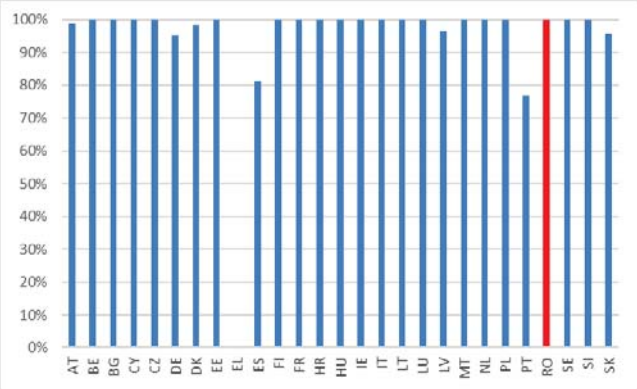
The shares of UTEs for which information on safety measures and requisite behaviours was actively made available to the public in 2022 in the EU-27 are presented in Figure 25. This provision on knowledge is an important provision of the Seveso III Directive, as awareness by the public of this information may ameliorate the consequences of a major industrial accident.

([117]) Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directive 96/82/EC (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2012/18/oj.

([118]) https://espirs.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/espirs/content; data extracted in September 2024.

([119]) As provided for by Article 21(2) of the Seveso III Directive.

Figure 24: Share of UTEs for which information on safety measures and requisite behaviours was actively made available to the public per Member State (%), 2022



NB: No data available for Greece.

Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

In 2022, Romania received a priority action to strengthen control and enforcement to ensure compliance with the Seveso III Directive rules, especially those on information for the public. Substantial progress has been made in that regard.

Mercury Regulation

The Mercury Regulation establishes measures and conditions concerning the use and storage of and trade in mercury, mercury compounds and mixtures of mercury, the manufacture and use of and trade in mercury-added products and the management of mercury waste, in order to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The revision of the Mercury Regulation adopted in 2024 sets out rules to address the last intentional uses of mercury in the EU by phasing out the use of dental amalgam by 1 January 2025 except when deemed strictly necessary by the dental practitioner based on the specific medical needs of the patient, and prohibiting the manufacture and export of additional mercury-containing lamps from 1 January 2026 or 1 January 2027 (depending on the lamp category).

Measures should have been put in place in Romania to ensure a socially and economically sound phase-out, including an adequate reimbursement of the alternatives to dental amalgam through the health insurance scheme and the training of dental practitioners. The Commission is monitoring whether the phase-out has taken place under the terms and conditions of the regulation. Romania will also need to ensure that the manufacture and export of mercury-containing lamps are prohibited by the deadlines set out in the Mercury Regulation.

Noise

The Environmental Noise Directive ([120]) requires a common approach to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects of noise. The designated authorities are responsible for making and approving noise maps and action plans for agglomerations, major roads, major railways and major airports. Member States decide on noise limits that are not set at the EU level. Nevertheless, the zero pollution action plan sets as a 2030 target a 30 % reduction compared with 2017 in the share of people chronically disturbed by transport noise.

Excessive noise from aircraft, railways and roads is one of the main causes of environmental health-related issues in the EU. It can cause ischaemic heart disease, stroke, interrupted sleep, cognitive impairment and stress ([121]).

In Romania, environmental noise is estimated to cause at least around 1 900 cases of ischaemic heart disease annually ([122]) and some 180 000 people to suffer from disturbed sleep ([123]).

([120]) Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise – Declaration by the Commission in the Conciliation Committee on the directive relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise (OJ L 189, 18.7.2002, p. 12), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32002L0049.

([121]) WHO *Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region*, Copenhagen, 2018, https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289053563.

([122]) These figures are an estimation by the EEA based on (i) the data reported by Member States on noise exposure covered by Directive 2002/49/EC for the round of noise mapping of 2022; (ii) European Topic Centre on Air Pollution, Transport, Noise and Industrial Pollution (ETC/ATNI), *Noise Indicators under the Environmental Noise Directive 2021: Methodology for estimating missing data*, Eionet report ETC/ATNI No 2021/06, Kjeller, 2021; and (iii) the methodology for health impact calculations in European Topic Centre on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation (ETC/ACM), *Implications of environmental noise on health and wellbeing in Europe*, Eionet report ETC/ACM No 2018/10, Bilthoven, 2018, https://www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-atni/products/etc-atni-reports/eionet_rep_etcacm_2018_10_healthimplicationsnoise.

([123]) More information on the adverse health effects of noise pollution is available at: https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/human/noise/noise-2

Based on the latest set of information analysed, Romania has completed noise mapping for airports and major railways, while noise mapping for major roads and agglomerations remains incomplete.

Since Romania failed to report to the Commission all relevant information on the strategic noise maps, including the noise exposure of the population, the European Commission decided to open an infringement procedure against Romania ([124]).

Action plans for noise management for agglomerations, roads, railways and airports must be updated and submitted to the Commission every five years. The deadline for reporting noise action plans under the most recent reporting cycle was 18 January 2025; these plans have not been assessed yet.

2025 priority actions

- Complete noise mapping.
- Complete and implement action plans on noise management.

Water quality and management

EU legislation and policy requires that the impact of pressures on transitional waters, coastal waters and fresh water (including surface waters and groundwater) be significantly reduced. Achieving, maintaining or enhancing a good status of waterbodies as defined by the Water Framework Directive will ensure that EU citizens benefit from good-quality and safe drinking and bathing water. It will further ensure that the nutrient cycle (nitrogen and phosphorus) is managed in a more sustainable and resource-efficient way.

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive ([125]) is the cornerstone of EU water policy in the 21st century ([126]). The Water Framework Directive and other water-related directives ([127]) form the basis of sustainable and integrated water management in the EU. They aim to achieve a high level of protection of water resources, prevention of further deterioration and restoration to good status. These objectives are very important for the EU's competitiveness, strategic autonomy and security, yet have become even more challenging in the face of climate change affecting our precious water resources.

The Water Framework Directive establishes a procedural framework for reaching good surface water ecological and chemical status and good groundwater quantitative and chemical status. This implies monitoring and classification of all waterbodies, assessment of pressures and impacts and identification of the most cost-effective measures to achieve the objectives of the directive. The directive dates from 2000 and set an initial deadline of 2015 for achieving its objectives, with the option to extend the deadline to the end of 2027. Every six years, Member States must report their river basin management plans (RBMPs) to the Commission. They should cover river basin districts in their countries, some of which may be shared with other countries. The Commission has assessed the third cycle of RBMPs, which were to be submitted by March 2022, and reported its findings to the European Parliament and to the Council on 4th February 2025 ([128]).

Romania has 3 026 surface waterbodies and 143 groundwater bodies, divided over one river basin district (Danube). Approximately 16 % of surface waters are designated as 'heavily modified' and about 2 % as 'artificial'. Heavily modified and artificial waterbodies must reach good ecological potential rather than good ecological status, which means that all measures must be taken to mitigate the adverse impact of the sustainable human development activities causing the water body to be heavily modified / artificial, while not significantly affecting these activities.

Figures 25–28 show the change in ecological status/potential and of chemical status of surface waters, and the quantitative and chemical status of groundwater in 2010, 2015 and 2021.

It follows from the assessment of the third RBMP that there has been a slight improvement in the ecological status/potential of surface waterbodies, and a slight deterioration in their chemical status, compared with the status reported in the second RBMP (covering 2015–

([124]) INFR(2024)2200.

([125]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060.

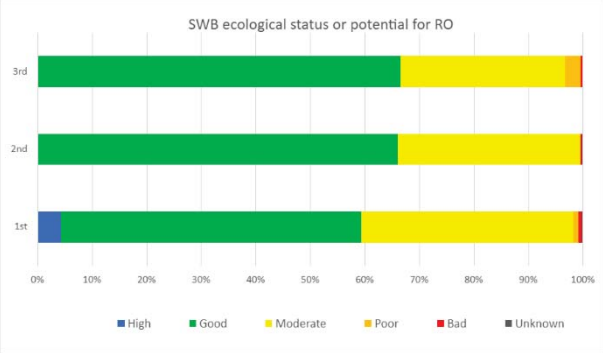
([126]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water_en.

([127]) These include the Groundwater Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0118), the Environmental Quality Standards Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/105/oj), the Floods Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32007L0060), the Bathing Water Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0007), the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31991L0271), the new Drinking Water Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020L2184), the Nitrates Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A31991L0676), the MSFD (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008L0056) and the IED (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32010L0075).

([128]) ENV Library, https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/circabc-ewpp/ui/group/c04f478b-d4dc-44f9-a211-087c01165b2c/library/faada4be-9fc3-4a48-b972-f71e356019d5?p=1&n=10&sort=modified_DESC.

2021). There has been no deterioration in the quantitative status of groundwater bodies, which are all reported to be in good status, and there has been a slight improvement in their chemical status.

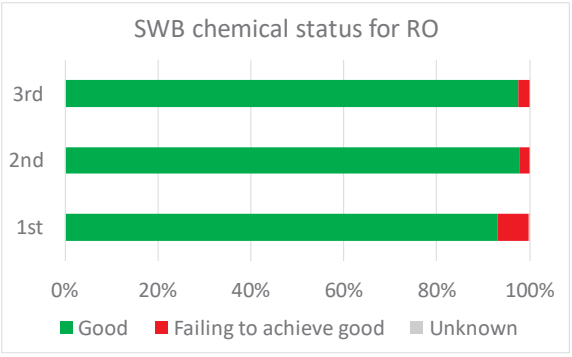
Figure 25: Ecological status/potential of surface waterbodies in each RBMP cycle (%)



Approximately 67 % of surface waterbodies have good ecological status/potential, showing a minor improvement since the second RBMP. Monitoring programmes have improved, and new monitoring sites have been added.

87.7 % of surface waterbodies are expected to achieve good ecological status/potential by 2027.

Figure 26: Chemical status of surface waterbodies in each RBMP cycle (%)

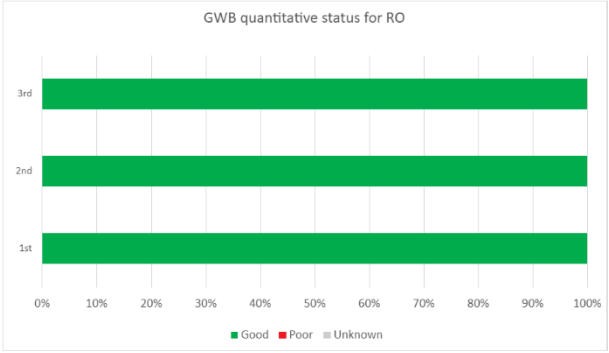


97.6 % of surface waterbodies are reported to have good chemical status.

Failure to achieve good chemical status is mostly due to ubiquitous persistent bioaccumulative and toxic substances, which are difficult to address and often have transboundary sources. In Romania, these are mainly mercury and polybrominated diphenyl ethers.

The percentage of surface waterbodies expected to achieve good chemical status by 2027 is approximately the same as the results published in the third RBMP.

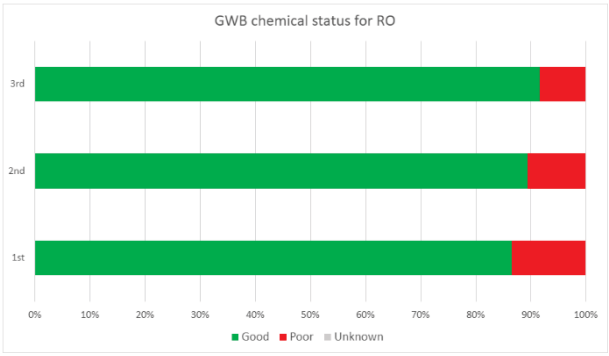
Figure 27: Quantitative status of groundwater bodies in each RBMP cycle (%)



The third RBMP reports that 100 % of groundwater bodies have good quantitative status and that no groundwater bodies are at risk of failing to achieve good quantitative status by 2027.

The percentage of classifications with high confidence amounted to 84.6 % of the assessments in the third RBMP. However, a significant portion of the classifications (15.4 %) were still conducted with low confidence.

Figure 28: Chemical status of groundwater bodies in each RBMP cycle (%)



91.6 % of groundwater bodies are reported to have good chemical status, showing a slight improvement from the second RBMP.

The percentage of classifications with high or medium confidence has remained the same since the second RBMP, at 97.9 % of the assessments.

8.4 % of groundwater bodies are expected to fail to achieve good chemical status by 2027.

Until the end of 2027, Member States can still apply time-related exemptions, subject to providing evidence of compliance with the strict criteria set out in the Water Framework Directive. After 2027, the possibilities for applying exemptions will be much more limited.

The 2022 EIR identified the following priority actions.

- Strengthen the monitoring of surface waters by covering all relevant quality elements in all water categories, including hydromorphological quality

elements, and improve quantitative and chemical groundwater monitoring.
- Ensure that projects with the potential to affect the status of waterbodies are thoroughly assessed and justified in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (Article 4(7)).

Some progress has been made regarding all of these priority actions.

In the third RBMP, the number of monitoring sites and the proportion of surface waterbodies covered by monitoring of ecological status has significantly increased in terms of surveillance and operational monitoring, especially in rivers and lakes. There has been a slight decrease in quantitative monitoring, related to changes made to adjust the monitoring network, but additional elements have been taken into consideration. Regarding chemical status, greater effort has been put into operational monitoring and less on surveillance, and efforts have been made to increase the number of substances monitored.

Projects with the potential to affect the status of water have been subject to an impact assessment. The third RBMP also provides a general indication that, for Article 4(7) applications, steps have been taken / will be taken to mitigate the adverse impacts on the status of the waterbodies affected.

It is worth noting that Romania has developed national guidelines on the preparation of environmental impact assessment (EIA) reports specifically for hydropower projects.

Romania is facing water scarcity, as evidenced by the Seasonal Water Exploitation Index + ([129]). In 2022, this index reaches 32,5% which is much above the 20% generally considered as a sign of scarcity in the third quarter of the year. Above 40%, it would be a sign of severe scarcity. This seasonal index at national level does not reflect the situation at river basin level ([130]) where more acute water stress can be recorded.

2025 priority actions

Without prejudice to the list of recommended actions in the Commission report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the assessment of the third RBMPs, the following priority actions can be highlighted.

- Tackle the obstacles identified in the implementation of measures, such as administrative capacity and resources.
- Improve river continuity and ecological flows, including in light of hydropower pressures.
- Improve hydromorphological measures to meet objectives.
- Reduce pollution from nutrients, chemicals, metals and saline discharges.
- Improve the classification of waterbodies, reduce the gap to objectives and better justify exemptions.

Floods Directive

Every six years, following the same reporting cycle as the RBMPs, all Member States also report their flood risk management plans (FRMPs), based on the flood hazard and risk maps (FHRMs) and the preliminary flood risk assessments drawn up during the second cycle (2016–2021).

The Commission assessed the FRMPs and reported its findings to the European Parliament and to the Council on 4th February 2025, together with the assessment of the RBMPs.

In the second FRMPs, Romania identified progress indicators that have clear targets linked to the level of priority of the strategies for the areas of potential significant flood risk. Although the FRMPs only provide a link between the nine objectives and the three broad categories of measures, a national methodology was used to develop the measures along the lines of the objectives. In addition, the second FRMPs provide information on the methodology for the prioritisation of measures, the estimated costs for the implementation of the measures and funding sources for some of the measures. Unlike the first FRMPs, the second FRMPs refer to Romania's national climate change strategy and provide information on the potential impacts of climate change on floods. Furthermore, robustness tests for vulnerability to climate change have been carried out. The FRMPs provide information on public consultation and stakeholder involvement.

2025 priority actions

- FRMPs should provide details on how the FHRMs were used in the choice of measures and how to consider pluvial flooding.
- Consider future climate scenarios in FRMPs.
- Better explain the choice and implementation of flood prevention and protection measures (prioritisation, monitoring, costs of measures).
- Improve public consultation and stakeholder involvement.

([129]) Water scarcity conditions in Europe, EEA, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/use-of-freshwater-resources-in-europe-1.

([130]) Percentage of seasons with water stress, EEA, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/percentage-of-seasons-with-water-stress.

Drinking Water Directive

The recast Drinking Water Directive is now applicable, and Member States were required to transpose its provisions into their national legal systems by 12 January 2023. Since the entry into force of the recast directive, the Commission has adopted several delegated and implementing acts establishing (i) a watch list of substances and compounds of concern for drinking water ([131]), (ii) a methodology for measuring microplastics in drinking water ([132]) and (iii) an EU system for testing and approving materials that will be allowed to be in contact with drinking water ([133]). Member States will have to take these various Commission acts into account when implementing the recast directive.

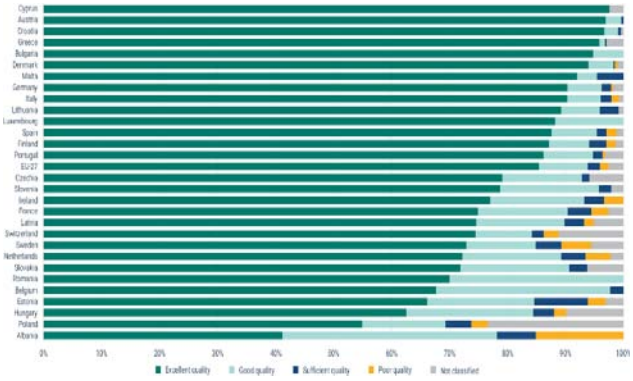
Finally, the Commission has now received data from Member States on the quality of drinking water (supplied by large water suppliers) in 2017–2019. However, Romania has not yet submitted the related data. From January 2026, the European quality standards for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in drinking water will apply, ensuring harmonised Member States' reporting of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance monitoring data in the future.

Bathing Water Directive

The Bathing Water Directive requires Member States to monitor and assess bathing water. It requires that, during the bathing season, Member States disseminate to the public information on bathing water quality actively and promptly. In particular, notices banning or advising against bathing should be rapidly and easily identifiable.

Figure 30 shows that in 2023, out of the 50 Romanian bathing waters, 35 (70 %) were of excellent quality and 15 (30 %) were of good quality. No bathing waters were found to be of sufficient or poor quality.

Figure 29: Bathing water quality per Member State, Albania and Switzerland (%), 2023



Source: EEA, *European Bathing Water Quality in 2023*, briefing No 04/2024, Copenhagen, 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bathing-water-quality-in-2023/.

Nitrates Directive

The Nitrates Directive ([134]) aims to protect water quality across Europe by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources that can pollute groundwater and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices.

The latest Commission report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive ([135]), dating back to 2021, warns that nitrates are still causing harmful pollution to water in the EU. Excessive nitrates in water are harmful to both human health and ecosystems, causing oxygen depletion and eutrophication. Cleaning of waters by national authorities or farmers, where it has been undertaken, has had a positive impact on the drinking water supply and on biodiversity. It has also benefited the sectors – such as fisheries and tourism – that depend on biodiversity and on a good supply of drinking water. Nevertheless, excessive fertilisation remains a problem in many parts of the EU. The report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive covering 2020–2023 will be available in 2025.

The analysis of Romania's RBMPs has identified nutrients from agriculture as an important pressure for groundwater / surface waters that is affecting these

([131]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/implementing-decision-drinking-water-directive-watch-list_en.

([132]) Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2024/1441 of 11 March 2024 supplementing Directive (EU) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council by laying down a methodology to measure microplastics in water intended for human consumption (notified under document C(2024) 1459) (OJ L, 2024/1441, 21.5.2024), http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_del/2024/1441/oj.

([133]) OJ L, 2024/365, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/365/oj; OJ L, 2024/367, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/367/oj; OJ L, 2024/369, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/369/oj; OJ L, 2024/368, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/368/oj; OJ L, 2024/370, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/370/oj; OJ L, 2024/371, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/371/oj; see the Commission web page on all six delegated acts for more information (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/delegated-acts-drinking-water-directive_en).

([134]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1561542776070&uri=CELEX:01991L0676-20081211.

([135]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/nitrates_en.

waters' good status and as one of the main factors in not meeting the Water Framework Directive objectives.

2025 priority action

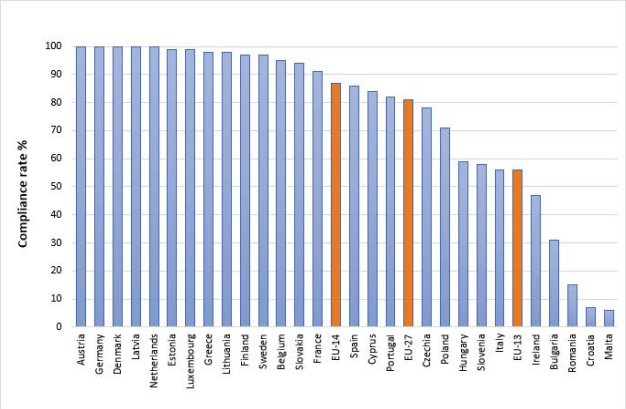
- Tackle nutrient pollution, especially nitrates from agriculture through the implementation of the Nitrates Directive.

Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) aims to protect human health and the environment from the effects of untreated urban waste water. It therefore requires Member States to collect and treat (secondary or biological treatment) waste water in all urban areas of more than 2 000 people, and to apply a more stringent treatment than secondary, with nitrogen and/or phosphorus removal, to the waste water generated in urban areas, also known as agglomerations, of more than 10 000 people, before they are discharged into waters and their catchments, when they are sensitive to nitrogen and/or phosphorus (i.e. eutrophic or tending to become eutrophic).

In Romania, 38 agglomerations, generating 3 052 104 population equivalent of urban waste water, complied with the requirements of the directive in 2020. In total, 1 777 agglomerations, generating 16 779 407 population equivalent of urban waste water, did not comply with the requirements of the directive.

Figure 30: Proportion of urban waste water that fully complies with the UWWTD (%), 2020



Source: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, Fribourg-Blanc, B., Dhuygelaere, N., Berland, J. and Imbert, F., 12th technical assessment of UWWTD implementation – Final version, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/318637.

Despite improvements in compliance over the years, for which the use of EU funding has been instrumental, the Commission sent a reasoned opinion to the Romanian authorities for failure to comply with the UWWTD in relation to agglomerations of above 10 000 population equivalent, which benefited from a transitional period in accordance with Romania's Treaty of Accession. Nevertheless, 150 large agglomerations still do not conform with the urban wastewater collection obligations, 154 large agglomerations do not comply with secondary treatment obligations and 154 large agglomerations do not comply with the tertiary treatment obligations ([136]).

The Commission referred Romania to the Court of Justice of the European Union on 15 November 2024. It is essential that Romania takes the necessary measures to fully comply with the requirements of the directive.

This is all the more important as the directive has been revised in order to, among other things, strengthen existing treatment standards and establish an additional treatment of micropollutants in urban waste water. Other new requirements relate to moving towards the energy neutrality of the sector, establishing an EPR system to ensure sustainable financing of micropollutant treatment by the most polluting industries and ensuring access to sanitation, especially for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Romania has until 31 July 2027 to transpose the new directive into its national legal system.

Romania continues to struggle with incomplete public water supply connections and still has one of the lowest compliance rates with EU water legislation. It continues to be confronted with the highest investment needs to reach and maintain compliance. Efforts need to be stepped up to extend and modernise drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, and to ensure a sustainable service at a reasonable price. The significant leakage rate of water supply systems highlights the need for investment in network infrastructure. The Romanian RRP has identified some key reforms to support the water sector, notably by strengthening the regulatory framework for the sustainable management of the water and wastewater sectors, and to accelerate public access to quality services. Significant funding support for water investments is available in the RRP and under the cohesion policy. In 2021–2027, EUR 1.2 billion in EU cohesion policy supports investments in wastewater collection and treatment in projects started in 2014–2020 and in new projects. As a condition of the support, Romanian authorities developed a national investment plan to enable the strategic planning and deployment of these investments. This plan includes a set of actions which refers to actions to ensure the institutional framework for the implementation and monitoring of the investment plan, and to strengthen the strategic governance of the sector, the economic regulation of the sector and the capacity of operators,

([136]) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_22_601.

including regional ones. The implementation of the investments and reforms in the plan should be ensured.

Despite some progress having been made since the 2022 EIR, Romania has not completed the implementation of the UWWTD for all agglomerations. Therefore, further efforts are necessary.

2025 priority action

- Take the necessary measures to ensure full implementation of the current urban wastewater treatment directive, taking into account the new requirements of the recast directive.

Chemicals

The EU seeks to ensure that chemicals are produced and used in a way that minimises any significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. In October 2020, the Commission published its chemicals strategy for sustainability towards a toxic-free environment ([137]), which led to some systemic changes in EU chemicals legislation. The strategy is part of the EU's zero pollution ambition – a key commitment of the European Green Deal.

The EU's chemicals legislation ([138]) provides a baseline protection for human health and the environment. It also ensures stability and predictability for businesses operating in the internal market.

Since 2007, the Commission has gathered information on the enforcement of the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation and the Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulation. In December 2020, the Commission assessed the Member States' reports ([139]) on the implementation and enforcement of these regulations ([140]). It is apparent from the Commission's report that there are still many disparities in the implementation of the REACH and CLP Regulations, notably in the area of law enforcement. Recorded compliance levels in Member States, generally quite stable over time, appear to be getting slightly worse. This may be because (i) enforcement authorities are becoming more effective in detecting non-compliant products/companies and (ii) more non-compliant products are being placed on the EU market.

In August 2021, the Commission published a measurable assessment of the enforcement ([141]) of the two main EU regulations on chemicals using a set of indicators on different aspects of enforcement. Since 2021, the list of chemicals subject to restrictions has been expanded as new entries have been added to Annex XVII to the REACH Regulation ([142]).

In 2023, new hazard classes were added to the CLP Regulation, and the revision of the regulation was tabled (published on 20 November 2024) ([143]). The new hazard classes cover endocrine disruptors and persistence-related hazards while the revision of the regulation encompasses new rules on online sales to better tackle non-compliances observed over the years. Also in 2023, the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention (COP) decided to include, in its Annex A (which

([137]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Chemicals strategy for sustainability: Towards a toxic-free environment, COM(2020) 667 final of 14 October 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A667%3AFIN; Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 (OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1), https://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/c6b6a31d-8359-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1.0004.02/DOC_2.

([138]) Namely, Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH), establishing a European Chemicals Agency, amending Directive 1999/45/EC and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 793/93 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1488/94 as well as Council Directive 76/769/EEC and Commission Directives 91/155/EEC, 93/67/EEC, 93/105/EC and 2000/21/EC (OJ L 396, 30/12/2006, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006R1907; and Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 (OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008R1272-20221217.

([139]) European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details.

([140]) In line with Article 117(1) of the REACH Regulation and Article 46(2) of the CLP Regulation.

([141]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, *REACH and CLP Enforcement: EU-level enforcement indicators*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e5c3e461-0f85-11ec-9151-01aa75ed71a1/.

([142]) These are substances in tattoo inks and permanent make-up, *N*,*N*-dimethylformamide, formaldehyde (and formaldehyde releasers), lead in PVC (polyvinyl chloride), siloxanes (D4, D5, D6) and, finally, microplastics.

([143]) Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 amending Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, OJ L, 2024/2865, 20.11.2024, p.1 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2865/oj/eng).

lists banned substances), three new chemicals ([144]). The Commission is working on the delegated acts to include these substances in Annex I to the Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulation by 2025 at the latest.

In Romania, responsibility for checking compliance with the REACH Regulation lies with the following authorities ([145]):

- National Environmental Guard,
- Labour Inspection,
- National Consumer Protection Authority (also responsible for the CLP Regulation).

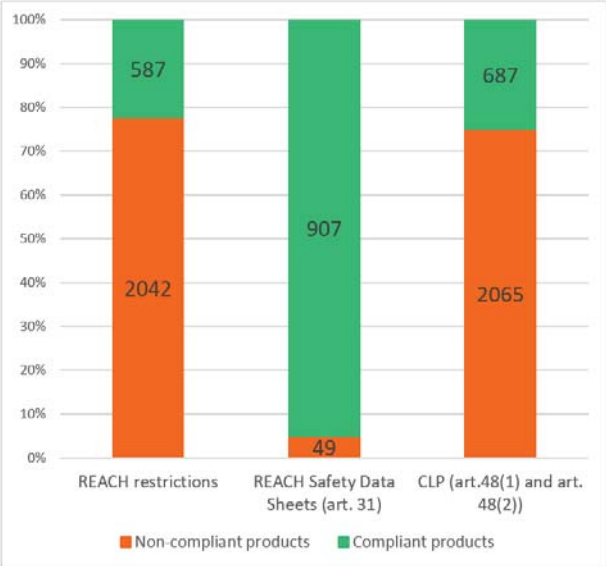
Romania has drawn up but only partially implemented the REACH and CLP Regulation enforcement strategies ([146]).

The Member States' reporting exercise set out in Article 117 of the REACH Regulation and Article 46 of the CLP Regulation is conducted every five years. The results of the coming one are expected in 2025, hence the absence of new country-specific data on enforcement since 2022.

In 2020, Romania indicated that 90 staff members are allocated to the enforcement of the REACH and CLP Regulations (covering 384 person hours/year), plus 43 labour inspectors ([147]).

In 2020, Romania participated in an EU coordinated enforcement project on products sold online, called the REACH-EN-FORCE (REF)-8 project ([148]). The report was adopted in November 2021, so it could not be taken into account in the previous EIR.

Figure 31: Compliance of imported products – results of the REF-8 project (%)



A risk approach was used for the targeting of control measures in order to maximise the chances of identifying non-compliances. Therefore, the non-compliance rates presented above cannot be considered the average non-compliance rates of products in the EU. However, the proportion of non-compliance cases found in the REF-8 project are of concern.

([144]) These are methoxychlor, dechlorane plus and UV-328. In the case of the pesticide methoxychlor, there are no exemptions from the ban. However, for the two plastic additives, dechlorane plus and UV-328, the COP decision lists some time-limited specific exemptions.

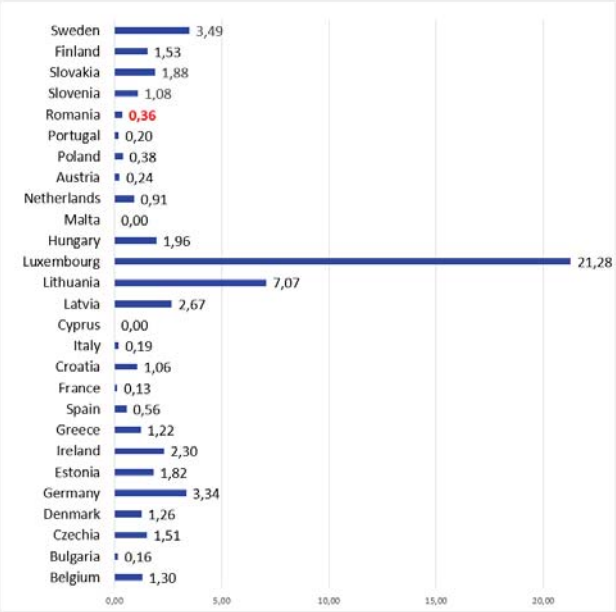
([145]) European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, p. 71, https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details.

([146]) European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, p. 76, https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details.

([147]) European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, p. 75, https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details.

([148]) European Chemicals Agency, *REF-8 project on enforcement of the CLP, REACH and BPR duties related to substances, mixtures and articles sold online*, Helsinki, 2021, p. 20, https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/17088/project_report_ref-8_en.pdf/ccf2c453-da0e-c185-908e-3a0343b25802?t=1638885422475.

Figure 32: Number of REF-8 checks performed per 100 000 inhabitants (EU average = 1.24)



Romania participated to a small extent in the REF-8 coordinated enforcement project. Online sales have been proved to correspond consistently to higher non-compliance rates in checks performed across the EU, in particular when related to imported products.

In 2022, Romania received a priority action related to upgrading administrative capacities in implementation and enforcement to move towards a policy of zero tolerance of non-compliance. In the absence of reporting since 2022, no progress has been shown and this priority action remains valid in 2025, partly because of the experience with the REF-8 project.

In addition, Romania must fully implement the REACH and CLP Regulation enforcement strategies.

2025 priority actions

- Upgrade administrative capacities in implementation and enforcement towards a policy of zero tolerance of non-compliance.
- Increase involvement in the activities of the Forum for Exchange of Information on Enforcement of the European Chemicals Agency, including in the coordinated enforcement projects, called REFs.
- Increase customs controls and controls of products sold online with regard to compliance with chemicals legislations.

4. Climate action

The impacts of climate change have continued to increase in recent years, inflicting damage and suffering in the EU and around the world. Globally, 2023 was the hottest year on record, while Europe has been warming twice as quickly as the global average, and is now the fastest-warming continent. The frequency and severity of extreme climate events are also increasing. Against this backdrop, the EU has demonstrated its determination to implement the European Green Deal and to become climate neutral and resilient by 2050, ensuring sustainable competitiveness and supporting EU industry in the net-zero transition. The European Climate Law is the EU's response to the need for action. It sets the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and a midterm target of a reduction in GHG emissions of at least 55 % by 2030, and outlines the adaptation efforts necessary to adjust to climate change's present and future impacts. Almost all the 'Fit for 55' proposals set out in the European Green Deal have been agreed in law, and the European Commission recommended a new intermediate climate target of a 90 % reduction in emissions by 2040. In 2024, the Member States submitted updated national energy and climate plans for 2021–2030, reflecting the increased ambition of the revised EU legislation. In 2024, the European Commission also released, jointly with the EEA, the first-ever European climate risk assessment.

Over the last three decades, since 1990, the EU has achieved steady decreases in its emissions, reaching a running total in 2022 of – 32.5 % ([149]). However, the EU and its Member States need to step up their implementation efforts and accelerate emissions reduction to stay on track to reach their targets of a 55 % reduction in net GHG emissions by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. Between 1990 and 2022, net GHG emissions of Romania decreased by 73%, making it one of the countries with an above-average decrease.

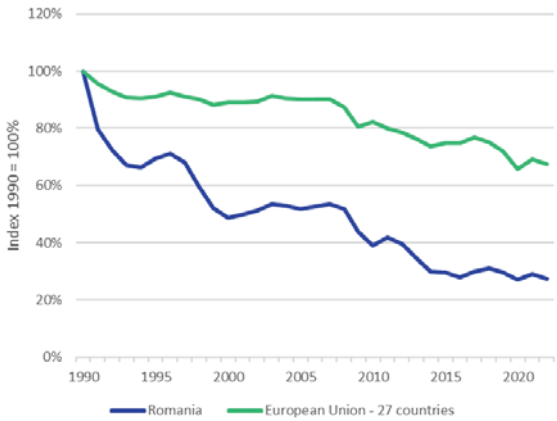
The 'Fit for 55' legislative package reflects the need to speed up the green transition. It includes (i) strengthening and expanding the EU emissions trading system (ETS), with the creation of a new, second, ETS for transport and buildings together with a dedicated Social Climate Fund to help citizens during the transition; (ii) increasing targets under the effort sharing regulation; and (iii) a revised regulation for Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry ([150]). The package has been fully adopted, and the Member States have been implementing the legislation.

The key strategic document at country level is the national energy and climate plan (NECP) ([151]). Romania submitted its updated plan in October 2024 after the deadline set by the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action ([152]). The European Commission assessed the plan and the extent to which Romania has followed the recommendations for the draft version. The findings from the assessment are:

- Emissions under the Effort Sharing Regulation will decrease by 15% in 2030 compared to 2005, and Romania will meet its target of 13%.
- The latest projections show a gap to the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation target, meaning that current levels of removals have been insufficient.
- Romania has a gap to its target for the share of renewable energy.
- Romania is in line with its energy efficiency targets.

To minimise the impacts of climate policies on vulnerable people and sectors, Romania is using the Just Transition Fund and Modernisation Fund and will use Social Climate Fund from 2026 (for more information, see Chapter 5 Finance).

Figure 33: Total GHG emissions (excluding international aviation) (%), 1990–2022



([149]) EU net domestic emissions, including the land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector and excluding international aviation.

([150]) A full overview of the Fit for 55 package is available at https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal/fit-55-delivering-proposals_en.

([151]) More information about NECP is on the dedicated website https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/national-energy-and-climate-plans-necps_en.

([152]à Article 14 of regulation 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action.

The EU emissions trading system

The EU ETS is the key tool for reducing GHG emissions cost-effectively across all Member States. It is the world's biggest carbon market, covering around 40% of the EU's total GHG emissions from electricity and heat generation, the manufacturing industry, aviation within Europe ([153]) and, from 2024, maritime transport also.

The system sets a limit or cap on the total amount of GHGs that can be emitted at the EU level. Within this limit, companies buy emissions allowances (one allowance gives the right to emit 1 t of CO_2 eq (carbon dioxide equivalent)), in auctions or through trading allowances with others. The cap is reduced annually to ensure that overall emissions in the sectors covered decrease over time.

The emissions under the ETS decreased by 66% from 2005 to 2023.

In 2023, 54 % of GHG emissions from Romania's ETS installations came from power generation, slightly below the EU average (57 %). Cement and lime accounted for about 24 %, the metals industry for 8 %, and refineries and other industries for 7 %, each. Between 2019 and 2023, the industry sectors registered a higher reduction (37 %) than power generation (33 %), resulting in a 35 % overall emissions decrease. Since 2013, GHG emissions from power generation have declined by half. Although ETS emissions from the 'other' sectoral category have decreased by 30 %, emissions from the metals industry have increased by 59 %, and emissions from cement and lime have grown by 24 %. This has resulted in an overall GHG reduction of 44 % since 2013.

On 25 January 2024, the Commission started an infringement case against Romania for failing to fully transpose previous revisions of ETS directive ([154]) into national law. Romania had two months to respond and address the shortcomings raised by the Commission. In the absence of a satisfactory response, the Commission may decide to take the infringement case further.

From 2027, a new emissions trading system, called ETS2, for buildings, road transport and additional sectors (mainly industry not covered by the current ETS) will become fully operational ([155]). Member States should have notified full transposition the provisions of the revised EU ETS directive related to the new ETS2 into national law by 30 June 2024. Romania did not communicate full transposition into national law by this deadline. For this reason, on 25 July 2024, the Commission opened an infringement procedure against Romania.

Romania had two months to respond and address the shortcomings raised by the Commission. In the absence of a satisfactory response, the Commission may decide to take the infringement case further.

Effort sharing

The Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) ([156]) covers GHG emissions from domestic transport (excluding CO_2 emissions from aviation), buildings, agriculture, small industry and waste. Emissions from these sectors account for around 60 % of the EU's domestic emissions. The regulation sets the EU-wide target to reduce emissions from the effort sharing sectors by 40 % by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. This overall target for the EU translates to binding national emission reduction targets for each Member State. Romania's target is –12.7%.

In addition to the 2030 targets, Member States have annual GHG emissions limits (annual emission allocations), reducing every year until 2030.

There is some flexibility to take account of annual fluctuations in emissions, by trading emissions and transfers from the ETS and LULUCF.

Based on historical emissions and the most updated projections Romania is on track to achieve its 2030 ESR target.

Projected emission reduction is 2.6 percentage points above the 2030 target.

Romania is one of the few countries where domestic transport is not a dominant effort sharing sector. Transport accounted for 26 % of all effort sharing emissions in 2022, but the share is on rise. Domestic transport emissions increased by 68 % from 2005 level. In Romania, much remains to be done in the sector, especially for passenger transport. Only 0.3 % of car fleet were battery electric vehicles in 2023 (EU average is 1.2 %) and Romania has about 2 660 publicly accessible charging points, or one for every 12 e-vehicles (above the EU average of 1:10). The total share of public transportation is above the EU average but share of railways (3 %) is considerably lower than the average (6 %). On the transport of freight, inland waterways and rail each account for 25 % of movements. However, only 37 % of Romania's rail network is electrified (well below the EU average of 56 %).

Between 2005 and 2022, emissions from buildings increased by 7 %, which is not in line with EU trend and EU average decrease of 29 % in the same period. Romania is

([153]) Flights between the EU Member States including departing flights to Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

([154]) Directive (EU) 2023/959 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32023L0959) and Directive (EU) 2023/958 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32023L0958).

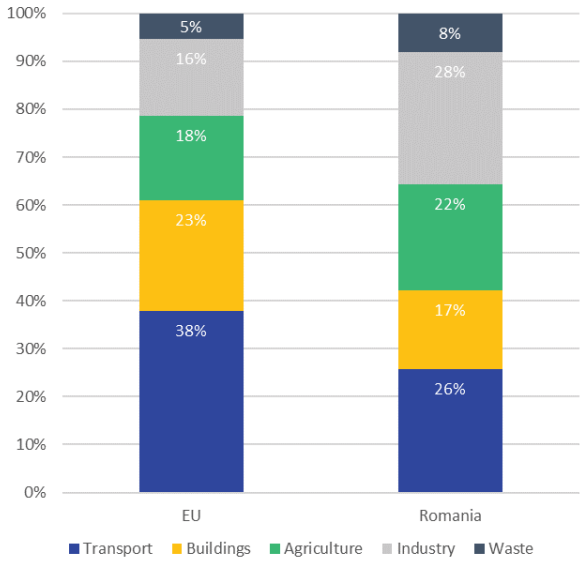
([155]) Directive (EU) 2023/959 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2023.130.01.0134.01.ENG).

([156]) Regulation (EU) 2018/842 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/842).

expected to continue improving the energy efficiency of its buildings sector. For example, residential final energy consumption decreased by 2 % in 2022 compared to 2021, continuing its decrease since 2019, but was still above 2015–2017 levels. The share of renewable energy in heating and cooling was at the same level as in 2013.

The most important effort sharing sector is a small industry accounted for 29 % emissions.

Figure 34: Effort-sharing emissions by sector (%), 2022



Land use, land-use change and forestry

The Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector plays a significant role in achieving the EU's climate neutrality goal. In the EU, this sector absorbs more GHGs than it emits, removing significant volumes of carbon from the atmosphere. Thus, it is the only sector with negative emissions.

Recent trends show that LULUCF removals are slowly decreasing since 2020 in Romania.

Romania's target in 2030 is to enhance land removals by additional −2.4 Mt of CO_2 equivalent compared to the yearly average of the period 2016–2018. The latest projections show a gap to target of 2.0 Mt of CO_2 equivalent in 2030. Therefore, Romania needs to apply additional measures to reach its 2030 target.

Adaptation to climate change

Halting all GHG emissions would still not prevent climate impacts that are already occurring. Therefore, adaptation to climate change is also a key component of climate policy.

Romania has one out of three regions identified as a hotspots of climate risks most affected by climate change –low-lying coastal regions ([157]).

Romania is vulnerable to extreme events related to climate change, such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves. Agriculture is particularly affected. Romania has a pronounced insurance gap for flooding. Indeed, all climate-related hazards have an insurance penetration below 50 %. Data from 1980–2020 show that only 5 % of economic losses were insured.

Romania adopted its national adaptation strategy in 2013 and updated it together with adaptation plan in 2016. There are no regional or sectoral adaptation plans. Appropriate institutional mechanisms are crucial for climate adaptation. In this regard, Romania has weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation policies, the analysis of climate vulnerabilities and risks, coordination across sectors of government, and adaptation action at local level. Moreover, there is considerable scope for integrating nature-based solutions into adaptation plans.

Romania received six priority actions regarding climate action in the 2022 EIR. The progress in the transport sector is limited and emissions are increasing. Romania overachieved in relation to its 2020 energy efficiency targets, but additional measures are needed for it to reach its 2030 targets. Biomass sustainability criteria are not explicitly mentioned in reported measures. The share of renewable energy has been stagnant since 2014 and there is scope for increasing Romania's target for renewable energy. Since 2022, Romania has adopted six territorial just transition plans for the regions that face the biggest socioeconomic challenges in phasing out coal and reducing CO_2 emissions. Progress on the implementation of these plans is limited, including in transformational investments in the high emission sectors, such as steel industry.

2025 priority actions

- Implement all policies and measures that are needed to achieve targets laid down in the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) and the Land Use and Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation. More detailed priority actions are set out in the assessment of the final National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) ([158]).

([157]) European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA). 2024. Available at https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/eu-adaptation-policy/key-eu-actions/european-climate-risk-assessment.

([158]) National energy and climate plans.

Part II: Enabling framework – implementation tools

5. Financing

The EU budget supports climate investment in Romania with significant amounts in 2021–2027, with revenues from the ETS also feeding into the national budget. During 2020–2022, Romania's revenues from auctioning reached EUR 1.775 billion in total, with 40 % of it spent on climate and energy.

In addition, the annual investment needed to meet its environmental objectives in the areas of pollution prevention and control, the circular economy and waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems is estimated to be around EUR 9.7 billion per year in Romania.

These four environmental areas currently receive total funding of around EUR 4.3 billion per year; thus, there is a gap of around EUR 5.4 billion per year.

Of the annual environmental investment gap, EUR 3 billion concerns biodiversity and ecosystems, EUR 0.8 billion pollution prevention and control, EUR 1.1 billion the water objective and around EUR 0.5 billion the circular economy.

Climate finance landmarks

EU funding for climate action

The EU budget supports climate action in the EU-27 with EUR 657.8 billion in the 2021–2027 budgetary period across the various programmes and funds, representing an overall 34.3 % contribution level. Of this, cohesion policy provides EUR 120 billion (over half of it through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)), the RRF EUR 275.7 billion and CAP EUR 145.9 billion ([159]).

In Romania, EU cohesion policy (considering the EU contribution amount) provides EUR 9.2 billion for climate action in 2021–2027 (with more than half of this via the ERDF), with a further EUR 70.5 million from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) ([160]).

The RRF contributes to climate finance in Romania with EUR 12.6 billion up to 2026, representing 44.1 % of the RRP ([161]).

The European Investment Bank (EIB) provided EUR 109.9 billion financing across the EU-27 between 2021 and mid 2024 to support energy, transport and industry projects that are aligned with the EU's climate objectives. Of this amount, EUR 2.1 billion was assigned to Romania in the reference period ([162]).

National financing, including EU emissions trading system revenues

Revenues from the auctioning of emission allowances under the EU ETS, which feed directly into national budgets, amounted to EUR 803 million in 2020, EUR 484 million in 2021 and EUR 488 million in 2022 in Romania, totalling EUR1.775 billion in the three-year period. In Romania, 50 % of the revenues are earmarked for climate and energy purposes and an additional 6 % is earmarked for GHG reduction projects (and 15 % goes to indirect carbon cost compensation and 29 % to the general budget). Part of the unspent revenues is carried over to later years.

From the remaining part of the EU ETS revenues that feed into the Innovation Fund and the Modernisation Fund, further support is available to climate action at the EU level ([163]).

It should be noted that investment in climate action also supports the environment and, therefore, the environmental investments described in the following sections cannot be regarded as entirely additional to climate investment ([164]).

Environmental financing and investments

This section describes Romania's investment needs, current financing and gaps as they relate to the four environmental objectives beyond climate objectives, namely tackling pollution, the circular economy and

([159]) European Commission, *Statement of Estimates of the European Commission – For the financial year 2025*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, pp. 94–96, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/7a0420e1-599e-4246-9131-ccb7d505d6d9_en?filename=DB2025-Statement-of-Estimates_1.pdf.

([160]) See the Cohesion Open Data Platform (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/).

([161]) European Commission datasets and the Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard (https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/index.html).

([162]) A list of financed projects is provided by the EIB (https://www.eib.org/en/projects/loans/index.htm).

([163]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Climate Action, *Progress Report 2023 – Climate action*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-your-voice/news/climate-action-progress-report-2023-2023-10-24_en.

([164]) NB: Indirect investments (from climate and other policies) in support of the environment are accounted for via the tracking.

waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems ([165]).

The environment overall

Investment needs

The overall environmental investment needs to be sufficient to enable Romania to meet its objectives in the areas of pollution prevention and control, the circular economy and waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems. The required investment is estimated to be EUR 9.7 billion per year (in 2022 prices).

A significant part of the estimated requirement, around EUR 3.8 billion per year, can be attributed to the need to support biodiversity and ecosystems, and EUR 2.1 billion per year is needed for pollution prevention and control. For water and the circular economy, the investment need is around EUR 1.9 billion per year each (in 2022 prices).

Current investments

To implement the environmental investments needed, the available financing is estimated to currently reach an annual EUR 4.3 billion in Romania from EU and national sources combined (in 2022 prices).

Total environmental funding from the multiannual financial framework (MFF) is estimated to reach around EUR 10.8 billion for Romania in total, during 2021–2027 (or around EUR 1.5 billion per year).

Table 1: Key environmental allocations from EU funds to Romania (million EUR), 2021–2027

Instrument	Allocations
Cohesion policy	**6 459.3** ([a])
ERDF	5 023.0
Cohesion Fund	1 067.3
Just Transition Fund	369.1
CAP	**3 623.1** ([b])
European Agricultural Guarantee Fund	2 336.9
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	1 286.2
EMFAF	**45.6**
Other MFF	667.5 ([c])
RRF ([d]) (2021–2026)	**7 455**

([a]) European Commission, 2021-2027 cohesion policy (planned) allocations in *EU amount* excluding national co-financing, based on the tracking in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR, 2021) Annex I. Please note potential data changes that may have arisen between the EIR preparation cut-off date (31 October 2024) and its publication date. Source and further information: https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2021-2027-Categorisation/2021-2027-Planned-finances-detailed-categorisation/hgyj-gyin/about_data

([b]) Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP strategic plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 (OJ L 435 6.12.2021, p. 1), Annex XI, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2115.

Note that 2021-2027 combines factual data for 2021 and 2022 and expenditure under the relevant specific objectives (SOs) of the CAP strategic plans from 2023, using the EU biodiversity tracking methodology (https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/Biodiversity%20tracking%20methodology%20for%20each%20programme%202023.pdf). Source: European Commission.

([c]) Space Fund, Horizon Europe, the LIFE programme and the Connecting Europe Facility.

([d]) Outside the MFF. Note that the RRF applies a similar environmental tracking scheme (set in the RRF Regulation, Annex VI) as the EU's cohesion policy. RRF dataset version used: July 2024, prior to 2025 revisions. Data source: European Commission.

Romania, in addition to receiving EU funds earmarked specifically for it in 2021–2027, can also benefit from funding programmes that can be accessed at the EU level and which are open to all Member States. These include the LIFE programme (EUR 5.4 billion) ([166]), Horizon Europe (EUR 95.5 billion) ([167]), the Connecting Europe Facility (EUR 33.7 billion) ([168]) and funds that can be mobilised through the InvestEU programme ([169]).

Romania's RRP supports climate objectives through funding of EUR 12.6 billion (44 % of total), with an additional EUR 1.99 billion (7 % of total) for the environment.

The EU's cohesion policy provides EUR 9.2 billion for climate action in 2021–2027 (support for the environment from cohesion policy is EUR 6.68 billion).

The EIB provided around EUR 1 021.9 million in environment-related financial contributions to Romania from 2021 to mid-2024, most of which, EUR 180.8 million (77 %), was in the area of sustainable energy, transport

([165]) Research, development and innovation is accounted for under each environmental objective. The financing needs, baselines and gaps estimates are based on the Directorate-General for Environment's internal analysis (of 2024). Throughout this chapter, specific references are provided to the most important data sources used.

([166]) https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en.

([167]) European Commission, Horizon Europe, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en.

([168]) The Connecting Europe Facility Transport part also includes EUR 11.3 billion transferred from the Cohesion Fund, of which 30 % will be made available, on a competitive basis, to all Member States eligible for the Cohesion Fund. The remaining 70 % will respect the national envelopes until 31 December 2023.

([169]) The InvestEU Fund is set to mobilise over EUR 372 billion of investment through an EU budget guarantee of EUR 26.2 billion to back the investment of financial partners such as the EIB group and others.

and industrial projects, which provides significant co-benefits to reducing air pollution, environmental noise and other pollution.

The EU's total national expenditure on environmental protection (operating plus capital expenditure) was EUR 298 billion in 2020 and EUR 321 billion in 2021, representing around 2.2 % of EU-27 GDP. In Romania, the total national environmental protection expenditure was EUR 5.2 billion in 2020 and EUR 5.7 billion in 2021, representing 2.4 % of GDP.

Of the total environmental expenditure, the national capital expenditure (investment) on environmental protection amounted to EUR 54.5 billion in 2020 and EUR 59.9 billion in 2021 in the EU-27, representing around 0.4 % of the EU's GDP. In Romania, the national environmental protection investment reached EUR 671 million in 2020, rising to EUR 728 million in 2021, and to EUR 820 million in 2022, representing around 0.3 % of GDP.

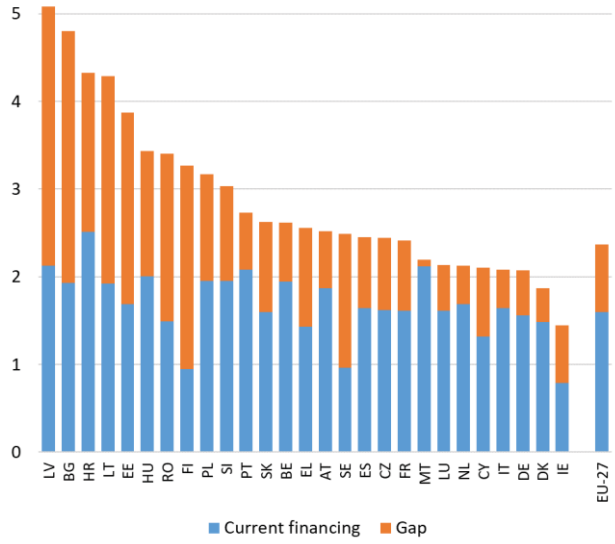
Splitting by institutional sector, 63 % of Romania's national environmental protection investment (capital expenditure) comes from the general government budget, with 15 % coming from specialist private-sector producers (of environmental protection services, such as waste and water companies) and 22 % from the business sector, whose environmental activities are usually ancillary to its main activities. At the EU level, 38 % of environmental protection investment comes from governments, 40 % from specialist private-sector producers and 22 % from the general business sector ([170]).

Romania's total financing for environmental investment reaches an estimated EUR 4.3 billion per year (in 2022 prices), including EU funding and national public and national private expenditure. Of the total, the share of EU funds (including EIB funds) reaches 60 %, with around 40 % national financing. The total public financing (EU plus national public) represents 85 % of the total.

The gap

To meet its four environmental objectives beyond climate change, the additional investment need over the current levels (i.e. the gap) reaches an estimated EUR 5.4 billion per year in Romania, representing around 1.9 % of national GDP, being significantly higher than the EU average (0.77 %).

Figure 35: Environmental financing, needs and gaps per Member State (% of GDP)



Source: Analysis of Directorate-General for Environment.

The following table provides the distributions of Romania's environmental investment gap (expressed in various forms) by environmental objective.

Table 2: Summary of environmental investment gaps in Romania per year, 2021–2027

Environmental objective	Investment gap per year		
	Million EUR (2022 prices)	% of total	% of GDP
Pollution prevention and control	805	14.8	0.3
Circular economy and waste	534	9.8	0.2
Water management and water industries	1 107	20.3	0.4
Biodiversity and ecosystems	2 997	55.1	1.1
Total	**5 443**	**100.0**	**1.9**

Source: Directorate-General for Environment analysis.

Pollution prevention and control

Investment needs

In pollution prevention and control, Romania's investment needs are estimated to reach EUR 2.1 billion per year (in 2022 prices) (including baseline investments) in 2021–2027. Most of this, EUR 1.9 billion, relates to air pollution control, to comply with the clean air requirements for the

([170]) Eurostat, 'Environmental protection expenditure accounts', env_ac_epea.

five main air pollutants under the NECD by 2030. The estimated needs to reduce environmental noise reach EUR 0.4 billion per year, most of which is delivered by the (same) sustainable energy and transport investments that also benefit clean air ([171]). Protection from radiation costs EUR 138 million per year, and industrial site remediation an estimated EUR 52 million per year. Microplastics pollution and the chemicals strategy require around EUR 30–40 million per year (each) ([172]).

Current investments

The current investment levels supporting pollution prevention and control reach an estimated EUR 1.3 billion per year (in 2022 prices) in Romania in 2021–2027. Most of the financing concerns clean air (EUR 1.2 billion per year). Protection from environmental noise receives around EUR 0.6 billion per year, with a further EUR 47 million for site remediation.

In Romania, the EU MFF provides an estimated 30 % of the clean air financing (mostly via cohesion policy), with a further 53 % from the RRF, adding up to around 83 % of the total. EIB financing contributes 8 % and national sources reach 9 % ([173]).

The gap

To meet its environmental objectives concerning pollution prevention and control (towards zero pollution), Romania needs to provide an additional EUR 805 million per year (0.28 % of GDP), mostly related to clean air and noise. The adequate implementation of the NECP with the investments included for sustainable energy and transport would largely deliver this, while in many Member States additional measures and investments may be required to comply with the ammonia reduction requirements.

According to the latest (2023) NAPCP review report ([174]), Romania complied with ammonia reduction requirements in 2020 and 2021, but missed those for other pollutants, namely NO_x, NMVOC and $PM_{2.5}$, and it remains at high risk of breaching the NECD 2030 emission reduction commitments on those air pollutants, based on the policies and measures in its NAPCP, which takes into account climate, energy and CAP plans and financing baselines.

Circular economy and waste

Investment needs

Romania's investment needs in the circular economy and waste reach EUR 1.9 billion per year (in 2022 prices) (including baseline investments). Most of this, around EUR 1.5 billion per year, relates to circular economy measures in the mobility, food and built environment systems, with a further EUR 0.4 billion necessary for waste management (municipal and packaging waste), covering waste collection, biowaste treatment, recycling reprocessors, waste-sorting facilities and digitalisation of the waste registry. The amount for waste excludes the investments needed for the uptake of circularity and waste prevention across the economy ([175]).

Current investments

Circular economy investments across the economy reach around EUR 1.1 billion per year (in 2022 prices) in Romania in 2021–2027, with a further EUR 0.3 billion provided for waste management that does not constitute circular economy.

Around 2.9 % of this combined financing for circularity and waste comes from the EU MFF, with a further 10.7 % contribution from the RRF, coming to 13.7 % combined. EIB loans identified in support of circularity and waste represent 1.6 % of the total. The share of national sources is overwhelming, reaching 85 % of the total financing ([176]).

The gap

To meet its environmental objectives concerning the circular economy and waste, Romania needs to increase

([171]) 2021 Phenomena project assessment (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f4cd7465-a95d-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1) and the Commission's 2023 Environmental Noise Directive implementation report (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/COM_2023_139_1_EN_ACT_part1_v3.pdf.

([172]) European Commission, *Third Clean Air Outlook*, Brussels, 2022, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/clean-air-outlook_en. See also the impact assessment for the revision of the AAQD, available from the Commission web page on the proposed revision (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/revision-eu-ambient-air-quality-legislation_en).

([173]) Through the tracking of EU funds, EIB projects and national expenditure (environmental protection expenditure accounts (EPEAs), Eurostat). Note that the bulk of clean air financing is provided as a contribution from climate (energy and transport) measures, as per the tracking schemes in the Common Provisions Regulation Annex I and the RRF Regulation Annex VI. Further information on clean air tracking: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/0a80484e-2409-4749-94c6-3b23bc6bae8f_en?filename=Clean%20air%20methodology_0.pdf

([174]) European Commission, 'National air pollution control programmes and projections', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants/national-air-pollution-control-programmes-and-projections_en.

([175]) See Systemiq and Ellen MacArthur Foundation, *Achieving 'Growth Within'*, 2017; and European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Study on investment needs in the waste sector and on the financing of municipal waste management in Member States*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4d5f8355-bcad-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1

([176]) Waste management and circular economy expenditure tracking in EU funds, EIB projects and national expenditure (Eurostat). Datasets: EPEAs (env_epi) and circular economy private investments (cei_cie012).

circular economy investments by an estimated EUR 426 million per year, with an additional EUR 108 million concerning waste management action, not belonging to circular economy. Combined, this amounts to EUR 534 million per year, representing 0.19 % of Romania's GDP.

Of the circular economy gap, EUR 112 million relates to recent initiatives, such as eco-design for sustainable products, packaging and packaging waste, labelling and digital tools, CRM recycling and measures proposed under the amendment of the Waste Framework Directive, and EUR 314 million constitutes further investment needed to unlock Romania's circular economy potential.

Water protection and management

Investment needs

The annual water investment needs reach an estimated EUR 1.925 billion (in 2022 prices) in Romania. This comprises investment needs both for the water industry and for the protection and management of water. Of the total annual need, EUR 816 million relates to the management of waste water (including additional costs associated with the revised UWWTD), a further EUR 189 million is necessary for drinking-water-related investments and around EUR 915 million for the protection and management of water ([177]).

Current investments

Water investments in Romania are estimated to be around EUR 818 million per year (in 2022 prices) in 2021–2027. Of this, EUR 534 million supports wastewater management, EUR 145 million drinking water and around EUR 136 million the other aspects of the Water Framework Directive (water management and protection).

Of the total financing, 40.8 % is provided by the EU MFF (mostly through cohesion policy), with a further 8 % from the RRF, reaching 48.8 % combined. EIB financing is around 1.2 % of the total, while the bulk of financing comes from national sources (50 %) ([178]).

The gap

To meet the various environmental targets under the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive, Romania's water investment gap reaches EUR 1.1 billion per year (0.4 % of GDP), with EUR 282 million linked to wastewater measures. Drinking water measures require an additional EUR 44 million per year and the other aspects of the Water Framework Directive around EUR 779 million per year over the existing levels of financing.

Biodiversity and ecosystems

Investment needs

The investment needs for biodiversity and ecosystems are estimated to be EUR 3.7 billion per year (in 2022 prices) in Romania in 2021–2027. This includes the following financing needs:

- Romania's PAF ([179]), concerning the Natura 2000 areas: EUR 544 million per year, mostly running costs;
- additional BDS costs ([180]): EUR 2.2 billion per year on top of the PAF;
- sustainable soil management costs ([181]): EUR 983 million per year.

Current investments

The current level of biodiversity financing is estimated to be EUR 755 million per year (in 2022 prices) in 2021–2027. 62.1 % of the financing is considered direct financing to biodiversity and ecosystems, with a 100 % coefficient in the tracking schemes.

15.2 % of the total financing is estimated to come from EU cohesion policy, 70.4 % from CAP, 6.1 % from Horizon Europe, around 2.4 % from LIFE and 0.6 % from EMFAF. The EU MFF altogether accounts for 89.2 % of the financing, and the RRF for 10.7 %, adding up to a total of 99.9 % from the EU budget. The rest, 0.01 %, comes from national sources ([182]).

([177]) See European Commission, 'Estimating investment needs and financing capacities for water-related investment in EU Member States', 28 May 2020, https://commission.europa.eu/news/estimating-investment-needs-and-financing-capacities-water-related-investment-eu-member-states-2020-05-28_en; and OECD, *Financing Water Supply, Sanitation and flood Protection: Challenges in EU Member States and policy options*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/financing-water-supply-sanitation-and-flood-protection_6893cdac-en.

([178]) Water investment levels are estimated through tracking EU funds, EIB projects and national expenditure (EPEAs, Eurostat).

([179]) European Commission, 'Financing Natura 2000 – Prioritised action frameworks', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/natura-2000/financing-natura-2000_en.

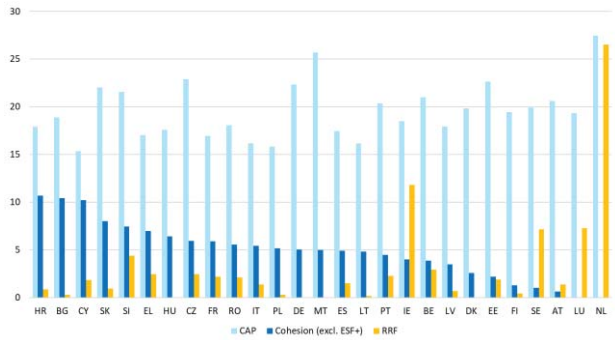
([180]) See European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Biodiversity Financing and Tracking – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/793eb6ec-dbd6-11ec-a534-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

([181]) See Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law) COM(2023) 416 final of 5 July 2023, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-directive-soil-monitoring-and-resilience_en.

([182]) Based on biodiversity tracking in the EU budget (https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3f466d71-92a7-49eb-9c63-

At 2.1 %, Romania's share of RRF funding is above the average share dedicated to supporting measures for biodiversity. However, Romania has programmed to spend 18.1 % of its CAP budget on measures supporting biodiversity over 2021–2027, which is somewhat below the EU average. Lastly, 5.5 % of its cohesion policy EU contribution amount is estimated to contribute to biodiversity, disregarding ESF+, slightly under the EU average (see Figure 36).

Figure 36: 2021–2027 contributions to biodiversity from the main EU instruments per Member State (% of policy total)



NB: ESF+, European Social Fund Plus.

The gap

To meet the environmental objectives concerning the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems and other relevant cross-cutting measures, Romania's investment gap is estimated to be around EUR 3 billion per year, corresponding to 1.05 % of its GDP.

Public financial management

Green budgeting practices

Green budgeting refers to the use of budgetary tools to achieve climate and environmental goals. Some Member States already use green budgeting tools for identifying and tracking green expenditures and/or revenues ([183]). Green budgeting practices provide increased transparency on the environmental implications of budgetary policies.

The Commission has developed a non-mandatory green budgeting reference framework that brings together methodologies for assessing the impacts of budgets on climate and environmental goals ([184]).

To help Member States to develop national green budgeting and thereby improve policy coherence and support the green transition, the Commission facilitated a TSI project on green budgeting from 2021 to 2024 ([185]). Romania participated, drawing on the experience of other Member States to develop and test green budgeting.

Romania has also been selected for the next round of TSI projects on green budgeting, starting in 2025. The country will prioritize deepening its green tagging methodology, developing a framework for ex-ante impact assessments and building capacity, amongst other things.

Beyond green budgeting, to improve policy outcomes, the Commission has also drawn up climate-proofing and sustainability-proofing guidance ([186]) as tools to assess project eligibility and compliance with environmental legislation and criteria.

Green taxation and tax reform

Total environmental taxes amounted to EUR 7.7 billion in Romania in 2022, representing 2.7 % of its GDP (EU average: 2.0 %). Energy taxes formed the largest component of environmental taxes, accounting for 2.6 % of GDP, which is lower than the EU average of 1.6 %. Transport taxes, at 0.1 % of GDP, were under the EU average (0.4 %), while data on taxes on pollution and resources were not available. In 2022, environmental taxes in Romania accounted for 10.1 % of total revenues

6cb0fadf29dc/library/8e44293a-d97f-496d-8769-50365780acde), and national expenditure into biodiversity from the Classification of the Functions of Government accounts.

([183]) European Commission, *Green Budgeting in the EU. Key Insights from the 2023 European Commission Survey of Green Budgeting Practices*, 2023, https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/national-fiscal-frameworks-eu-member-states/green-budgeting-eu_en#:~:text=European%20Commission%20Green%20Budgeting%20Survey%C2%A0.

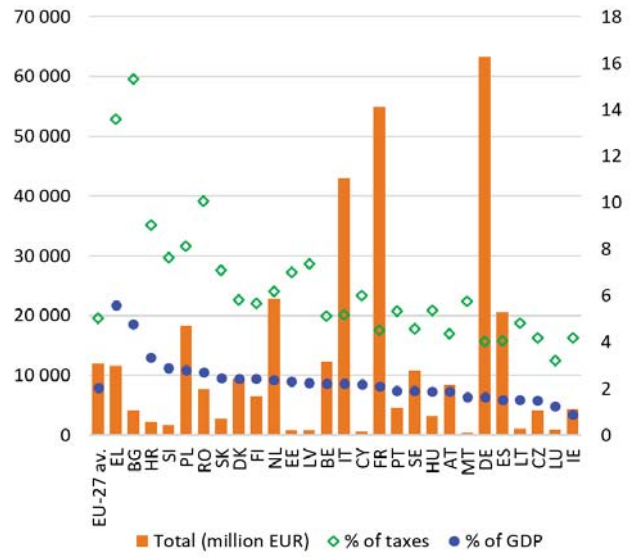
([184]) European Commission, 'European Union green budgeting reference framework', 2022, https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/green-budgeting-eu_en.

([185]) https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/revenue-administration-and-public-financial-management/supporting-implementation-green-budgeting-practices-eu_en.

([186]) Commission notice – Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021–2027 (OJ C 373, 16.09.2021, p. 1), https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/23a24b21-16d0-11ec-b4fe-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

from taxes and social security contributions (well above the EU average of 5.0 %) ([187]).

Figure 37: Environmental taxes per Member State, 2022



The EU Green Deal emphasises the role of well-designed tax reforms (e.g. shifts from taxing labour to taxing pollution) to boost economic growth and resilience, and to foster a fairer society and a just transition through the right price signals. The Green Deal promotes the 'polluter-pays principle', which makes polluters bear the costs to prevent, control and remedy pollution.

According to a 2024 study ([188]), Romania applies emission charges (mainly relating to air and water quality), as well as user charges (for hunting and fishing and for mineral extraction, and a volumetric charge for water abstraction and disposal). The same study proposes the introduction of pay-as-you-throw and wastewater pollution taxes ([189]).

Green bonds and sustainable bonds

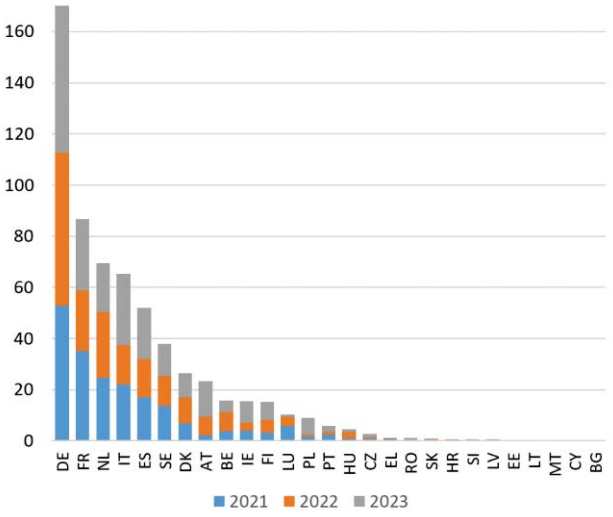
In 2023, the total value of green bonds issued by Member States was USD 245 billion (EUR 227 billion), up from USD 234 billion (EUR 198 billion) in 2021 ([190]).

During 2021–2023 combined, Romania issued green bonds worth USD 1.2 billion (EUR 1 billion). Of this, the issuance in 2023 amounted to USD 885 million (EUR 0.8 billion).

During 2014–2023, 83 % of the green bonds issued by European countries (excluding supranational entities) served objectives in energy, buildings or transport, while 5 % supported objectives in water, 5.1 % related to land use (with links to nature and ecosystems) and 3.8 % applied to waste management. By 2023, the combined share of energy, buildings and transport had decreased to 73 %, the shares of waste management and land use had increased (to 5.9 % and 8.4 %, respectively) and the share of water remained around 5 %.

In 2021–2023, 31.7 % of the European green bonds (excluding those issued by supranational bodies) were issued by financial corporates, 29.1 % by sovereign governments and 23.1 % by non-financial corporates. 8.3 % of the issuances were linked to government-backed entities, 6.4 % to development banks and 1.4 % to local governments.

Figure 38: Value of green bonds issued per Member State (billion EUR), 2021, 2022 and 2023



Data source: Climatebonds.net, with some additional data from national sources (e.g. Croatia, Slovenia).

([187]) Eurostat, 'Environmental taxes accounts', env_eta.

([188]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Candidates for Taxing Environmental Bads at National Level*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, Annex 1, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/35c1bbdf-2931-11ef-9290-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

([189]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Candidates for Taxing Environmental Bads at National Level*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, p. 17, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/35c1bbdf-2931-11ef-9290-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

([190]) Climate bonds initiative (https://www.climatebonds.net/). NB. Additionally (and not included in this), national sources indicated EUR 544.8 million issuance for Croatia, in 2022-2023, and a slightly higher amount for Slovenia (+0.27 billion) during 2021-2023 in total.

Environmentally harmful subsidies

Addressing and phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies, in particular fossil fuel subsidies (FFS), is a further step towards achieving the eighth environment action programme objectives and the enabling conditions ([191]). FFS are costly for public budgets and make it difficult to achieve European Green Deal objectives.

The overall downward trend of FFS mentioned in past EIRs was disrupted from 2022 due to the European response to the 2021 energy crisis and subsequent increase in energy prices.

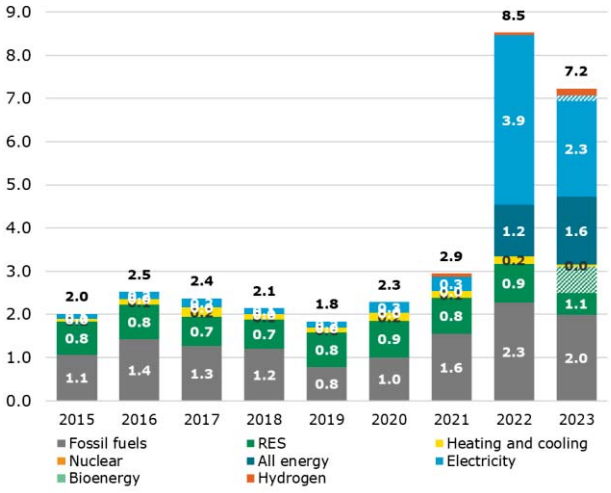
As a direct consequence, annual FFS in the EU increased to EUR 109 billion in 2023 from EUR 57 billion in 2020. From 2021 to 2023, there was a marked increase in annual FFS of 72 % in the EU ([192]).

For the majority of the Member States (16), the year 2022 saw a peak in the amount of overall FFS. A decline was then observed in 2023 ([193]). In particular, FFS for coal and lignite, natural gas and oil increased in 2022 and a strong increase was observed for natural gas subsidies.

In Romania, there was some volatility in energy subsidies between 2015 and 2021, with FFS ranging between EUR 0.8 billion and 1.6 billion per year. In 2022, energy subsidies increased overall, and they stayed high in 2023, with FFS climbing to EUR 2.3 billion in 2022 and reaching EUR 2 billion in 2023.

As a share of GDP, FFS in 2022 ranged from 1.8 % in Croatia to less than 0.1 % in Denmark and Sweden. Romania's value reached 0.8 %, on a par with the EU average (0.8 %) ([194]).

Figure 39: Energy subsidies by energy carrier, Romania (billion EUR), 2015–2023



NB: RES, renewable energy source.

Romania received a priority action during the 2022 EIR to devise an environmental financing strategy to maximise opportunities for closing environmental implementation gaps, bringing together all relevant administrative levels, and addressing issues in project conception, development and implementation, while using technical assistance when necessary to increase administrative capacity. The report pointed out that Romania had benefited substantially from EU funds in the environmental field, but had real absorption issues that needed to be addressed urgently. Not much progress has been achieved. There was also a priority action to look more closely into the possibility of environmental financing from private sources, as currently public sources provide almost two thirds of such financing.

Romania has a similar overall environmental investment gap as at the time of the 2022 EIR, at around 1.9 % of GDP (above the EU average), related mostly to biodiversity and ecosystems and to a lesser extent to the water objective.

2025 priority action

- Use more national funding (for instance by increasing taxes in favour of the environment and reducing environmentally harmful subsidies), EU funding and private funding to help close the investment gap.

([191]) Article 3(h) and 3(v) of the eighth environment action programme.
([192]) European Commission, 2024 Report on Energy Subsidies in the European Union, COM(2025). https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2025)17&lang=en
([193]) 16 Member States: BE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LT, HU, NL, AT, PT, RO and SE.
([194]) European Commission, 2024 Report on Energy Subsidies in the European Union, COM(2025). https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2025)17&lang=en.

6. Environmental governance

Information, public participation and access to justice

Citizens can more effectively protect the environment if they rely on the three 'pillars' of the Aarhus Convention: (i) access to information, (ii) public participation in decision-making and (iii) access to justice in environmental matters. It is of crucial importance to public authorities, the public and businesses that environmental information is shared efficiently and effectively ([195]). Public participation allows authorities to make decisions that take public concerns into account. Access to justice is a set of guarantees that allows citizens and NGOs to use national courts to protect the environment, safeguard the rights of citizens and ensure accountability of authorities ([196]). It includes the right to bring legal challenges ('legal standing') ([197]).

Environmental information

This section focuses on the implementation of the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (Inspire) Directive. The Inspire Directive aims to set up a European spatial-data infrastructure for sharing environmental spatial information between public authorities across Europe. It is expected that this will help policymaking across boundaries and facilitate public access to this information. Geographic information is needed for good governance at all levels and should be readily and transparently available.

Romania's progress in implementing the Inspire Directive is substantial and has been reviewed based on its 2023 country fiche ([198]) (see Table 3).

Table 3: Romania dashboard on implementation of the Inspire Directive, 2016–2023

	2016	2023	Legend
Effective coordination and data sharing			Implementation of this provision is well advanced or (nearly) completed. Outstanding issues are minor and can be addressed easily. Percentage > 89 %
Ensure effective coordination			
Data sharing without obstacle			
Inspire performance indicators			Implementation of this provision has started and made some or substantial progress but is still not close to being completed. Percentage = 31–89 %
(i) Conformity of metadata			
(ii) Conformity of spatial datasets			
(iii) Accessibility of spatial datasets through view and download services			Implementation of this provision is falling significantly behind. Serious efforts are necessary to close the implementation gap. Percentage < 31 %
(iv) Conformity of network services			

Source: European Commission, 'Romania', Inspire Knowledge Base, https://knowledge-base.inspire.ec.europa.eu/romania_en.

In 2022, Romania received a priority action on the need to make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise environmental datasets ([199]). Romania has made progress

([195]) The Aarhus Convention (https://unece.org/environment-policy/public-participation/aarhus-convention/text), the Access to Environmental Information Directive (Directive 2003/4/EC) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003L0004) and the Inspire Directive (Directive 2007/2/EC) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32007L0002) together create a legal foundation for the sharing of environmental information between public authorities and with the public.

([196]) These guarantees are explained in the European Commission's 2017 notice on access to justice in environmental matters (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52017XC0818(02)) and a related 2018 citizen's guide (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2b362f0a-bfe4-11e8-99ee-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF).

([197]) This EIR focuses on the means used by Member States to guarantee rights of access to justice and legal standing and to overcome other major barriers to bringing cases on environmental protection.

([198]) European Commission, 'Romania', Inspire Knowledge Base, https://knowledge-base.inspire.ec.europa.eu/romania_en..

([199]) The European Commission provides a list of high-value spatial datasets (https://github.com/INSPIRE-MIF/need-driven-data-prioritisation/blob/main/documents/eReporting_PriorityDataList_V2.1_final_20201008.xlsx).

on accessibility of spatial data, but more efforts are needed. Therefore, the 2022 priority action is repeated.

Public participation

Public involvement at both the planning and the project phase maximises transparency and social acceptance of programmes and projects. Consultation with the public (including NGOs) and environmental, local and regional authorities is a key feature of an effective impact assessment procedure. Such consultation also provides an opportunity for public authorities and project promoters to engage with the public actively and meaningfully by making information on the likely significant effects widely available. If carried out with due diligence and taking into consideration useful public input, this process leads to better-informed decision-making and can promote public acceptance. Making information available increases stakeholder involvement, thus lessening resistance and preventing (or minimising) litigation. On the other hand, it is paramount that the procedure is effective.

This section examines how public involvement and transparency are ensured under two instruments, namely the EIA Directive ([200]) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive ([201]).

EU law provides for a flexible framework concerning EIAs. The aim of this framework is to ensure the application of the necessary environmental safeguards, while enabling speedy approval of projects. The Commission has contributed to simplifying and accelerating permitting for renewable energy projects and continues to support the Member States in this regard. Romania has already taken some steps aimed at accelerating permit-issuing procedures, taking advantage of the high degree of flexibility offered by the EU legal framework, such as the establishment of one-stop shops and accelerated short deadlines for issuing permits for renewable energy projects.

The average speed in the EU for issuing permits involving an EIA procedure is 20.6 months, with a minimum duration of 11.4 months and a maximum duration of 75.7 months ([202]). The duration of each step in an EIA process (screening, scoping, EIA report, public consultation, reasoned conclusion, development consent) varies considerably between Member States and projects. The available data for Romania show that the average duration of an EIA process is faster than the EU average. Effective use of EU procedures can positively influence the timely approval of activities underpinning the decarbonisation of the economy on the way to net zero by 2050.

A new report is not yet available on the application and effectiveness of the SEA Directive in the EU. Nevertheless, a support study has been published with information by Member State ([203]).

The relevant legislation obliges environmental protection agencies to publish announcements and relevant information on EIA and SEA processes on a central website. However, as mentioned in previous EIRs, the relevant Romanian website is not organised in a way that facilitates searching for and identifying relevant cases. Information about local projects, plans or programmes subject to EIA/SEA procedures is published on each local environmental agency's website, in the 'Regulations' area.

Information about national EIA/SEA procedures is published on the website of the central public authority for environment protection, following the path 'Domains' → 'Impact assessment' ([204]).

No information is published by Romania on the number of EIA and SEA processes or on the level of public participation, either in individual cases or in aggregate.

In the 2022 EIR, Romania received priority actions to improve the functioning of the website in relation to EIA and SEA processes, to ensure that the public has adequate information to identify cases of concern and adequate opportunity to make comments, and to publish regular information on the number of EIA and SEA processes and their outcomes, including information on the level of public participation and the extent to which public comments were taken into account in final decisions. Romania has made limited progress in this area, and therefore the messages in these priority actions are reiterated in a single 2025 priority action.

([200]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0092.

([201]) Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (OJ L 197, 21.7.2001, p. 30), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042.

([202]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Collection of information and data on the implementation of the revised Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by 2014/52/EU)*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, Tables 5 and 6, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8349a857-2936-11ef-9290-01aa75ed71a1/.

([203]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, Lundberg, P., McNeill, A., McGuinn, J., Cantarelli, A. et al., *Study supporting the preparation of the report on the application and effectiveness of the SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) – Final study*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/1615072

([204]) http://www.mmediu.ro/.

Access to justice

Access to justice, guaranteed by Article 19(1) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, is a fundamental right and part of the democratic process. It is vital to ensure the full application of EU law in all Member States and the legal protection of the rights of individuals, including in environmental matters. Access to justice is essential to enable judicial review of the decisions of public authorities and to allow the correction of any wrongdoing committed by these authorities.

This section provides a snapshot of the state of play of access to courts by the public, particularly when it comes to challenging plans, or the non-adoption of plans, under EU law, in the areas of water, waste, air quality and noise, irrespective of the form of the legal act (i.e. regulatory act or administrative decision).

As outlined in the 2022 EIR, NGOs have a special status and do not have to demonstrate a special interest in order to have legal standing in an environmental court case or in cases that could have significant effects on the environment.

Plans and programmes under SEA that are specifically required by EU law to be prepared are adopted through laws issued by the parliament, or normative administrative acts such as governmental decisions or ministerial orders. Laws issued by the parliament can be challenged on the ground that they breach the constitution. If a plan or programme is not within the scope of SEA, a public consultation will be carried out in any case. Indeed, according to Law No 52/2003 on the transparency of the decision-making of public authorities regarding the public consultation procedure, and other sectoral legislation, a public consultation must be carried out prior to the adoption of a normative act. These administrative acts – both SEA normative/administrative acts and other normative acts under the scope of Law No 52/2003 – can be challenged in accordance with the general provisions of Law No 554/2004.

2025 priority actions

- Make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise environmental datasets in implementing the Inspire Directive, especially those identified as high-value spatial datasets for implementing environmental legislation ([205]).
- Ensure that relevant information on EIA and SEA procedures (including on public participation opportunities and on publication of final decisions) is electronically accessible in a timely manner, through at least a central portal or easily accessible points of access, at the appropriate administrative level.
- Improve access to courts in national environmental cases by the public concerned and eliminate practical barriers, such as length of proceedings and excessive costs in some Member States.

Compliance assurance

Environmental compliance assurance covers all work undertaken by public authorities to ensure that industries, farmers and others fulfil their obligations to protect water, air and nature, to manage waste ([206]) and to remedy any environmental damage. It includes measures such as (i) compliance promotion, (ii) compliance monitoring (i.e. inspections and other checks), (iii) enforcement, that is, steps taken to stop breaches and impose sanctions, and (iv) ensuring damage prevention and remediation in line with the polluter-pays principle.

Compliance promotion, monitoring and enforcement

Non-compliance with environmental obligations may occur for different reasons, including poor understanding or lack of acceptance of the rules, opportunism or even criminality. Compliance promotion activities help duty-holders to comply by providing information, guidance and other support. This is particularly important in areas where new and complex legislation is put in place.

When inspections and other control activities identify problems, a range of responses may be appropriate, including the use of administrative and criminal enforcement tools.

In November 2023, a regional conference dedicated to strengthening the fight against crime affecting the environment was held, which representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland and Romania attended ([207]).

No specific information is available on the prosecution of environmental crimes, and concerns persist about the capacity of the judicial system to deal with environmental cases effectively. Criminal investigations and prosecutions are generally not made public, in line with current

([205]) The European Commission provides a list of high-value spatial datasets (https://github.com/INSPIRE-MIF/need-driven-data-prioritisation/blob/main/documents/eReporting_PriorityDataList_V2.1_final_20201008.xlsx).

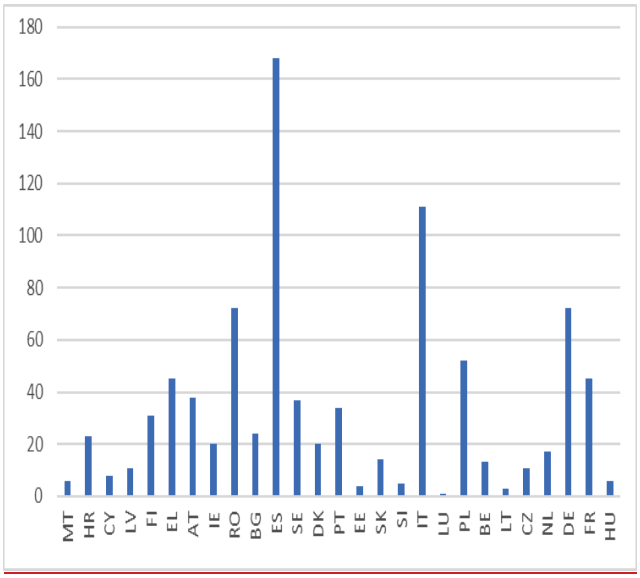
([206]) The concept is explained in detail in the European Commission's 2018 communication on EU actions to improve environmental compliance and governance (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0010) and the related Commission staff working document (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0010).

legislation, and only in a very few cases were press releases made available to the public. It is difficult therefore for concerned individuals or civil-society groups to investigate whether, and what, action has been taken by the authorities in cases of specific breaches of environmental legislation. There are existing formal arrangements for coordination among the bodies responsible for enforcing penalties for environmental damage or environmental crimes, issued as 'protocols' on cooperation between the national environment agency and various other public authorities (e.g. in 2011 and 2018), but it is not obvious that those guidelines have resulted in a functioning system.

The recommendations issued in 2022 pointed to the need for Romania to (i) provide information to farmers on how to manage their land to improve biodiversity outcomes, and more detailed site-specific information once management plans are available for Natura 2000 sites; (ii) encourage and monitor public participation in enforcement, through activities to raise awareness of the options for reporting environmental problems, and, more generally, establish active plans for making use of citizen science; (iii) make more information available on the enforcement of environmental law, including by providing regular information on the prosecution of environmental crimes, as well as information on formal arrangements for cooperation between responsible public bodies; and (iv) make information available on environmental damage, including information on penalties and other financial measures. The 2022 priority actions concerning compliance promotion, monitoring, and criminal and administrative enforcement are not assessed here due to a lack of systematic information. Similarly, the Commission is not aware of whether or not information regarding compliance with the Nitrates and Nature Directives is easily available online at the national level for farmers, and hence the 2022 priority action on this point is not assessed.

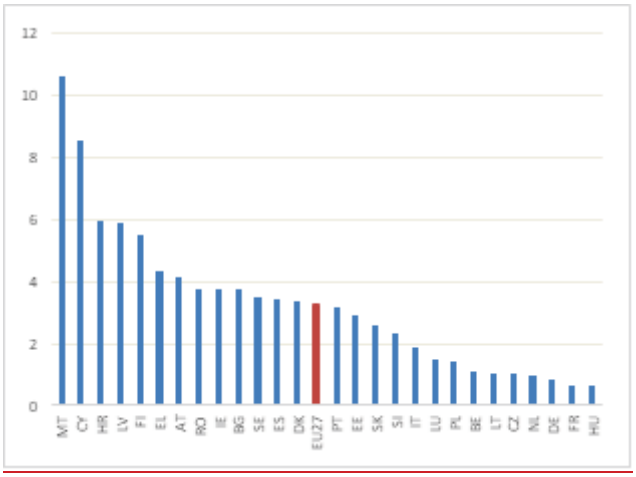
Between 15 May 2022 and 31 December 2024, the Commission received 71 complaints in relation to the environment in Romania, making it the Member State with the joint third highest number of complaints for that period. That is 3.72 complaints per million inhabitants, above the EU average of 3.2 (figures 40 and 41). A significant proportion of those complaints concern waste and nature, followed by water, air quality and EIA issues.

Figure 40: EU complaints 15 May 2022-31 December 2024



Source: DG Environment complaints data.

Figure 41: EU complaints per million inhabitants 15 May 2022-31 December 2024



Source: Eurostat, 'Population' tps00001, accessed 22 January 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en, and DG Environment complaints data.

The new EU Environmental Crime Directive

The EU has recently strengthened its legal framework on tackling the most serious breaches of environmental obligations, notably by the adoption of the new ECD (Directive (EU) 2024/1203/EU)([208]) and new sectoral legislation with stronger provisions on compliance monitoring, enforcement and penalties. Issues important for the transposition and the implementation of the relevant new instruments are highlighted below; a detailed assessment of these topics will be included in the

([208]) Directive 2024/1203/EU on the protection of the environment through criminal law (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1203/oj/eng).

next EIR once more implementation measures are put in place and more systematic information is available.

The new ECD replaced the 2008 ECD and introduced several new offence categories, such as unlawful ship recycling, unlawful water abstraction, and serious breaches of EU legislation on chemicals, mercury, fluorinated GHG and IAS of EU concern. It also covered the establishment of qualified offences, subject to more severe penalties where one of the offences defined in the directive leads to serious widespread and substantial damage or destruction of the environment. Concrete provisions on the types and levels of penalties that can be imposed for natural and legal persons who commit an offence were also introduced. Other provisions will help considerably to improve the effectiveness in combating environmental crime of all actors along the enforcement chain. These include obligations to ensure adequate resources and investigative tools, specialised regular training and the establishment of cooperation mechanisms within and between Member States as well as national strategies on combating environmental crime.

Member States are required to transpose the new ECD into national law by 21 May 2026 and to take additional measures to more effectively combat environmental crime, in particular through training, coordination, cooperation and strategic approaches. The Commission will provide support, including by facilitating the identification and sharing of good practices. Member States are expected to ensure the availability of the necessary resources and the specialised skills required and they are invited to encourage their authorities to support and cooperate with the recognised EU-level networks of environmental enforcement practitioners, such as the EU Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law ([209]), EnviCrimeNet ([210]), the European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment ([211]) and the EU Forum of Judges for the Environment ([212]). The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation mechanisms for cooperation on cross-border cases should be used more systematically for environmental offences.

Environmental Liability Directive

The Environmental Liability Directive (ELD)([213]) aims to ensure that environmental damage is remediated in kind at the expense of those who have caused it, in line with the polluter-pays principle. It helps to halt the net loss in biodiversity, as well as reducing the number of contaminated sites and protecting the environmental quality of groundwater and surface waters. The ELD is a cross-cutting tool and a key enabler for better implementation of EU environmental law.

The ELD addresses cases of significant environmental damage to protected species and natural habitats, and, when caused by operators carrying out certain potentially hazardous activities, also damages to water and to soil. The Commission has the legal obligation to periodically evaluate the ELD. The ELD has undergone the second evaluation ([214]), which will be finalised in 2025, and which was supported by an external study ([215]), containing, among other things, evidence, views, reports and other relevant information gathered from different stakeholder groups, including Member States.

One of the most relevant indicators in assessing implementation and enforcement of the ELD is the number of environmental damage cases handled under the ELD, especially when this number is compared with the previous reporting period. Fewer ELD cases were reported in the second reporting period (2013–2022) than in the first one (2007–2013). However, the downward tendency in the number of ELD occurrences and their overall low number do not necessarily mean that the ELD has achieved its objectives, as the figure needs to be compared with the overall number of environmental damage cases, some of which may have been handled under the other liability instruments.

The ELD has not always been effective in ensuring that the polluter pays, because the liable operators often lack financial capacity to carry out remediation measures. While the ELD does not provide for a mandatory financial security system, it explicitly calls for Member States to encourage the development of financial security instruments and markets, with the aim of enabling operators to use financial guarantees to cover their responsibilities under this directive.

([209]) https://www.impel.eu/en.

([210]) LIFE+SATEC project (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/life/publicWebsite/project/LIFE20-PRE-ES-000001/fight-against-environmental-crime-at-a-strategic-level-through-the-strengthening-of-envicrimenet-network-of-experts-in-environmental-criminal-investigations).

([211]) https://www.environmentalprosecutors.eu.

([212]) https://www.eufje.org/index.php?lang=en.

([213]) Directive 2004/35/EC on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02004L0035-20190626).

([214]) Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Environmental Liability Directive, forthcoming 2025.

([215]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment and Fogleman, V., *Study in support of the evaluation of the Environmental Liability Directive and its implementation – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/006d90e5-980a-11ef-a130-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

In the first reporting period, Romania reported one occurrence of an imminent threat and three occurrences of environmental damage under ELD. The second report by Romania covers 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2021 and provides information about one occurrence of an imminent threat of environmental damage. For comparison, between 2007 and 2017 there were 1 186 non-ELD environmental damage occurrences in Romania.

Romania has not introduced mandatory financial security for ELD liabilities, and demand for such instruments is low. Environmental insurance policies are not generally available and, even when they are available, they provide cover only for remediating sudden and accidental pollution. Environmental extensions to general liability policies that provide cover for remediating pollution, including pollution under the ELD, are not available, while environmental extensions to property policies are available only from a small number of insurers and they do not provide cover for remediating pollution (or other environmental damage) under the ELD or non-ELD environmental legislation.

The 2022 EIR recommended that Romania make available information on environmental damage, including information on penalties and other financial measures. Romania has made some progress in increasing the availability of information. Annual reports are published on the National Environmental Protection Agency's website describing ELD occurrences.

2025 priority action

- Encourage the use of training programmes provided by the Commission (or developed at the national level) covering the ELD and its interactions with the other national liability-related instruments, to ensure more efficient ELD implementation, improve the expertise of the competent authorities and raise awareness among all stakeholder groups.

EU-supported environmental capacity building

The Commission's 2023 Compact () initiative to enhance the administrative space identifies the capacity to lead the green transition as one of three key pillars, along with the public administration skills agenda and the capacity for Europe's Digital Decade. Compact also recognises the role of the EIR reporting tool in improving environmental governance. The two main capacity-building opportunities for the environment provided by the European Commission are the TSI (216) and the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool (217). The technical assistance available through cohesion policy is subject to shared management and is not dealt with in this subsection.

The Commission's technical support instrument

The TSI provides Member States with tailor-made technical expertise on the design and implementation of reforms. The support is demand driven and does not require national co-financing.

The TSI had annual calls in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. The following environment-related projects have been selected for Romania:

- Support for implementing Romania's renewable energy support scheme from the Ministry of Energy (2023);
- ESG ([218]) risk management framework for the financial sector from the National Bank of Romania (2023);
- Support to the preparation of Social Climate Plans, involving the Ministry of European Investments and Projects (2024) (2024);
- Support to the revised EU Emissions Trading System, also involving the Ministry of European Investments and Projects (2024);
- Development of legal framework for fully fledged and comprehensive regional green hydrogen market from the Ministry of Energy (2024);
- Supporting the preparation of secondary legislation needed for offshore wind development in the Black Sea, Ministry of Energy (2025);
- Water Losses Reduction for a sustainable water from the National Regulatory Authority for Public Utilities Services (ANRSC) (2025).

The Commission's TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool

The Commission launched the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool in 2017. It aims to facilitate peer-to-peer learning among Member States' environmental authorities through workshops (single or multi-country), expert missions (where a delegation of experts travels to the requesting institution) and study visits (where a delegation from the requesting institution travels to a host country). Flagship multi-country workshops are those requested by the European Commission to present new and upcoming

([216]) See the European Commission web page on the TSI (https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en).

([217]) See the European Commission web page on the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/law-and-governance/environmental-implementation-review/peer-2-peer_en). TAIEX: Technical Assistance and Information Exchange.

([218]) 'ESG' here means 'environmental, social and governance'.

environmental legislation and policy in all Member States ([219]).

Workshops involving Romania during the reporting period were as follows:

- Best practices on sustainable forest management, with the participation of experts from several Member States (9–11 March 2022);
- Measures to reduce air pollution in transport and residential energy, involving several Member States (11–13 June 2024);
- Good practices on noise abatement measures and noise mapping: Directive 2002/49/CE, with the participation of Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, the EEA and the European Commission (26–27 September 2022);
- Future challenges in air protection in Europe, under the Czech Presidency (24 November 2024).

In 2022, Romania was encouraged to boost administrative capacity and project preparation to make full use of EU funds to build environmental infrastructure and protect nature. In this respect, progress has not been sufficient.

2025 priority action

- Improve overall national environmental governance, in particular administrative capacity to support the green transition and coordination at the regional and local levels.

([219]) Flagship multi-country workshops are: Recast Drinking Water Directive (3 April 2025); Environmental compliance and governance (18 March 2025); Planning of Renewable Energy Projects (20 February 2025); Air Quality: Implementation of the revised Air Quality Directive (16 January 2025); Industrial safety: awareness raising of emerging risks linked with climate change and decarbonation (12 December 2024; Air quality: implementation of the NEC Directive to further mainstream air and broader pollution reduction in agricultural policy (25 September 2024); Industrial emissions transposition and implementation of the revised directive (12 September 2024); Noise: progress towards meeting Member States' noise limit values and EU reduction targets (5 June 2024); Best practice use of environmental footprint methods on the EU market (30 May 2024); Sustainable finance (9 November 2023); Textile waste separate collection, treatment and markets (3 October 2023); EU environmental funding and support (13 June 2023); Advisory service for businesses to go circular (24 April 2023); Digital product passport implementation (6 December 2022); Public involvement in planning and approval of renewable energy projects (17 November 2022); Environmental compliance and governance (14 November 2022); Biowaste management (19–20 September 2022); and Renewable energy projects: permit granting processes (13 June 2022). NB: The first flagship workshop on zero pollution for air, water and soil took place9 February 2022.

Annex: 2025 priority actions

Circular economy and waste management

Transitioning to a circular economy

- Adopt measures to increase the circular material use rate.
- Speed up the transition to a circular economy by implementing an updated national strategy and the EU framework and recommendations, in particular to complement it with upstream circularity measures.

Waste management

- Complete closure of non-compliant landfills.
- Improve separate collection at source e.g. through economic instruments, investing in infrastructure for separate collection, sorting and recycling, and increasing public awareness.
- Increase reuse of products and scale up waste recycling infrastructure associated with the higher steps of the waste hierarchy. In particular, improve collection and increase treatment capacity for bio-waste.
- Improve municipal waste preparation for reuse and recycling.
- Increase the recycling rates of packaging waste.
- Increase the collection and recycling rate of waste electronic and electric equipment (WEEE).
- Improve the system for managing the quality of data on packaging waste in order to build coherent and verifiable data sets.
- Invest in waste prevention measures to reduce the total amount of waste generated.
- Ensure the achievement of the 2025 waste targets, following the recommendations made by the Commission in the early warning reports where applicable.
- Ensure the achievement of the 2025 waste targets, following the recommendations made by the Commission in the Early Warning Reports where applicable.
- Ratify the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships.

Biodiversity and natural capital

Global and EU biodiversity frameworks

- Submit to the CBD an updated NBSAP or national targets following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Nature protection and restoration – Natura 2000

- Complete the Natura 2000 site designation process.
- Ensure the effective implementation of Natura 2000 management plans and sufficient administrative capacity and financing for both Natura 2000 and the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation. Ensure the implementation of Prioritised Actions Framework 2021–2027 PAF.
- Enhance efforts to collect reliable data on the conservation status of habitats and species as well as their prevalence at the site level. In view of this, consider the creation of a body in charge of monitoring and reporting, to ensure that data are not provided only ad hoc on a contract basis.

Recovery of ecosystems

Agricultural ecosystems

- Implement environmental eco-schemes and agri-environmental measures and practices to address the environmental needs of Romania.
- Implement and scale up the uptake of organic farming practices.

Wetlands/peatlands

- Implement peatland conservation and restoration measures and include such measures and objectives in the national restoration plans.

Forest ecosystems

- Take action against illegal logging activities and apply appropriate penalties and remedies for damage done to Natura 2000 sites.

Prevention and management of invasive alien species

- Step up implementation of the IAS Regulation, including with regard to enforcement and capacity of inspection authorities
- Ratify the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments of 2004 (BWM Convention).

Ecosystem assessment and accounting

- Support the development of the national business and biodiversity network.

Zero pollution

Clean air

- As part of the NAPCP, take actions towards reducing emissions of air pollutants.
- Ensure full compliance with the current AAQD standards, also in light of future stricter requirements under the revised AAQD.
- Upgrade and improve the air quality monitoring network, and ensure timely reporting of air quality data.

Industrial emissions

- Reduce industrial air pollution damage and intensity.
- Reduce industrial releases to water, and their intensity.
- Engage with industry and environmental NGOs to ensure proper contribution to and implementation of BAT conclusions, and ensure timely updates to permits following the publication of BAT conclusions.
- Ensure effective public participation and access to justice in relation to the IED.

Noise

- Complete noise mapping.
- Complete and implement action plans on noise management.

Water quality and management

Water Framework Directive

- Tackle the obstacles identified in the implementation of measures, such as administrative capacity and resources.
- Improve river continuity and ecological flows, including in light of hydropower pressures.
- Improve hydromorphological measures to meet objectives.
- Reduce pollution from nutrients, chemicals, metals and saline discharges.
- Improve the classification of waterbodies, reduce the gap to objectives and better justify exemptions.

Floods Directive

- FRMPs should provide details on how the FHRMs were used in the choice of measures and how to consider pluvial flooding.
- Consider future climate scenarios in FRMPs.
- Better explain the choice and implementation of flood prevention and protection measures (prioritisation, monitoring, costs of measures).
- Improve public consultation and stakeholder involvement.

Nitrates Directive

- Tackle nutrient pollution, especially nitrates from agriculture through the implementation of the Nitrates Directive.

Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

- Take the necessary measures to ensure full implementation of the current urban wastewater treatment directive, taking into account the new requirements of the recast directive..

Chemicals

- Upgrade administrative capacities in implementation and enforcement towards a policy of zero tolerance of non-compliance.
- Increase involvement in the activities of the Forum for Exchange of Information on Enforcement of the European Chemicals Agency, including in the coordinated enforcement projects, called REFs.
- Increase customs controls and controls of products sold online with regard to compliance with chemicals legislations.

Climate action

- Implement all policies and measures that are needed to achieve targets laid down in the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) and the Land Use and Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation. More detailed priority actions are set out in the assessment of the final National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP).

Financing

- Use more national funding (including by increasing taxes in favour of the environment and reducing environmentally harmful subsidies), EU funding and private funding to help close the investment gap.

Environmental governance

Information, public participation and access to justice

- Make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise environmental datasets in implementing the Inspire Directive, especially those identified as high-value spatial datasets for implementing environmental legislation.
- Ensure that relevant information on EIA and SEA procedures (including on public participation opportunities and on publication of final decisions) is electronically accessible in a timely manner, through at least a central portal or easily accessible points of access, at the appropriate administrative level.
- Improve access to courts in national environmental cases by the public concerned and eliminate practical barriers, such as length of proceedings and excessive costs in some Member States.

Compliance assurance

- Encourage the use of training programmes provided by the Commission (or developed at the national level) covering the ELD and its interactions with the other national liability-related instruments, to ensure more efficient ELD implementation, improve the expertise of the competent authorities and raise awareness among all stakeholder groups.

EU-supported environmental capacity-building

- Improve overall national environmental governance, in particular administrative capacity to support the green transition and coordination at the regional and local levels.