



# Sustainable European economies

WWF wants sustainable economies in Europe that provide more well-being for all within the ecological limits of the planet.

## What does the current economy do to the people, the businesses and the nature of Europe?

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### Environmental collapse

- In the EU, 65% of habitats and 52% of species are under serious threat<sup>1</sup>.
- Europe is consuming natural resources as if we had 2.6 planets, and yet we have only one<sup>2</sup>.

### Serious health problems

- Air pollution kills 500,000 people<sup>3</sup> and costs the EU around €537 billion every year<sup>4</sup>.
- In Europe 20 million people lack access to quality water<sup>5</sup>.

### Social insecurity

- In 2014, 1 out of 10 adults in the EU28 is without a job (23.8 million adults), with higher levels for Greece and Spain where 2 out of 10 are unemployed<sup>6</sup>.

### Economic instability:

- In 2010 EU businesses spent €528 billion to import raw materials (one third of EU imports)<sup>7</sup>. This makes our economy highly vulnerable to resource scarcity and external shocks.

## What will change with sustainable economies?

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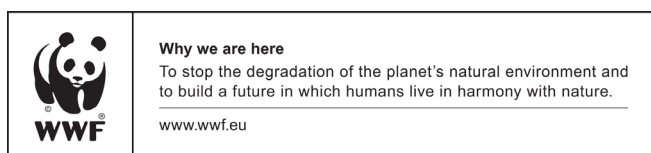


**20 MILLION**  
**PEOPLE EMPLOYED**  
**BY 2020 BY THE**  
**TRANSITION TO SUS-**  
**TAINABLE ECONOMIES**

- More employed people: Up to 20 million jobs (10% of EU labour force) by 2020 created by the transition to sustainable economies<sup>8</sup>.
- Resource-efficient industries saving up to €310 billion per year in the cost of materials<sup>9</sup>.
- At least 20% of Europe's territory (Natura 2000) better protected and managed producing benefits worth up to €300 billion per year.
- Greener tax systems: Less taxes on labour and more on polluting energy intensive activities would bring revenues of €35 billion in 2016, and 3 times more within 10 years<sup>10</sup>.
- Cleaner air: With 20% less greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 we would save lives and cut €52 billion annually in health costs<sup>11</sup>. This could rise to €60-80 billion with a 30% greenhouse gas reduction cut across the EU<sup>12</sup>.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> European Commission (2011), Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020, COM(2011) 244 final.
- <sup>2</sup> WWF et al. (2014), Living Planet Report 2014.
- <sup>3</sup> Brandt, J. et al. CEEH (2011), Assessment of Health-Cost Externalities of Air Pollution at the National Level using the EVA Model System.
- <sup>4</sup> European Environment Agency (2011), Air Quality Report in Europe.
- <sup>5</sup> EU Commissioners Potocnik, Piebalgs and Barnier, World Water Day 2013, 21 March 2013, Brussels, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-13-270\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-270_en.htm)
- <sup>6</sup> Eurostat, January 2015
- <sup>7</sup> European Commission (DG Trade) website: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/trade-topics/rawmaterials>
- <sup>8</sup> European Commission (2014), Press Release, Employment : Commission outlines measures to maximize job opportunities in the green economy, July 2014.
- <sup>9</sup> Research by McKinsey & Co published in Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2012), Towards the circular economy.
- <sup>10</sup> Eunomia Research & Consulting et al. (2014), Environmental Fiscal Reform Potential in 12 EU Member States.
- <sup>11</sup> WWF; Health and Environment Alliance, Climate Action Network Europe (2008). The co-benefits to health of a strong EU climate change policy. See also European Commission (2010), Analysis of options to move beyond 20% greenhouse gas emission reductions and assessing the risk of carbon leakage.
- <sup>12</sup> Health and Environment Alliance and Health Care Without Harm Europe (2010), Acting now for better health – a 30% reduction target for EU climate policy.



### For more information:

**Sébastien Godinot**

Economist

WWF European Policy Office

+32 2 740 0920

[sgodinot@wwf.eu](mailto:sgodinot@wwf.eu)