



European Union Network for the Implementation  
and Enforcement of Environmental Law

# An introduction to **the IMPEL Network**

Network of practitioners in permitting  
and enforcing of environmental law





**The mission of IMPEL is to contribute to protecting the environment by promoting the effective implementation and enforcement of EU environmental law.**

## Who we are

The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) is an international non-profit association of the environmental authorities of the European Union Member States, acceding and candidate countries of the EU, EEA and EFTA countries and potential candidates to join the European Community. It has over 50 members from more than 35 countries in Europe. Participants range from inspectors, law enforcement officers, permit writers, policy makers to managers. The core of the IMPEL activities concern awareness raising, capacity building, peer review, exchange of information and experiences on implementation, international enforcement collaboration as well as promoting and supporting the practicability and enforceability of European environmental legislation. It undertakes its activities primarily within a project structure.

## What we do

IMPEL aims to improve the implementation of EU environmental legislation, by:

- supporting the development of good practices with guidance and tools;
- promoting the exchange of information and experience;
- supporting and facilitating capacity building and training of regulators;
- carrying out joint actions including inspections;
- providing feedback and advice on new and existing EU environmental law.

IMPEL's objectives are in line with those of the European Union. These include the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) and the Recommendation on Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI).

Working as a network of practitioners, IMPEL shapes its strategic priorities, networking and future work plans to address the project findings. IMPEL will also continue to identify challenges and raise awareness of the importance of effective implementation in Europe.

## How we do it

The core of IMPEL's activities take place within a project structure on the basis of five thematic areas.



## **IMPEL's thematic areas are grouped into so called Expert Teams, each with their own focus.**



### **Industry and Air**

The Industry and Air Expert Team will mainly focus on the practical implementation and enforcement of industry related pieces of legislation. In this area the key directives are the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU (IED) and the Air Quality Directive, because of its close connection to air emissions. Another piece of legislation concerns the Seveso Directive on the control of major industrial accidents.



### **Waste and Transfrontier Shipments (TFS)**

The focus of the Waste and TFS Expert Team is on the practical implementation and enforcement of international and European waste shipment and waste management rules. The aim of the team is to promote compliance through enforcement by carrying out joint enforcement projects and by stimulating a uniform enforcement regime. This is done by awareness raising and capacity building activities, and facilitating inter-agency and cross-border collaboration.



### **Water and Land**

The Water and Land Expert Team aims to contribute to implementation and enforcement challenges related to

directives such as the Water Framework Directive, the Nitrates Directive and the Marine Strategy directives. In addition, the team focuses on water and soil protection, as well as agricultural issues with a special focus on the impact of this human activity on the water environment and on soil.



### **Nature Protection**

The objective of the Nature Protection Expert Team is to strengthen the implementation of EU Nature legislation through awareness raising, extend the network of green experts, exchange best practices, strengthen collaboration with EU networks from prosecutors and judges, share knowledge with NGO's, improve cooperation between (enforcement) experts and organise joint inspections.



### **Cross-cutting tools and approaches**

The Cross-cutting Expert Team is set up to support regulatory practitioners who are responsible for the development of systems, processes, procedures and new ways of working. The team is primarily concerned with cross-cutting regulatory systems rather than sector specific ones. The aims of the team are to make regulators more efficient and effective and to develop overarching tools to support the implementation of new regulations.

## **How we help**

IMPEL was set up in 1992 as an informal network. In 2008, IMPEL was transformed into an international non-profit association under Belgian law. The network's objective is to create the necessary impetus in the European Union to make progress on ensuring a more effective application of environmental legislation. Since its inception, IMPEL has helped numerous national environmental authorities in their efforts to achieve compliance and enforcement. Here are some examples of how IMPEL helps:

- **By helping countries get to compliance more quickly**  
sharing knowledge, skills and good practices, peer reviews (IRI's)
- **By helping implementing organisations to use their limited resources more effectively**  
producing technical guidance and promoting the use of risk-based approaches to target effort
- **By coordinating actions between countries**  
enforcing regulations to tackle illegal trans-frontier movements of waste
- **By facilitating communication between different actors and networks**  
bringing together prosecutors, judges, police, ombudsmen, international networks
- **By informing policy with practical experience and expertise**  
feeding back to policy makers on practicability and enforceability of EU environmental law



# Membership benefits

open to public (associations of) authorities/organisations



IMPEL offers various benefits to its members and to potential members, whether they are public authorities/organisations or associations of such organisations. Working together, knowing and learning from each other are probably the most important ones. Interested organisations can contact us via the IMPEL site on [www.impel.eu](http://www.impel.eu).

## Our members

(over 50 members from more than 35 countries)

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|  Albania        |  Finland |  Latvia          |  Romania         |
|  Austria        |  France  |  Lithuania       |  Serbia          |
|  Belgium        |  Germany |  Luxembourg      |  Slovak Republic |
|  Bulgaria       |  Greece  |  Malta           |  Slovenia        |
|  Croatia        |  Hungary |  Netherlands     |  Spain           |
|  Cyprus         |  Iceland |  North Macedonia |  Sweden          |
|  Czech Republic |  Ireland |  Norway          |  Switzerland     |
|  Denmark        |  Italy   |  Poland          |  Turkey          |
|  Estonia        |  Kosovo* |  Portugal        |  United Kingdom  |



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