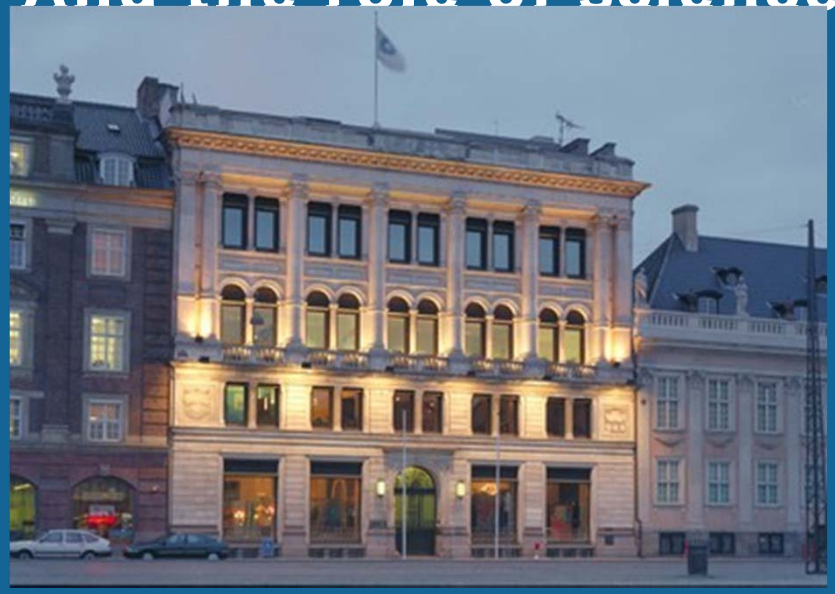
European Environment Agency

Who we are, what we do...
And the role of science



The EEA mission

- "The EEA aims to support sustainable development and to help achieve **significant and measurable** improvement in Europe's environment, through the provision of **timely**, targeted, **relevant and reliable information** to policy making agents and the public"
- Need of sound scientific background
- Commitment to endorse ignorance and uncertainty
- Process appropriate data and turn it into effective information

The EEA is...

- An independent information provider
- An analyst and assessor
- Building bridges between science and policy
- Dependent upon strong networks to carry out its work

→ ...to support policy processes and inform the public

→ Thanks to Eionet, staff budget and steering

Central elements

- EEA backs on several SoERs that made global understanding development,
- Environment is more deeply embedded into society: economy and globalisation,
  - Recognition of complexity by stakeholders
  - Recognition of need for integrated approach
  - Recognition of the systemic crisis
- Ensure that environmental thinking is brought into the mainstream of decision-making

New challenges

- Facts are more complex and less predictable than expected,
- Society is more critical towards science and demands “simplicity”, maybe not yet conscious of the decoupling between behaviour and wishes
- Scientific knowledge is more and more “pixelled”: systemic approach is not fully recognised as scientific work
- Provide access - through the Shared Environmental Information System - SEIS - and the Environmental Data Centres - to updated information and data

Major complexities in policies

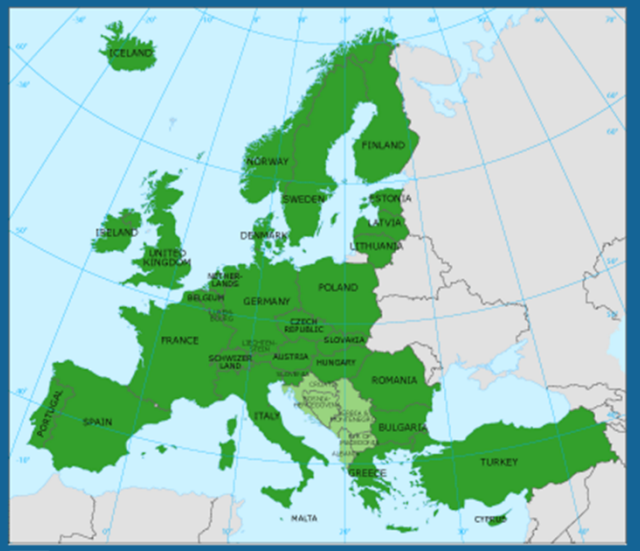
- Biodiversity
  - Strategic goal BUT
    - Still efforts to monitor appropriately
    - Still efforts to address landscapes, soils, land sealing to achieve the goal…
- Water
  - Legal ecological status, BUT
    - Continuity not embedded in legislation,
    - Quantity not really addressed…

The way forward

- Legislation is improvable: for example, the BP2012 aims at assessing efficiency of the WFD
- SEIS aims to improve, modernise and streamline environmental information
- The ”ecosystem accounting” conceptual and preporting framework aims at putting data of different species to cooperate
- ”citizen science” fosters both commitment and data obtaining

EEA development of information making

- Area is huge: spatial approach is prerequisite
- Key role of reference systems
- Data heterogeneity is major issue
- Sound scientific backing to data engineering is another challenge to handle complexity and nevertheless make effective results in a semi-ignorance environment



Diversifying the data sources and provision of results

Beyond the classical data flows and reporting, the focus is as well on:

- Organizing ways to collect locally distributed data (down – top)
- Organizing a better information for the local level (placing local in perspective of global)

Modern Web technologies (Eye on Earth) serve this purpose, with the goal of providing the best possible information

Thanks for your attention