

a few assessments conclude that the EU is becoming weaker in its relationship with big states, e.g. China, Russia and the USA. However, all advanced and emerging economies face problems that cannot be dealt with alone. This can play to the long-term advantage of Europe, which remains the largest economic bloc in the world, with considerable innovation power and experience in managing difficult socioeconomic transition processes.

Next steps

State-of-the-art, well structured information is essential to understand global megatrends and potential environmental consequences for Europe. Generating this information falls within the core remit of the EEA and undertaking the work behind the present study has confirmed both its considerable value and the need to continue it in the future.

The information presented here does not claim to be exhaustive or definitive but contributes a first step towards developing an improved information base for Europe's environment in a global context. It represents part of a longer-term, continuous, iterative activity. Further work will be undertaken during coming years — in particular in the run-up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) — to provide a solid information base to support policy formulation with a long-term perspective.

List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRIC countries	Brazil, Russia, India and China
BRIIC countries	Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia and China
CAP	EU Common Agricultural Policy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DG ECFIN	Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs
EEA	European Environment Agency
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	Foreign direct investment
G20	Group of 20: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America
G8	Group of 8: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GET	Global Education Trend
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEA	International Energy Agency
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IZT	Institut für Zukunftsstudien und Technologiebewertung
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NBIC	Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Information technology and Cognitive science
NIC	National Intelligence Council
ODS	Ozone depleting substances
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
REACH	Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances
RCEP	Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution
SOER	State and outlook of the environment report
SRES	Special Report on Emission Scenarios (IPCC)
UBA	Umweltbundesamt
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
	UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN WTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WGBU	German Advisory Council on Global Change
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

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