



## The role of environmental services in the ecological transition in Europe



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The continued economic development of Europe in the respect of its environment implies that it is committing to a virtuous ecological transition that will provide answers to the problems of dwindling resources, more complex pollution issues and challenges of new urban lifestyles.

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### Elections :

#### A. Merkel still in the lead in the polls but the gap with the opposition is closing up



Just one week before the general election in Germany on 22nd September next and according to the most recent poll published by Infratest Dimap the CDU will easily win the election with 41% of the vote. It is due to be followed by the SPD which is forecast to win 27%, the Greens 10%; the Left Party 8% and the FDP, 5%. With 3% of the vote the AfD would be below the 5% threshold obligatory to be represented in the Bundestag. The campaign is in full swing to convince the undecided and to guarantee a good turnout... [Read more](#)

#### The Rightwing wins the general elections in Norway



The rightwing won the general elections in Norway on 9th September. The Conservative Party (H) chaired by former Local Affairs and Regional Development Minister (2001-2005), Erna Solberg won 26.8% of the vote and 48 seats (+18 in comparison with the previous general elections on 14th September 2009). The Progress Party (FrP), a populist party led by Siv Jensen, won 16.4% of the vote and 29 seats (-12). The Democratic Christian Party (KrF) led by Knut Arild Hareide won 5.6% of the vote and 10 seats (=); the Liberal Party (V) chaired by Trine Skei Grande won 5% of the vote and 9 seats (+7). Together the rightwing won 54% of the vote and 96 of the 169 seats in the Storting, the only chamber of parliament. Will the rightwing be able to

work together on a programme and form a coalition government?.. [Read more](#)

## Financial Crisis :

### Eurogroup Decisions on Cyprus



Finance Ministers, who met on 13th and 14th September 2013 in Vilnius, agreed on a further payment of aid totalling 1.5 billion euro to Cyprus. Ministers deemed that the Cypriot authorities had taken decisive measures, thereby stabilising the financial sector. However the short term outlook is still subject to uncertainty, hence the European support. The payment is planned for the end of September after an official agreement by the European Stability Mechanism... [Read more](#)

### Estonia enters into recession



According to an official estimate published on 9th September 2013 Estonia entered into recession in the second quarter of 2013 contracting by 0.2% of the GDP in comparison with the previous quarter. In comparison with the second quarter 2012 the GDP had increased by 1%... [Read more](#)

### Greece: unemployment rose to 27.9% in June 2013



On 12th September 2013 the Greek unemployment bureau published the most recent data on unemployment in June 2013. According to the report the unemployment rate rose to 27.9% in June 2013 whilst it lay at 24.6% in the same month last year. There was also a 0.3 point increase in comparison with May 2013. The report also includes the inactive population which dropped by 0.7 points in comparison with June 2012... [Read more](#)

### French Government announces the main outlines of the 2014 budget



On 11th September 2013 the French government revealed the main outlines of the draft finance law for 2014. Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault announced after the Council of Ministers that next year's budget was going to include unprecedented savings to a total of 15 billion euro. Growth forecasts for 2014 have been reduced to 0.9% instead of 1.2% planned in the spring. The deficit will total 4.1% of the GDP at the end of 2013 and is due to lie at 3.6% in 2014... [Read more](#)

### Ireland shows "encouraging signs of recovery", according to the OECD



On 11th September 2013 the OECD published two reports on the Irish economy: "Economic Study of Ireland 2013" and "Local Job Creation: How Employment and Training Agencies can Help." These two reports explain that recovery is now underway in Ireland but that growth had to be boosted. Hence the organisation is encouraging the country to act on unemployment, notably amongst young people and that it also had to foster growth. 13% of the population is without work in spite of a slight decline in unemployment over the last few months... [Read more](#)

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### The Polish Diet approved the draft bill modifying the 2013 budget



The lower chamber of the Polish parliament approved the government's draft budget on 13th September. The latter is planning for an increase in the deficit of 16 billion zlotys (3.76 billion euro), to total 51.57 billion zlotys. 235 MPs supported this draft, 73 were against it and 3 abstained. The project notes fiscal revenues of 23.7 billion zlotys (5.6 billion euros) less in comparison with what had been planned in the finance bill for 2013. To impede a rising budgetary deficit Prime Minister Donald Tusk's government is suggesting spending cuts of 7.7 billion zlotys. The cuts will involve the cutting national defence and transport infrastructure spending in the main... [Read more](#)

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### Portugal: the government cuts civil servants' pensions

The Portuguese government adopted an austerity measure on 12th September which aims to make cuts of up to 10% in civil servants' pensions which are over 600 euro per month. This draft bill which has



been the focus of bitter negotiations with the unions is part of the reform of the State that Portugal committed to undertaking to enable a 4.7 billion euro reduction in public spending by the end of 2014... [Read more](#)

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#### UK: unemployment decreased slightly to 7.7% in July 2013



According to figures published by the National Office for Statistics on 11th September 2013 the unemployment rate totalled 7.7% in the UK in July 2013, i.e. one point less than during the period February to April... [Read more](#)

#### Commission :

##### Reform by the European Commission of the single telecommunications market



On 11th September 2013 the European Commission adopted a regulation to reform the single telecommunications market. It is notably suggesting the suppression of roaming fees, cheaper calls abroad, the guarantee of an internet system open to all and new consumer rights. The latter will be able to conclude 12 month limited contracts and change provider more easily. Moreover the proposal mentions the simplification and harmonisation of operators' rules and measures to guarantee better, faster wifi internet access... [Read more](#)

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##### Speech on the State of the Union



On 11th September 2013 the President of the Commission José Manuel Barroso delivered a speech on the State of the Union to the European Parliament. He maintained that the EU's Member States had succeeded in responding to the financial, economic and social crisis together. The efforts made were now starting to convince and confidence was returning. However there remained a great deal to do: deepening banking union; fighting against unemployment; adopting and implementing the 2014 budget as well as the multi-annual financial framework. He recalled that the Union was a project for peace. Countries like Ukraine which want to draw closer to the Union must be free to make their own geopolitical choices... [Read more](#)

#### Parliament :

##### Parliament supports advanced biofuels



On 11th September 2013 MEPs voted in support of measures to support advanced biofuels. The share of traditional biofuels, the so-called first generation, has been capped at 6% in comparison with the final consumed energy in transports in 2020. This restriction enables a faster transition over to a new generation of so-called advanced biofuels which is made using other sources such as algae and some waste products. MEPs believe that advanced biofuels will represent not less than 2.5% of consumption in 2020. These measures aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions via the increased use of agricultural land to produce biofuels... [Read more](#)

##### Introduction of the Single Supervisory Mechanism of the Euro Zone Banks



On 12th September MEPs gave the greenlight for the introduction of a single supervisory mechanism of euro zone banks under the authority of the European Central Bank. This mechanism will be in force as of September 2014 and will supervise around 150 euro zone banks. It is also open to other EU banks. The European Banking Authority is responsible for setting out supervisory procedures which supervisors of national banks will have to follow. The European Parliament will have access to a range of information and will receive complete reports of the meetings held by the supervisory committee... [Read more](#)

##### New European rules against market abuse

On 10th September 2013 MEPs approved the new European rules for market abuse. Strict measures will be introduced against insider dealing, financial market manipulations or privileged information abuse. Sanctions focus on a wide range of negotiations and financial



instruments. To ensure a high level of protection for investors these measures will apply to the EU as a whole. The European Commissioner for the Internal Market Michel Barnier declared that "this agreement will lead to the establishment of stricter rules in order to prevent, detect and punish market abuse." The European Parliament will start negotiations with the Member States in October over the "Markets Abuse" Directive... [Read more](#)

#### New rules to limit risks during the purchase of real estate



On 10th September 2013 MEPs approved a draft project which will help real estate purchasers to acquire better information about the costs and risks run during the signing of a contract. European citizens will be better protected in the event of market fluctuations which could increase payment instalments and in the event of difficulties of paying their loan. MEPs are expecting guarantees from the Member States to ensure the total implementation of this directive across the entire EU before adopting more general rules... [Read more](#)

#### Launch of the European Election Campaign 2014



On 10th September 2013 the European Parliament launched an information campaign "Act, React, Impact" for the European Elections that will take place on 22nd-25th May 2014. The campaign is divided into four stages: the first explains the powers of the European Parliament; the second develops key themes (economy, employment, quality of life, finances and the European Union in the world); the third focuses on the political campaign; the fourth and last phase will focus on the implementation and election of the President of the Commission as well as on the inauguration of the new European Commission... [Read more](#)

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#### Council :

##### Banks: single resolution mechanism



The EU Finance Ministers met in Vilnius for an informal meeting on the single resolution mechanism on 13th and 14th September. Divergences have emerged; Berlin is critical about the Commission's proposal which would indirectly force German banks to fund rescue plans or bankruptcies of other European banks. The UK has expressed its concern and does not like the idea of the Commission taking over the banks' resolution plans. Time is running out in view of the European elections in May 2014 which will interrupt the legislative process. A compromise has to be found by the end of 2013... [Read more](#)

#### Court of Justice :

##### Short selling



In 2012 the EU gave a single response to short-selling based on article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) was given various powers of action thanks to article 28 if the good functioning, the integrity and the stability of the EU's financial markets were in danger. On 12th September 2013 the General Prosecutor, M. Jaaskinen suggested that article 28 be abolished deeming that article 114 of the TFEU was not a good legal base for its adoption. He said that article 28 established a new emergency decision making mechanism within the Union. Hence this was a transposal of the decision making process from the national level over to the Union which goes beyond the competences of article 114 of the TFEU... [Read more](#)

#### Germany :

##### Absolute majority for the CSU in Bavaria

Just one week before the German elections the CSU (Christian Social Union) won an absolute majority in the elections which took place in Bavaria on 15th September 2013. This is a victory for the outgoing Minister President Horst Seehofer. The CSU, the Bavarian branch of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union), won 47.7% of the vote according to



provisional results. However its liberal ally FDP was thrown out of Parliament as it failed to achieve the crucial 5% voting threshold. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) won 20.6% of the vote. The Greens won 8.6%... [Read more](#)

#### Angela Merkel at the Frankfurt Car Show



On 12th September 2013 German Chancellor Angela Merkel stood as the protector of the German car industry given the environmental requirements set by the EU as she inaugurated the Car Show in Frankfurt-am-Main. In her speech the Chancellor called for a "sensible balance" between the protection of the environment and economic interests. "It makes no sense to limit oneself to one category of car in Europe, i.e. small, sober cars," she declared... [Read more](#)

#### Spain :

##### Social Security for Part Time Workers



On 12th September 2013 the Spanish Congress validated a royal decision involving access to social protection for part time workers. According to the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, Fatima Banez the bill will reduce differences between part time workers, who are mostly women and those who work full time. This bill will introduce greater flexibility over the minimum period of work necessary to acquire contributory retirement pensions set at present at 15 years... [Read more](#)

##### Human chain in support of a self-rule referendum



The human chain which crossed Catalonia on 11th September in demand of the region's independence is a challenge both for Madrid, which is fiercely against any kind of referendum on self-rule and also for Artur Mas, the Catalan nationalist leader. Indeed hundreds of thousands of people formed a human chain over 400km in demand of a referendum on Catalonia's independence. This chain extended across Catalonia, from the Pyrenees in the north to the province's border near Valencia in the south. The recession and cuts in public spending decided by the central government in Madrid to rescue the country's accounts have caused the anger of many Catalonians whose province represents around one fifth of the Spanish economy... [Read more](#)

#### France :

##### France's Industrial Policy Priorities



On 12th September 2013 the French President F. Hollande presented France's industrial policy priorities with Arnaud Montebourg, the Productive Recovery Minister in attendance. These priorities take the shape of 34 plans with the aim of strengthening French competitiveness, to win back markets and to re-create industrial jobs. The plans focused on three main priorities: energy transition and ecology, the living economy and new technologies. At the same time the priorities selected match three criteria: positioning on a growth market, or presenting strong growth prospects, based on technologies that France masters and occupying a strong position on this market with leading businesses. 3.5 billion euro from the Investments for the Future Programme will be devoted to this... [Read more](#)

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##### Third Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean



The third Ministerial Conference of the Union for the Mediterranean on the "Strengthening of Women's role in Society" took place on 11th and 12th September in Paris. The meeting on 11th September was followed by a dinner together with the French President F.Hollande. During his speech he stressed that this conference was being held in the context of the Syrian war in which women have been the first victims. On 12th September ministers adopted a Declaration that included political commitments in three areas: equal participation by women and men in the political, economic and social domains; the fight to counter all types of violence and discrimination; the fight to counter gender stereotypes... [Read more](#)

### Interview with the French President on the TV news programme



On 15th September 2013 the French President F. Hollande spoke on French television channel TF1. First he addressed the Syrian issue and notably the US-Russia agreement. He said he was pleased that this "major step" had been taken and maintained that the implementation of this agreement had to be followed closely in order to find a political solution to the crisis. Then the French President spoke of the economic situation in France; he said that the unemployment curve had almost "reversed" and that he hoped to continue promoting employment. Finally he presented the outline of the 2014 budget... [Read more](#)

## Italy :

### Tripartite Forum on cooperation in the Adriatic Sea



On 12th September 2013 the first SPONDE forum between Croatia, Italy and Slovenia took place. The aim of this forum is to create stable cooperation between the three countries which have joint interests in the Northern Adriatic. During the press conference participants announced the creation of working groups on energy, infrastructures and ports. The group will meet every six months said Enrico Letta and will be open to participation by other countries with interests in the region, notably Austria... [Read more](#)

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### Speech by Enrico Letta on the new global reform



On 9th September 2013 during an annual dinner of the Bruegel Group organised on the theme of: "Defining the outline of a new world economy," the President of the Italian Council Enrico Letta gave a speech in support of European community institutions. He insisted on the need to step up political union giving a leadership role to the Franco-German couple, but also with an election of the next President of the European Commission after a real political campaign. This speech enabled him to address the major projects of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union as of July 2014, which will be organised around the theme of political union. He also spoke of economic and monetary union pleading in support of a specific budget for the euro zone and of increased powers for a permanent president of the Eurogroup... [Read more](#)

## Latvia :

### Conference on the euro in Latvia



On 12th September 2013 a conference on the euro was held in Latvia on the occasion of the country's entry into the euro zone planned for January 1st 2014. After an inaugural speech by the Latvian Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis, Mario Draghi, President of the ECB insisted on re-assuring the Latvian people of the advantages they would gain from transferring over to the euro. The conference concluded with a debate entitled "The Euro: Past, Present, and Future" in which several European personalities took part... [Read more](#)

## UK :

### Privatisation of the Royal Mail



The British government announced on 10th September 2013 that the Royal Mail was to be privatised. The process was officially launched on 11th September with the introduction onto the stock exchange within the "next few weeks" which will go together with conditions to satisfy employees... [Read more](#)

## Albania :

### New government in Albania



The Albanian Parliament approved the investiture of the coalition government led by Edi Rama on 15th September 2013. The latter promised to revive his country's economy and to draw closer to the EU. The new government comprises 20 ministers, including six women - an all time first in Albania - amongst whom features Mimi Kodheli who will be Defence Minister. 82 MPs voted for the investiture of this coalition government which comprises five ministers from the Socialist Integration Movement

allied to the Socialist Party led by Edi Ramam, 55 voted against and one MP abstained... [Read more](#)

#### Iceland :

##### Iceland interrupts its membership negotiations with the European Union



The Icelandic Foreign Minister Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson announced on 12th September 2013 that membership negotiations of Iceland to the European Union were being interrupted. Mr Sveinsson decided that the PAI (Pre-Accession Aid Instrument) would no longer be attributed. He did however say that Iceland wanted to strengthen ties with the EU and that it would continue to cooperate in areas such as fishing and energy... [Read more](#)

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#### Monaco :

##### Monaco and the European Union



On 9th September the Minister of State of Monaco, Michel Roger, presented the features specific to Monaco. Monaco is the smallest state of Europe after the Vatican and in spite of its smallness its contributions to Europe are significant in terms of employment, scientific research (electric car) and also regarding cultural and humanitarian issues. Monaco is negotiating with Brussels at present to conclude a partnership agreement with the European Union as it has done with San Marino and Andorra. Monaco hopes for the signature of a specific agreement with the EU without having to sacrifice its specific nature... [Read more](#)

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#### Eurostat :

##### Collapse of employment in the euro zone in the second quarter of 2013



Eurostat has indicated that employment rates have declined in the euro zone (-1%) but that they remained stable in the European Union in the second quarter of 2013, in comparison with the first quarter of 2013 when employment plummeted in the euro zone (-0.4%) and in Europe 27 (-0.2%). In comparison with the same quarter last year employment has declined in the euro zone (-1%) and in the EU (-0,4%). Eurostat estimates that there are 221.8 million men and women in employment in the EU, 145 million of them are in the euro zone in the second quarter of 2013... [Read more](#)

##### Euro zone annual inflation rate decreases



According to Eurostat figures published on 16th September 2013 the euro zone's annual inflation rate lay at 1.3% in August 2013 against 1.6% in July. One year ago it lay at 2.6%. The monthly inflation rate lay at 0.1% in August 2013. The EU's annual inflation rate lay at 1.5% in August 2013 against 1.7% in July. One year ago it lay at 2.7%. The monthly inflation rate lay at 0.1% in August 2013... [Read more](#)

#### UN :

##### Agreement on the dismantling of chemical arms in Syria



The agreement concluded on 14th September 2013 in Geneva between the USA and Russia on the dismantling of the Syrian chemical arsenal has opened the way to intense diplomatic talks before the settlement of a UN resolution which does not rule out the possible use of force against the Syrian regime. This agreement announced by the American and Russian heads of diplomacy John Kerry and Serguey Lavrov, sets precise deadlines: Damascus has one week to present a list of its chemical weapons and this must be removed and destroyed by the end of the first half of 2014. Moreover the process will be included in a UN Security Council resolution which will quote Chapter VII of the Charter that provides for the possibility of sanctions including the use of force if the Syrian regime does not comply with its commitments... [Read more](#)

#### Studies/Reports :

##### Remaking Europe, Framework for a policy

Synopia has just published a report entitled "Remaking Europe, Framework for a Policy" by Pierre Boissieu, former permanent representative of France to the European Union, former Secretary



General of the Council of the European Union, Tom de Bruijn, former permanent representative of the Netherlands to the European Union, Antonio Vitorino, former MEP, former member of the European Commission, Stephen Wall, former permanent representative of the UK to the EU. They suggest an approach to the euro zone and for the EU to put things in order and to show that there is no contradiction but complementarity between euro zone integration and the improvement of the functioning of the EU "with 28 members" and the UK... [Read more](#)

### Populism in Europe



The Center for European Studies has just published a paper on populism in Europe entitled "Exposing the Demagogues. Right-wing and National Populist Parties in Europe". The paper prefaced by Elmar Brok, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the European Parliament offers several studies of national cases and makes a comparative analysis of the various populist parties in Europe. Magali Balent, Projects Director for the Robert Schuman Foundation is the author of the chapter on France... [Read more](#)

### Industries and citizens' groups networks in the EU's food policy



Camille Dehestru, a graduate of the College of Europe Bruges, is the author of a study entitled "Industries and citizens' groups networks in the EU's food policy: the emergence of 'unholy alliances' in multi-level governance." She describes the temporary alliances that are forming between parties which are generally opposed to one another in defence of the EU's food policy. Moreover industrialists and citizens' group join forces every now and again to defend a joint interest as part of the EU's food policy... [Read more](#)

### Oxfam fears poverty in Europe because of austerity



On 11th September 2013, on the eve of an EU Finance Ministers Meeting, the British NGO, Oxfam published its report entitled "A Cautionary Tale - the true cost of austerity and inequality in Europe" which warns the leaders of Europe against over severe austerity policies. According to its estimations up to 25 million Europeans, in addition the 120 million living in poverty since 2011, might fall into the poverty trap by 2025 if we continue to implement austerity programmes. The NGO is fighting to counter poverty and stresses that in addition to it being dangerous for the population, austerity does not reduce debt. It invites the leaders of Europe to look for other solutions to rise to the challenge of the crisis... [Read more](#)

### Publications :

#### "European Union Policies"



La Documentation française has published the study by Philippe Delivet in its series "réflexeeurope" entitled "European Union Policies". The author, a consultant at the Department for Legislation and the Supervision of the Senate (Foreign Affairs Committee) reviews the European policies from the first cooperation projects to the present. After an initial historic chapter the author analyses European policies from an economic and monetary as well as a political, social and diplomatic angle. This paper enables a better understanding of the influence of European policies in the daily lives of EU citizens... [Read more](#)

#### The British Institute for International Studies publishes its annual strategic report



The British Institute for International Studies (IISS) published its annual strategic report on 12th September 2013 entitled: "Strategic Survey 2013: The Annual Review of World Affairs". This report analyses key events of the past year. It includes articles and maps notably on the nuclear arms race between Pakistan and India, the evacuation of the armed forces from Afghanistan and the international involvement in Syria... [Read more](#)



## Culture :

### An unknown painting revealed at the Van-Gogh Museum



The Van-Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, which hosts the biggest Van Gogh collection in the world totalling 140 canvasses, will be showing an unknown picture for one year as of 24th September. It was painted by Van Gogh and was discovered on 9th September 2013 at the museum. Entitled "Sunset at Montmajour", the canvas dates back to 1888 and was made at the height of the Dutch painter's career. It shows an oak forest near Arles in the south of France. This discovery is "a unique event in the Van-Gogh Museum's history" said the establishment's curator, Axel Ruger... [Read more](#)

### Georges Braque at the Grand Palais



The Grand Palais is running the first retrospective devoted to Georges Braque (1882-1963) in the last forty years from 18th September 2013 to 6th January 2014. The originator of cubism and the inventor of collages he was one of the avant-garde in the early 20th century. The exhibition is offering a new vision of the artist and places his work in perspective with painting, literature and the music of his time... [Read more](#)

### Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt



Until 22nd September 2013 the 25th "Haydn Days" will be taking place in the castle of Eisenstadt (Austria). This internationally famous festival pays tribute to the composer Joseph Haydn (1732-1809). The castle is the old residence of the Esterhazy family. Joseph Haydn composed some 107 symphonies and 83 string quartets for his patron, Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy. On the musical programme this year: the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Philharmonic conducted by Adam Fischer and Thomas Fey who will lead the symphonic orchestra of Heidelberg... [Read more](#)

### "Rembrandt" Exhibition



Until 24th November 2014 the "Staedelmuseum" in Frankfurt/Main is running an exhibition of Rembrandt's main works (1606-1669). The artist etched a number of landscapes but this aspect of his work is not as well known as his other achievements. As of 1640 Rembrandt used etchings to express his feelings after his walks in the countryside near Amsterdam... [Read more](#)

### 42nd Autumn Festival in Paris



The 42nd Autumn Festival of Paris will be taking place until 12th January 2014. Forty venues in Paris and Ile-de-France have joined forces for this year's festival the programme of which includes nearly 60 plastic arts events, shows, dance, theatre, music and cinema... [Read more](#)

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## Agenda :



17th September

Broadcast of a film on police and judicial cooperation in Europe



19th-20th September

Informal Energy Ministers Meeting



22nd September

German General Elections



23rd September  
Agriculture and Fisheries Council

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