

# COUNTERING ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Environmental crime causes irreversible damage to the environment in each and every member State of the Council of Europe.

## DO YOU KNOW what environmental crimes are?

Environmental crime may encompass a wide range of activities including, but not limited to:

- illegal traffic, shipment or dumping of waste;
- illegal production of dangerous materials;
- illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances;
- illegal trade in wildlife.



## What are the RISKS of environmental crime?



Environmental crime not only threatens our ecosystems and the survival of thousands of plant and animal species, it causes many diseases that reduce life expectancy and ultimately, it causes the death of millions of human beings.

Environmental crime is hugely lucrative. According to Europol data, three out of the twelve most financially rewarding transnational criminal activities are linked to environmental crime. Overall, this generates an annual profit ranging from 70 to 213 billion USD.



Furthermore, the absence of an effective international legal instrument that establishes specific criminal offences and effective, dissuasive, and proportionate sanctions leaves the door wide open for criminals, mostly organised criminal groups, to damage the environment across the member States of the Council of Europe.

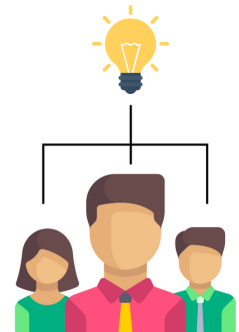
## What is the ROLE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE in supporting member States in preventing and countering environmental crime?



Environmental crime and its impact knows no boundaries. No State in Europe is immune to environmental crime, even when it does not occur on their territory. The transnational nature of environmental crime reinforces more than ever the need for a pan-European response in which criminal law should play an important role. This is an illegal, criminal activity, often perpetrated by organised crime.

Hence, the Council of Europe, covering the whole of geographical Europe, is ideally placed to take up this challenge. The standard-setting body of the Council of Europe in the area of criminal law, namely the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), is already working hard to help member States in their efforts to:

- decide which future steps are necessary in order to provide a joint, effective and common response from a criminal law perspective when environmental crime goes beyond national borders and affects Europe as a whole and
- co-ordinate national policies in order to strengthen international judicial co-operation, including amongst law enforcement agencies. Special attention will be given to environmental crime linked to organised crime and to those crimes related to transboundary pollution.



*“The environment and human rights, by their very nature, transcend national borders and therefore lend themselves perfectly to transnational co-operation.”*

Christos Giakoumopoulos, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe