

Concise note of BERLIN GA for website

20th IMPEL General Assembly
2-3 December 2020

The 20th IMPEL General Assembly (GA) meeting took place virtually between the 2-3 December 2020. Originally planned to be held physically in Berlin, due to the pandemic it was instead organised online and over 70 members and experts participated. The GA was chaired by the Chair of IMPEL, Mrs Kristina Rabe.

The meeting was hosted by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. Director Dietmar Horn welcomed participants and in his speech, he addressed the effect of digitalisation and its impacts on climate change, the role of regulation and implementation and the help that technology may provide.

Mr Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director of DG Environment at the European Commission gave the keynote speech and highlighted three key European developments of relevance to the network, the adoption of the green deal in December 2019, the annual sustainable growth strategy and new funding proposals for the EU budget. He reaffirmed DG Environment's commitment to work with IMPEL and support its national members, learn from challenges and work more effectively to offer mutual support. He said "IMPEL has become the most important and effective network of inspectors in Europe and DG Environment are happy to work with IMPEL".

The GA discussed the impact of the COVID19 pandemic at the national/ regional level and how members are dealing with these challenges. The activities of IMPEL have been severely impacted in terms of physical meetings as a travel ban has been in place but the work has carried on through virtual and hybrid meetings.

A key area of work for 2020 was the governance assessment of the IMPEL Network. The GA discussions aimed to encourage dialogue and discussion, and then form a collective view on how IMPEL could take forward the results and recommendations to build a stronger network for the future. There was broad support for this approach and number of committees will be established to drive forward this work.

The five Expert Teams all presented on their activities and projects for 2018/19 were approved. Details on all IMPEL projects are available online. Project proposals for 2021 would be agreed by written procedure. The GA was updated on the activities of external projects including SWEAP, SRSS Malta, SRSS Cyprus and WasteForce.

There was a useful exchange with other relevant networks such as the EU Forum of Judges for the Environment, EUFJE, EnciCrimeNet and the European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment (ENPE)