

Croatia. Enforcement of the new Environmental Protection Act harmonized with EU legislation in cases of criminal offences against the environment: a comparative view from Belgium

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This quick sketch of environmental law enforcement in Belgium starts with an overview of the most striking common characteristics of the federal, Flemish, Brussels and Walloon enforcement legislation. It next discusses the sanctioning options and the use made of those in the criminal (prosecutors and judges) and the administrative (fining officers and administrative authorities competent for situational and right-depriving sanctions) sanctioning track. The low levels of the actual transactions (prosecutor's offices) and fines (criminal courts and administrations) and the focus on individual prevention in the use of prison sentences (suspension of execution) are highlighted. Afterwards, attention is paid to the communication between the authorities in charge of enforcement, at the level of individual cases as well as the level of case handling and strategies in general. The paper ends with a discussion of the level of specialization found with the monitoring authorities (police and administrations with monitoring tasks) and the public authorities with sanctioning competences (prosecutors' offices, criminal courts, administrative authorities and administrative courts) and points at the current policy tendency towards higher specialization levels.

The data concerning the environmental law enforcement practice relate mostly to the environmental law enforcement in the Flemish and Brussels Region.