

# A GREAT WEEK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT!



IPF recently took part in a number of environmental events: [the EU Commission's Green Week](#), [the Belgian Energy and Environment Prize](#) awards ceremony, and the [Brussels Environment Festival](#).

On June 5th, the World celebrated [World Environment Day](#). This year's theme - "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care" - highlighted the need for responsible management of the planet's natural resources. With the aim of "increasing the quality of life for all people without further environmental degradation," World Environment Day invites us to [become better stewards of our planet](#).

## Biodiversity focus at Green Week

This year saw IPF return to the [European Commission's Green Week](#), the biggest annual conference on European environmental policy. From 3 to 5 June, IPF manned a stand where Green Week participants could learn more about the Polar Regions and IPF initiatives, including the annual [Arctic Futures Symposium](#) (which takes place every autumn in Brussels), IPF's [education and outreach resources](#) (used by a large number of educators around the world), and the foundation's flagship project, the [Princess Elisabeth Antarctica Station](#) – the world's first polar research station designed and built to run entirely on renewable energy.

This year's focus for Green Week - Nature and Biodiversity – aimed to show how nature is “vital for our health and wealth.” The event attracted 2000 participants from countries all across Europe. The event was a perfect networking opportunity with other organisations from around Europe interested in environmental issues.

## Belgian Energy and Environment Prize: sustainable management

On the evening of 3 June, several members of the IPF team headed to [Brussels Environment's](#) new eco-friendly administrative headquarters at the Tour & Taxis site for the 10th annual [Belgian Energy and Environment Prize](#) awards ceremony.

For the past decade, the International Polar Foundation has awarded the prize to a Belgian organisation or person who has shown outstanding leadership and initiative in finding solutions to live more sustainably. The 10th edition brought together past laureates, including IPCC Vice Chair [Professor Jean-Pascal van Ypersele](#), who shared news of their latest activities.

This year's laureate was [Empreintes ASBL](#), an association dedicated to environmental education for children, teenagers, young adults and people in difficult social and economic situations. The organisation was recognised for its [Eco Watchers](#) programme, in which the non-profit runs workshops to help people in difficult financial situations reduce their energy consumption (and thus their energy costs). The programme also empowers people by working with them to identify actions they can do to improve their quality of living. By generating social, environmental and economic benefits, the EcoWatchers programme certainly makes a significant contribution to sustainable development!

You can read more about past laureates and nominees on the Belgian Energy and Environment Prize website (in [Dutch](#) and in [French](#)). Congratulations to all the laureates and nominees!

## Sunny day for climate at the Brussels Environment Festival

Brussels Capital Region celebrated World Environment Day on 7 June with its annual [Environment Festival](#), organised by [Brussels Environment](#) at Park Cinquantenaire in Brussels.

The IPF was present at the festival – which focused on climate this year - with a stand where visitors could learn more about the Polar Regions. Throughout the day, many inquisitive people stopped by the IPF stand to have a chat with us. They were able to learn more about polar science, the impacts of climate change, and how they can learn more through IPF's [education and outreach tools](#).

Thanks in part to the great weather, the family-friendly event attracted an estimated 24,000 people keen to learn more about what they as citizens could do to reduce their impact on the planet and live more sustainably.

Overall, it was a wonderful week for the environment!

*Photo: International Polar Foundation President Alain Hubert poses with members of Empreintes ASBL, who won the 2015 Belgian Energy and Environment Prize.*