

THE EU COMMISSION MUST PROVIDE GUARANTEES ON CLIMATE, NATURE AND PUBLIC HEALTH, ENSURING THE PROTECTION OF PEOPLE

Brussels, 4 November 2024

The political direction set by President von der Leyen and the early parliamentary debates reveal a concerning shift: tackling the climate, biodiversity, and pollution crises is being deprioritised in favour of industry demands. With the Commissioners' hearings approaching, the coming weeks will be critical for restoring the balance between the public good and corporate influence.

According to the new mission letters, all Commissioners must meet arbitrary 'burden reduction' targets and simplify legislation, posing the risk of delayed or weakened environmental action. It is not enough for this Commission to vaguely claim it will not deregulate environmental, public health and social standards. We demand clarity from President von der Leyen and her Commission on key issues:

- **No rollback of environmental, public health and social laws:** President von der Leyen must make an unequivocal public commitment to uphold all existing environmental and climate EU laws and objectives, including those on sustainable finance and corporate accountability. We deplore the recent proposal by President von der Leyen to delay the application of the EU Deforestation Regulation and call on the European Parliament and all EU governments to reject the European Commission's proposal.
- **Acknowledge the triple planetary crisis:** Nature conservation and pollution reduction are quietly being sidelined in favour of a narrow focus on decarbonisation that fails to grasp the interconnectedness of the crisis. The urgent need to tackle pollution is now framed under a chemicals industry package aiming at simplifying the law, instead of better protecting citizens from harmful chemicals. All Commissioners must recognize that restoring and protecting nature, as well as reducing pollution, are integral parts of the solution to combat climate change. Addressing these challenges requires immediate, sustained action. Now is the time to accelerate, not retreat.

- **Support for Green Deal implementation:** Businesses and stakeholders need legal certainty underpinned by a clear long term vision and effective regulations. The Commission must pledge to swiftly publish essential guidance documents for implementing newly adopted laws, and making digital safety information, permitting and digital reporting the norm - allowing tracking of progress and benchmarking of industry performance. Furthermore, the Commission should prioritise effective enforcement of environmental laws to ensure a level playing field, supported by necessary financial investments to bolster administrative capacities at all levels.
- **Balanced public participation:** All public consultations must be carried in a way that ensures inclusivity of diverse views and avoids dominance by private influence over public interest [1]. In order to do so, particular attention must be paid to the voices of civil society organisations and their input must be routinely incorporated in upcoming dialogues and decision-making processes. Newly proposed mechanisms like 'reality checks' and 'competitiveness checks' should not be manipulated as tools for corporate lobbyists to hinder EU actions. The Commission must also resist using political 'urgency' as an excuse to bypass proper public scrutiny and adhere to its own Better Regulations guidelines to uphold transparency, consultations, and evidence-based decisions.
- **Collaboration across key policy areas:** The Executive Vice-Presidents for Cohesion and Reforms, and for Clean, Just, and Competitive Transition, should be given clear guidance to collaborate effectively across key sectors—such as agriculture, transport, and fisheries—to ensure full alignment with green transition goals.
- **Firewalls between national interests and EU policy:** Commissioners with previous ties to governments or political parties that opposed environmental regulations must be held accountable and rejected by the Parliament in case they are unable to dissociate themselves from earlier positions. Strong safeguards must be put in place to prevent conflicts of interest, for example in the application of forest and nature restoration rules.

- **Public money for proven climate solutions:** The Commission must commit to allocate public funds solely to proven, cost-effective climate solutions. Unproven or expensive technologies should not receive the same level of financial and administrative support as established methods like nature-positive deployment of renewable energy, energy efficiency and nature-based solutions for climate adaptation. Economic activities that allow the EU's zero-pollution and biodiversity objectives to materialise should be prioritised through public funding.

Despite carefully crafted mission letters, President von der Leyen has openly admitted that the focus has shifted away from climate action and the European Green Deal. In the EU Parliament, her own political group is pushing to weaken democratically adopted regulations on critical issues such as forest protection, greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, and corporate accountability for human rights and environmental violations.

We call on President von der Leyen to address these critical gaps before the new European Commission assumes office, and we urge the European Parliament to raise these concerns during the upcoming Commissioner confirmation hearings.

Notes

[1] Recent [reports](#) show that fossil fuel lobbyists continue to benefit from an alarming level of access to the European Commission.

Signed by:

2DII (2 degrees investing initiative)
350 Denmark / Klimabevægelsen i
Danmark
350.org
AbibiNsroma Foundation
Academia Española de Nutrición y
Dietética (Spanish Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics)
Activist Grannies
Agroecology Europe
Amici della Natura Italia (Federazione
GIAN)
Amycos.org
ARCHE NOAH
Asociación Nacional Defensa Animales
(ANDA)
Asociación Vida Sana
Association BIOM
Association Hyla
Association SOS MCS (Sensibilité
Chimique Multiple)
Association Žmergo
ATB De Natuurvrienden VZW
Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania
BeeLife
Bellona Europa
Biodiversity Conservation Center
BirdLife Austria
BirdLife Cyprus
BirdLife Estonia
BirdLife Europe
BirdLife Finland
BirdLife Malta
BirdLife Sweden
Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen vzw
Born Free Foundation
Buglife
Bulgarian Society for the Protection of
Birds

Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland
(BUND)
Butterfly Conservation Europe
CAN-Europe
Canopea
CEE Bankwatch Netowrk
CEEweb for Biodiversity
Changing Markets Foundation
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
Clean Air Action Group
ClientEarth
Climate Coalition (Poland)
Coalition Living Earth (Koalicja Żywa Ziemia)
Comité Schone Lucht
Compassion in World Farming EU
Cool Heating Coalition
CPC Center for Participation and Collaboration
Creatura Think & Do Tank ry
Croatian Society for Birds and Nature Protection
Czech Society for Ornithology
Danmarks Naturfredningsforening
DÉFENSE DES MILIEUX AQUATIQUES
Deutsche Umwelthilfe
Deutscher Naturschutzring e.V.
Doctors For Climate Finland
DOF BirdLife
DOPPS-BirdLife Slovenia
eco-union
ECODES
Ecologistas en Acción
ECOS (Environmental Coalition on Standards)
Ei polteta tulevaisuutta
EKOenergy ecolabel
Electra Energy
Eliante
Environmental Association Za Zemiata / FoE
Bulgaria
Environmental Defense Fund Europe
Environmental Investigation Agency

Signed by:

EuroNatur
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
European Grandparents For Climate
European Rivers Network
European Vegetarian Union
Fair Finance Guide - Sweden
Fair Trade Advocacy Office
FairFin
Federación de Consumidores y Usuarios CECU
Fondation pour la Nature et l'Homme
Food & Water Action Europe
Food Council MRA
foodwatch
Forum Ökologie & Papier
Foundation for Environment and Agriculture
FOUR PAWS International
France Nature Environnement
Frank Bold
Frères des Hommes
Friends of the Earth Cyprus
Fundación Cepaim
Fundación Global Nature
Futuro en Común
General Council of Dietitians-Nutritionists of Spain
Générations Futures
GEOTA - Grupo de Estudios de Ordenamento do Território e Ambiente
GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria
Global Witness
Grandparents for Future Austria
GrandsParents pour le Climat Suisse
Great Lakes and Wetlands Association (Nagy Tavak és Vizes Élőhelyek Szövetsége)
Green Impact
Green Liberty
Green Transition Denmark
Greenpeace
GROOTOUDERS VOOR HET KLIMAAT - GRANDPARENTS FOR CLIMATE BELGIUM-FLANDERS
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
Health Care Without Harm Europe
Hellenic Ornithological Society/BirdLife Greece
Hivos
Hogar sin Tóxicos
Humane Society International/Europe
Humusz Szövetség
IFAW
IFOAM Organics Europe
Institute for Sustainable Development Foundation
ISDE, International Society of Doctors For Environment Italy
Italian Sustainable Investment Forum - ItaSIF
JESC-Jesuit European Social Centre
Kyoto Club
Latvijas Ornitologijas biedrība
Leefmilieu
Legambiente
Lipu BirdLife Italia
Lithuanian Consumers Alliance
LPO France
Make Mothers Matter
Marine Explorers Society 20000 Leagues
Mensa Cívica
Mobilisation for the Environment
Mouvement Ecologique asbl
Mutualités Libres/Onafhankelijke Ziekenfondsen
NABU (Naturschutzbund Deutschland) e. V.
Natagora asbl

Signed by:

natur&mwelt a.s.b.l.
Naturefriends Greece
Naturefriends International
Natuurpunt
New Weather Institute
Nivon Natuurvrienden (Nivon
Naturefriends Netherlands)
NO PLASTIC IN MY SEA
Notre Affaire à Tous
Oceana
Omas for Future, Leben im Einklang mit
der Natur e.V.
PAN Europe
Pestizid Aktions-Netzwerk e.V. (PAN
Germany)
Polish Ecological Club Mazovian Branch
Polish Society for the Protection of
Birds (BirdLife Poland)
Polish Zero Waste Association
Přátelé přírody (Friends of Nature)
Profundo
Quercus - Associação Nacional de
Conservação da Natureza
Re-set: platform for socio-ecological
transformation
REScoop.eu
Réseau Action Climat
Save Estonia's Forests (Päästame Eesti
Metsad)
SDG Watch Europe
SEAE- SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA DE
AGRICULTURA ECOLÓGICA Y
AGROECOLOGIA
Seas At Risk
SEO/BirdLife
ShareAction
Simavi
Slovak Ornithological Society / BirdLife
Slovensko
Slovenian NCD Alliance
Slow Food Italia Aps
Sociedade Portuguesa de Ecologia
(SPECO)
Society for Ecological Restoration Europe
Society for Sustainable Development
Design
SOS MCS (Sensibilité Chimique Multiple)
SPEA - Sociedade Portuguesa para o
Estudo das Aves
Stichting Reptile Amphibian Conservation
Europe
Südwind
Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto
Surfrider Foundation Europe
Svalorna Latinamerika
Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
(SSNC)
The European Institute for Animal Law and
Policy
Transport & Environment (T&E)
Veblen Institute
Via Pontica Foundation
VšĮ "Žiedinė ekonomika"
Wetlands International Europe
Women Engage for a Common Future
Workshop for all Beings
World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO)
WWF European Policy Office
Youth and Environment Europe
ZERO - Association for the Sustainability
of the Earth System