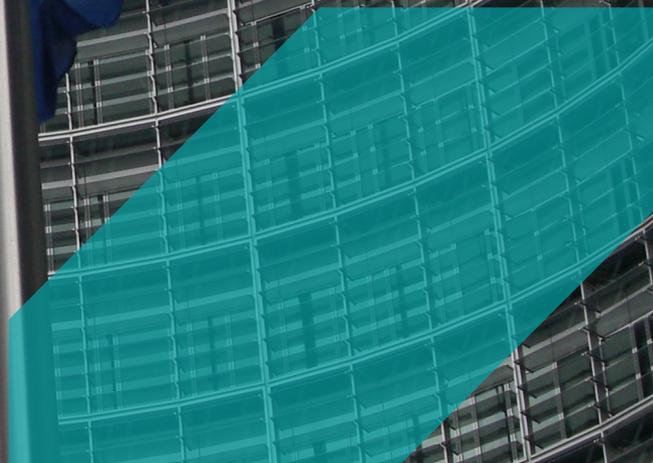




EUROPEAN
ENVIRONMENTAL
BUREAU

Juncker Commission Political Priorities Revisited





The following paper is not an official document from the European Commission. Rather, it is a document written by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) to demonstrate where we think the Commission's priorities should lie.

The EU executive last year signed up to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in New York and the new climate deal in Paris. These are Earth-changing agreements that require significant transformation from Europe. They imply both an opportunity, but also an obligation, for President Juncker to review and revise his initial priorities, in consultation with the Parliament and Council.

As the International Trade Union Confederation has said time and time again, “there are no jobs on a dead planet”. With these alternative Juncker priorities, the EEB hopes to set the ball rolling for a revised EU agenda, one that has sustainable development at its heart and where environmental, social and economic concerns are all addressed in a balanced way. If adopted, the priorities outlined here by the EEB would be the first step of a real reform agenda for Europe.

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Juncker Commission Political Priorities Revisited

This Commission came into office on a promise of change: to be big on big things and to solve Europe's most pressing problems. We agreed a set of 10 political priorities to make clear which actions would be dealt with at an EU level and which would be left to Member States.

Now, one year on, it has become increasingly clear that these priorities are ripe for an overhaul with many of them failing to reflect the current state of global affairs and lacking the ambition needed to tackle the economic, social and environmental challenges in Europe.

In retrospect, 2015 will most likely be remembered in Europe for the refugee crisis. But it was also the year in which the world committed to an ambitious, global agenda for change, underpinned by 17 universally applicable sustainable development goals (SDGs). And the year the world signed up to a new global climate deal in Paris.

2016 needs therefore to be the year in which the EU delivers on this truly ambitious and global agenda of change and reform. This means agreeing priorities that will make sustainable development a reality and will deliver on our commitment of living well within planetary boundaries.



1

NEW BOOST FOR JOBS, GROWTH AND INVESTMENT → INVESTING IN A GREEN ECONOMY AND QUALITY EMPLOYMENT

The European Union needs, more than ever before, to create new jobs, in emerging, future-oriented sectors. We know that green energy is much more labour intensive¹ than fossil energy and that the money saved from avoided fossil-fuel imports generates jobs² in Europe. Reducing the taxation of labour and increasing the taxation of resource consumption and pollution will help get more people into employment, and support cleaner forms of production. For every billion euro of taxes shifted away from labour towards pollution and resource use, we can generate over 10,000 new jobs³. Indeed, the green sector is one of the few that kept hiring during the recent economic crisis⁴.

We now need to build on this success story and transform Europe's economy through ambitious new proposals on

the circular economy, renewables and energy savings, and improved plans to safeguard Europe's biodiversity and ecosystems, the foundations of all life. We need to have the courage to promote innovative business models that create decent jobs while respecting environmental constraints.



Recognising the risks that stranded assets in fossil fuel infrastructure and exploration pose to both our climate and economy, the Commission will bring forward proposals to accelerate divestment from these sectors into clean and sustainable energy systems.

In the wake of the Volkswagen scandal, which shocked citizens and investors alike, we will subject the European Commission's 'Better Regulation' agenda on its tenth anniversary in 2016 to its own 'fitness check' - an in-depth review to ensure that the EU's legislative safety net that protects people and the environment is being reinforced not weakened.

1 At: ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2014/pdf/ee1_en.pdf

2 At: camecon.com/Libraries/Downloadable_Files/Fuelling_Europe_s_Future_How_auto_innovation_leads_to_EU_jobs.sflb.ashx

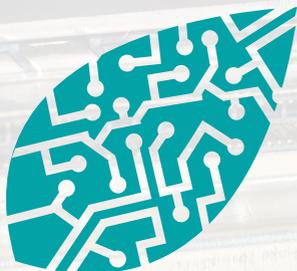
3 At: agf.org.uk/cms/upload/pdfs/R/2009_R2201_e_resource_productivity_environmental_tax_reform_and_sustainable_growth_in_europe.pdf

4 EEO review: Promoting green jobs throughout the crisis, a handbook of best practices in Europe

A CONNECTED DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET → GREENING THE DIGITAL MARKET

Driven by its high standards, the EU is a global leader in green tech. This could become a unique competitive advantage of the European economy and a key lever to maintain and reinforce European industry.

We will invest in citizen-based data gathering to monitor progress and make the most from digital tools that can empower consumers, help them choose the most sustainable goods and services, and deliver feedback on their energy and resource use. For this, it is essential to address the proliferation of green claims and to develop a credible information scheme.



Existing tools for the reporting of environmental performance will be improved to enable progress to be benchmarked and to give citizens the chance to assess compliance. This will happen through tools such as “next generation” pollutant release and transfer registers that require companies to periodically report into a publicly accessible database on their use, emissions and storage of toxic substances as well as their energy and resource use.

Finally, we recognise that the digital revolution, while creating countless new possibilities and opportunities, has also resulted in the proliferation of large and growing quantities of electronic and electrical waste. We will step up our efforts to address this problem within the context of accelerated progress towards a circular economy.

A RESILIENT ENERGY UNION WITH A FORWARD-LOOKING CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY → LIVING WELL WITHIN PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

Only two years ago, the EU agreed on an ambitious and comprehensive agenda via the Seventh Environmental Action Programme (7EAP) to live well within planetary boundaries. Following the agreement on a new climate deal in Paris, now is the time to step up delivery of this plan.

First, we will bring forward an effective and ambitious climate and energy package with three targets for 2030 which, in order to be enforceable and effective, will be legally binding at national level. These will be at least a 40% end use savings target, at least a 45% renewable energy goal and a reduction in GHG emissions by at least 60% for the EU as a whole. Adoption of this package will not however be the end of the story. Further additional measures will need to be adopted such as the setting of minimum performance requirements for major polluters.

Second, following the mid-term review of the Biodiversity Strategy, efforts need to be tripled to achieve the 2020 goals, and early preparation is essential for a new 2030 Strategy. The initial priority is to effectively enforce our common commitment to protect the Natura 2000 network. This needs sufficient investment and better ways of tackling the key drivers of continued biodiversity loss, in particular in the agriculture sector

through a Fitness Check of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This should be followed by proposals for an in-depth reform of the CAP to ensure that the public money invested in it delivers public goods, and a new legally binding framework to address EU soil policy.

Third, many chemicals used in the production of goods are a threat to our health and wildlife. For example, pesticides that kill bees are still widely used in Europe, despite the vital role that pollinators play in food production. We will bring forward new proposals to achieve the EU's goal of a non-toxic environment with a focus on endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and nanomaterials. We will also ensure that the EU maintains its global leadership in eliminating mercury pollution.

Fourth, air pollution continues to lead to unacceptable numbers of premature deaths in the EU. We will support an ambitious outcome of the currently ongoing negotiations on the National Emission Ceiling Directive and double our efforts to limit air pollution from major sources such as power plants, agriculture, shipping, road transport, construction and domestic heating. This will improve the quality of the air we breathe and bring down cancer and respiratory disease rates.

4

A DEEPER AND FAIRER INTERNAL MARKET WITH A STRENGTHENED INDUSTRIAL BASE → A FAIRER AND GREENER INTERNAL MARKET

As the largest consumer market in the world and with a solid track record as a global standard setter, Europe is well placed to pioneer new business models and lead the move towards a leasing and service economy, building on the opportunities created by a new circular economy package.

Having made major advances in improving labour productivity, our next challenge is to improve our resource productivity. Since materials account for an average of almost 60% of manufacturing costs, this is an economic imperative. But to ensure that any gains in productivity also lead to a reduction in Europe's considerable over-consumption of resources, we will propose a set of binding targets and indicators on Europe's land, water, material and carbon use to support a headline target of a 30% increase in resource productivity, while scaling back resource use in absolute terms.

Delivering on these goals will mean capitalising on the potential of the EU's ecodesign and labelling instruments through schemes that reward front runners and bring along laggards. Developing these rules will help avoid the creation of a patchwork of rules that complicate life for businesses and will foster innovation and reinforce the EU's industrial leadership. It is time to develop these instruments beyond their

initial focus on energy and orientate them more towards resource conservation.

The performance of Europe's manufacturing industry will be transformed towards the highest standards through the development of a new generation of strict Best Available Technique norms under the Industrial Emissions Directive and the elimination of loopholes and derogations which have become a major barrier to innovation.

Our next challenge is to improve our resource productivity.

The disastrous consequences of the Volkswagen emissions scandal for the EU's reputation in the world as a global standard setter and a leader in sustainable development cannot be overstated. Immediately restoring trust in the EU's system is essential and no effort should be spared to make this happen. This will start with the immediate fixing of the EU's car testing system and will extend to more general measures to ensure that EU policies are stringently enforced, including through a binding instrument on environmental inspections in line with the 7EAP.

5

A DEEPER AND FAIRER ECONOMIC MONETARY UNION → A FAIRER AND GREENER EUROPEAN MONETARY UNION

Five years of macroeconomic reform efforts to resolve the Euro crisis has led to mixed outcomes and high social and environmental costs. The time has come to change strategy. A more holistic approach is needed that will give the same level of priority to the social and environmental dimensions of our reform efforts as to the economic dimension.

The European Semester process will be reformed and democratised with a stronger role for the European Parliament and play a crucial role in supporting a green tax shift and the phase-out of environmentally harmful subsidies.

The mid-term review of the EU's budget will provide the opportunity to ensure that all environmentally harmful subsidies in it are phased out. The aforementioned Fitness Check of the CAP, which will assess how well the CAP is delivering on both its original objectives and in relation to major, more recent, challenges will contribute to this exercise.

Finally, we need to fundamentally overhaul tax policies in accordance with sustainability principles. This must include tackling illicit financial flows, tax evasion and tax avoidance, and banning tax havens. In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda⁵, we need to ensure transparency between the relevant tax authorities in all financial transactions between governments and companies. Further, we need to ensure that all companies,

We need to fundamentally overhaul tax policies in accordance with sustainability principles.

including multinationals, pay taxes to the governments of countries in which their economic activities occur and value is created, in accordance with national and international laws and policies.

5 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313

A REASONABLE AND BALANCED FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE US → A FAIR AND GREEN GLOBAL TRADE AGENDA

Negotiations on the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) have come to an impasse with too little progress on too many key issues. The whole exercise has become increasingly unpopular with European citizens and is threatening their support for the EU project. Time has therefore come to take a step back, to pause and reflect, taking into account legitimate concerns from citizens via, for example, the European Citizens' Initiative on TTIP, and their worries about other trade agreements such as that between the EU and Canada (CETA). With this in mind, we will propose to the European Council and European Parliament that we start with an entirely new approach to these agreements which will require a new negotiating mandate.

This new mandate should reaffirm and genuinely reflect the principle that the goal of easing barriers to trade and

investment can never take precedence over the right of sovereign states to set their own standards to protect environmental and social values. It should also recognise the right of parties to any agreement to restrict trade in commodities or services where this is necessary for the achievement of environmental and social objectives.



Start with a new approach to these agreements

Our recently published Trade Strategy, which addresses not only interests, but also values and commits to greater transparency in trade negotiations, is a recent indication of a change of direction. We will now take this a step further, seeking to embed our trade strategy firmly within a broader sustainable development agenda which regulates trade at an international level.

AN AREA OF JUSTICE AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST → ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

We will step up our efforts to deliver on the commitments made one year ago in relation to ensuring full respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law, including through confronting discrimination, countering organised crime and protecting against the invasion of privacy through mass surveillance.

The rule of law implies that the laws we adopt are properly and fully implemented, and yet it is evident that levels of compliance with EU laws fall well short of what is desirable. The scandal around the vehicle emissions testing regime is a particular example showing a gross failure to enforce legislation designed to protect health and the environment.

In order to improve the implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation and build bridges between different justice systems, the Commission will follow through on the commitments in the 7EAP by issuing legislative proposals on compliance assurance and access to justice in environmental matters. The latter will empower ordinary citizens and non-governmental organisations to seek the full enforcement of the law against public or private entities in violation of it, while ensuring full compliance with our obligations under the Aarhus Conven-

tion⁶. We will also propose a revision of the Aarhus Regulation⁷ to ensure that the Convention is more effectively applied at the level of the EU institutions.

The Commission will also propose legislation that allows the EU to uphold its values when importing goods that may be associated with environmental and social conflicts, such as mandatory due diligence on conflict minerals.



6 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, adopted in Aarhus in 1998 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The EU became a Party to the Convention in May 2005.

7 Regulation (EC) 1367/2006 on the application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters to Community institutions and bodies

TOWARDS A NEW POLICY ON MIGRATION

Ensuring that the EU response to the immediate and ongoing refugee crisis is dignified, humanitarian and coordinated will remain a priority for as long as it takes. We will continue to work towards a common approach to address this crisis in a spirit of solidarity which recognises our shared responsibility.

At the same time, efforts will need to go into tackling the root causes of this unprecedented movement of refugees. The spread of strife and conflict in the Middle East has reached alarming proportions. Establishing peace and stability in the region must be a top priority.



The role of environmental factors must also be acknowledged. The lion's share of today's refugees originate from a relatively small country in the Middle East which collapsed into civil war after suffering a four-year record drought that devastated its farming sector⁸. The drought, which scientists agree was almost certainly made worse by climate

change, is clearly not the only reason for people wanting to leave Syria. However, it is evident that the failure to tackle climate change will lead to ever more extreme weather events meaning that politically unstable regions will struggle even more to recover. Tackling the root causes of this migration crisis means, among other things, dealing with climate change and weaning Europe off all fossil fuels.

In addition to maintaining global leadership in efforts to combat climate change and move away from fossil fuels, we will aim to support key regions in the world in addressing problems of environmental degradation in order to eliminate a growing driver of migration and instability.

⁸ At; www.pnas.org/content/112/11/3241

A STRONGER GLOBAL ACTOR → A RESPONSIBLE AND RELIABLE GLOBAL ACTOR

Our way of life in Europe is heavily dependent on the extraction of natural resources from the global south, resources that are becoming increasingly scarce and in demand in developing and emerging economies. This is ultimately unsustainable. It is our duty and responsibility to give the necessary space to developing countries in their legitimate aspirations to achieve the levels of comfort and security that many Europeans enjoy, while avoiding the resource-intensive and often polluting path that Europe has taken. This position is only credible if coupled with a firm commitment by Europe to substantially reduce its levels of resource consumption in absolute terms.

We will also work to stop the transfer of hazardous waste from Europe to developing countries which lack adequate facilities for the safe treatment of such waste and to ensure that Europe faces up to its responsibilities when it comes to issues relating to the restoration of and compensation for environmental damage in such countries. We will use the agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals as a springboard to create a genuine sustainable development agenda for Europe that will significantly reduce our environmental footprint and thus help to make possible the transition of developing countries. Such an agenda

also implies a fundamental change in our tax policies in the light of sustainability principles, including a ban on tax havens.

The principle of policy coherence for sustainable development will guide all our external and internal activities, including trade, agriculture and monetary policies. Europe's development policies must be, without exception, sustainable development policies. We will direct our development aid more towards supporting civil society organisations in the Global South in order to strengthen democracies and good governance.

Europe's development policies must be, without exception, sustainable development policies

We will seek to ensure that Europe lives up to its responsibility to ensure corporate accountability so that we do not apply double standards when it comes to norms of environmental and social protection. Europe should not benefit from exploitative practices in other parts of the world which we do not tolerate at home.



A UNION OF DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

Bringing the EU closer to its citizens has been high on the agenda of successive Commissions with mixed results. The 'Better Regulation' agenda has long been seen as a crucial instrument for this, but its success in bringing citizens closer to the EU is minimal at best. Many Europeans clearly value the benefits that derive from the extensive framework of European laws built up over decades that protect the environment, health, working conditions and a wide range of social values. And we now know that the simplification of the EU's car testing system under the EU's Better Regulation agenda has not helped the EU to live up to these expectations, on the contrary.

We will therefore use the in-depth review of this agenda to initiate a debate about better ways to bring the EU closer to its citizens and move forward with broader democratic reform. This will among other things be necessary to address public concerns over the influence of regulated industries when rules are being written that apply to their sector.

We need to transform the political culture within the European Commission, European Parliament and Council to make it more transparent and accountable, granting access to documents in all but exceptional cases, ensuring that participation of organised civil society and industry stakeholders in consultations is balanced, and seeking to expand access to justice for citizens at EU and Member State level.



9 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52007DC0022>

With this revised set of 10 priorities we will begin to implement a process of real reform and make 2016 the year of sustainable development in Europe.





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