



The EEB's Priorities for the
2020-2021 Presidency Trio of
Germany, Portugal and Slovenia

A dozen demands from civil society

The EEB, building on consultation with its 160 members, with its wider civil society partnerships and stakeholder discussions, has developed a series of specific asks across environmental areas. From these we have extracted a “dozen demands” where coordinated Presidency engagement, commitment and solidarity can make a lasting and fundamental difference.



1 Drive a just transition to a sustainable and resilient Europe

Ensure that the EU fully embraces and implements the European Green Deal (EGD) through ambitious strategies, laws and financing, and that these are at the heart of the Corona crisis response. Furthermore, the EU should promote a complementary and transformative 8th Environmental Action Programme (8EAP) and Sustainable Europe 2030 Strategy for SDG implementation, and integrate social measures in each to effectively develop a new Social Contract for the future of Europe that builds on lessons from the Corona crisis and

improves social and environmental resilience. It should also continuously monitor progress through a reformed European Semester that integrates wellbeing and sustainability indicators as headline indicators. These transformative agendas need to be promoted through EU enlargement processes, relationships with European neighbours and agreements with trading partners. EU diplomacy needs to promote a Green Deal across the globe to support long term global resilience.



2 Leverage funding for a transformative EGD and ensure Corona recovery package is climate and biodiversity-proof

Use all financial means to drive the green transition of the EU economy – through having the green transition at the heart of the next Generation EU Recovery Package and an EU budget (MFF) with 40% climate funding and associated climate integration in Partnership Agreements, Operational Programmes and CAP Strategic Plans – as well as the new national Recovery and Resilience Plans. Furthermore, allocate an additional 10% of EU funding to other aspects of environment, and at least 15 billion EUR/year for the management of the Natura 2000 network and 45.6 bn EUR for large scale nature restoration, and ensure the full integration of environment into all programming documents. Ensure prioritisation and governance rules such that EU funds are targeted, just, proportionate, and fully transparent. Align the

green taxonomy to the need of orienting Corona response funding towards climate and biodiversity-proof investments to ensure policy coherence and avoid risks of poor targeting of taxpayers' money. Facilitate national expenditure by Paris-compatible State Aid Guidelines and use the Growth and Stability Pact flexibility mechanism to exempt taxonomy-coherent climate expenditure from the Maastricht 3% debt rule. Private expenditure should be facilitated through the sustainable finance taxonomy and finance strategy. Only with EU, national and private funding will we be able to address the climate, environmental and biodiversity crises and recover from the Corona crisis by implementing a transformative European Green Deal that invests in our future and wellbeing.



3 Address the climate emergency

Commit to ensuring a strong and ambitious European Climate Law aiming for climate neutrality by 2040 at the latest to be on a path towards the Paris objective of keeping global temperature rise below 1.5°C, as demanded by the latest scientific evidence. Increase the 2030 GHG emission reduction target to at least 65% by 2030, energy efficiency to at least 45% with at least 50% of sustainably-sourced renewable energy by 2030, each essential to achieve climate neutrality. And promote major investment in a fossil-fuel free energy production and consumption system, including industry, buildings, transport, agriculture and related energy infrastructure. Accelerated investment in climate neutrality will drive the creation of

future-proof jobs, provide essential economic stimulus, save economies and citizens' money while driving innovation, re-skilling and a systemic transformation of the economy. In addition, investment in nature-based solutions, such as the restoration of key ecosystems serving as natural sinks, for climate change adaptation needs to be a core part of the EU's climate adaptation strategy, together with measures needed to achieve a circular and zero-pollution economy. There should be a strengthened focus on ecosystem resilience to climate change, taking into account the latest science on feedback loops, tipping points and linkages of ecosystems and socio-economic systems.



4 Reverse the dramatic loss of biodiversity and invest in the resilience of our ecosystems

Endorse the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and lead the Council deliberations on the EU legally binding restoration targets for ecosystems important for biodiversity and climate such as wetlands, peatlands, biodiversity rich grasslands, marine ecosystems, and that protects and restores free-flowing rivers, increasing connectivity. Commit to healthy oceans, with at least 30% of the ocean to be highly or fully protected by 2030

with no-take-zones, a full transition to low-impact fishing, an end to the pollution and deterioration of marine ecosystems, and a major investment in restoration which together will also increase the resilience to climate change. Ensure that light and noise pollution impacts on terrestrial and marine biodiversity are addressed by EU policy.



5 Initiate a transition towards sustainable food and agriculture

Mobilise political support for a bold reform of the CAP and ambitious CAP Strategic Plans, to end subsidies harmful to the environment. An ambitious CAP should enable agroecological transition and strengthen the performance and governance framework of the new CAP, by inter alia introducing binding 10% non-productive “space for nature” areas at farm-level and making all CAP payments subject to a conditionality

that ensures a basic environmental delivery. Furthermore, the Presidencies should work closely with the Commission to develop measures to implement a transformative Farm to Fork Strategy that drives a transition to sustainable food systems, that also includes fisheries, reduces meat and dairy consumption, and that commits to cutting agricultural GHG emissions by 45% by 2030.



6 Safeguard freshwater ecosystems and clean water for all

Lead the Council response to the fitness check evaluation of the Water Framework Directive, by recognising that the WFD is fit-for-purpose as concluded by the evaluation and does not need amending and ensuring that its implementation is stepped up so that its objectives can be met by 2027. Improve policy coherence and integration with other sectoral

policies to address diffuse pollution from agriculture, hydromorphological pressures, and substances of emerging concern to help protect and enhance the health of freshwater ecosystems. Work with the Commission to develop an ambitious Zero-Pollution Action Plan on water, air and soil as proposed in the European Green Deal.



7 Clean air: towards zero environmental and health impact

Revise the Ambient Air Quality Directives to align EU air quality standards with the latest WHO guidelines (expected by early 2021), while Member States achieve full implementation and enforcement of existing legislation (e.g. Ambient Air Quality Directives and National Emission Ceilings Directive). Push for the adoption of ambitious source legislation (e.g. on domestic heating, transport, including shipping, industry and

agriculture) and commit to the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol (UNECE Air Convention) which will also have to cover methane, black carbon and mercury emissions. Work with the Commission to develop an ambitious Zero-Pollution Action Plan. Together these will save hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of lives directly and through improved resilience to future health crises.



8 Drive a new industrial revolution

Promote an industrial strategy that transforms EU industry towards being fully resource-efficient, zero carbon, zero waste and non-toxic by 2050, supported by a fully decarbonised energy system. Ensure that the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) review and Best Available Techniques (BAT)/BREF revisions fully integrate circular economy, climate mitigation and zero pollution ambitions, implying a re-design of the BAT determination scoping and methodology. Digitalisation can be instrumental to achieve this ambition, as well as enabling greater transparency on the environmental aspects of all industrial processes, although its own environmental impacts from energy and material consumption need to be tackled. An industrial transformation should be catalysed by

economic incentives, including through a reformed Energy Tax Directive that embraces carbon pricing above 100EUR/tCO₂; an EU-ETS with full auctioning, faster allocation withdrawal rates, and floor price; a combined approach with performance based standards (e.g. BAT) and the removal of kerosene tax exemptions for shipping and aviation that are incompatible with climate ambitions. Digitalisation and improved databases for benchmarking and compliance promotion does not only play a part in achieving this, but it needs to serve greater transparency in all industrial related decision making and enforcement.



9 Promote safe chemicals and a non-toxic environment that also protect our immune systems

Deliver Council Conclusions ensuring Member States' support to an ambitious and overarching long-term chemicals strategy for sustainability in order to achieve a toxic-free environment as soon as possible, based on urgent actions to prevent pollution across sectors. Member States must push the Commission to propose a strategy that closes regulatory gaps (e.g. chemicals used in food contact materials, exports of hazardous substances) and strengthens legislation to prevent exposure to hazardous chemicals, in particular by protecting vulnerable groups, and addressing endocrine disruptors and persistent chemicals including mercury. Speed up the phase-out and substitution of hazardous substances

by safe and sustainable alternatives while avoiding regrettable substitution (e.g. by restricting families of chemicals such as PFAS, phthalates or bisphenols). Member States must propose harmonised enforcement actions to address the issue of non-compliance (from the registration of nanomaterials to the biocides regulation in light of the need for disinfectants in the EU for the coming months). Furthermore, use the ICCM5 meeting to promote an ambitious global regulatory framework on chemicals and waste with SAICM post 2020; and strengthen related legally binding chemicals conventions such as Minamata and Stockholm.



10 Realise the circular economy promise for the environment, jobs and the economy

Secure the swift implementation of the sustainable product policy to make sustainable products the norm as promised under the Circular Economy Action Plan, including an EU product information system that brings together the environmental, consumer and digital agendas to ensure

full transparency and traceability on the performance and contents of products and materials by 2025, and push for a resource use/consumption footprint reduction target, binding waste prevention objectives and drastic restriction of (hazardous) waste shipment.



11 Promote democratic accountability and rule of law through better access to justice

Ensure the EU complies with the Aarhus Convention by improving access to justice within the EU. The Trio Presidency should maintain pressure on the Commission to prepare a legislative proposal for the revision of the Aarhus Regulation. Once proposed, the Presidencies should engage constructively in the co-decision process to ensure that the Regulation is progressive and that all its weaknesses are resolved. Convey its support for ensuring adequate access to justice in Member States through an ambitious and expansive new Commission proposal for a Directive on Access to Justice. Ensure full transparency and ease of access to information on

environmental and public health issues and any related public expenditure. Guarantee meaningful public participation and a safe space for civil society engagement that are increasingly under threat, also as a result of emergency responses to the Corona crisis. Advances in digitalisation should be used to improve democratic processes, transparency and accountability, while needing to be measured against the risks that they can pose to fundamental freedoms, such as privacy. Finally, the Presidencies should implement the EGD Green Oath to "do no harm" and ensure that it is not undermined by the Better Regulation process and one-in-one-out principle.



12 Promote European solidarity, wellbeing, and social and environmental justice

Cooperate with deep solidarity across the EU on the Corona crisis and the post Corona reform. This should take into account social justice between social groups, including women, and minorities, such as Roma and wider BAME communities and refugees, often more strongly affected, economically and health-wise, by the Corona crisis and environmental pollution. Also ensure equal access to clean water, sanitation and nature. Encourage policy and governance reform so that wellbeing and sustainability guide all policymaking and are fully integrated into the European Semester. This includes

deep level changes such as turning the Stability and Growth Pact into a Sustainability and Wellbeing Pact and critical reflections on the impact of the historic growth model that too often relies on over-extraction, the destruction of nature, creating unacceptable risks for human health and society. There is an urgent need to increase the consultation with and participation of all segments of society, in particular youth, so as to ensure better representation of the next generation's concerns and identify solutions to improve inter-generational justice.