



**EEB**

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT →



# EUROPEAN PACT FOR THE FUTURE: THE ACTION PLAN

For a green and social deal for  
a one-planet economy

#EU pact4future





**We are Europe's largest network of environmental citizens' organisations.  
We bring together over 180 civil society organisations from 41 countries.  
Together, we work for a better future where people and nature thrive together.**

The EEB is an International non-profit association /  
Association internationale sans but lucratif (AISBL).  
EC register for interest representatives:  
Identification number 06798511314-27  
BCE identification number: 0415.814.848  
RPM Tribunal de l'entreprise francophone de Bruxelles

Published: September 2024  
Responsible editor: Patrick ten Brink, Secretary General, EEB  
Design: Christian Skrivervik, Communications Lead, EEB

European Environmental Bureau (EEB)  
Rue des Deux Eglises 14-16  
1000 Brussels, Belgium  
+32 (0)2 289 1090  
eeb@eeb.org  
eeb.org  
meta.eeb.org



With the support of the LIFE Programme of the European Union  
Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those  
of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or  
CINEA. Neither the European Union nor CINEA can be held responsible for them.



## Acknowledgements

*The civil society proposal for a European Pact for the Future—including the 4-page Pact and accompanying website text endorsed by thousands of organisations and individuals—benefited greatly from the contributions of a wide range of EEB members. These members represent all EU Member States, EFTA countries, the UK, most EU candidate countries, and several international members. Their inputs came through 19 working groups, as well as through the EEB Council, EEB Board, and direct individual contributions.*

*We also drew on insights from NGO partners, with special thanks to WWF EPO, BirdLife Europe, CAN Europe, T&E, the wider Green10, and Youth & Environment. Additionally, the proposal was informed by extensive consultations with stakeholders from broader youth organisations, social partners, think tanks, policymakers from Member States and other European nations, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, and progressive businesses. We extend our sincere thanks to all for their ideas and support.*

*We would also like to thank all the donors who have contributed directly or indirectly to the development of the Action Plan. For a complete list of donors, please visit [www.eeb.org](http://www.eeb.org).*

## Disclaimer

*This detailed Action Plan is an EEB document presenting specific recommendations for achieving the objectives outlined in **the European Pact for the Future—a green and social deal for a one-planet economy** that has been endorsed by signatures. While this Action Plan builds on the priorities committed to in The Pact, it goes further into specifics. Therefore, out of caution and respect for the due process and commitments of the signatories, we must clarify that endorsement of The Pact does not automatically imply endorsement of The Action Plan.*

***The recommendations outlined in this document are EEB's proposals and should not be viewed as representing the views of those who signed The Pact.*** This Action Plan has been developed to communicate to the European Commission, Member States, and the European Parliament what we believe are the specific needs for the next legislative cycle and, as such, extends beyond the high-level vision of the European Pact for the Future.







# European Pact for the Future

**A green and social deal for a one-planet economy**

Europe needs a Pact for the Future that fosters hope and courage, opens opportunities, creates wellbeing for all, catalyses competitiveness through sustainability and drives the needed transformative system change for a sustainable future

These are times of both multiple crises, opportunities, and, certainly, challenges. Our choices today will define the course of history. Looking ahead at a new political mandate in the EU, we need a trailblazing agenda—a beacon of hope unleashing the potential for all citizens, communities and sustainable business to drive a just transition towards a future where people prosper within the limits of our one healthy planet.

## From Fear...

The interconnected climate, biodiversity and pollution crises are changing our world and deepening the rifts between and within countries globally. Poverty and profound inequalities, augmented by inflation, have spurred a cost-of-living crisis, eroding our societies and sparking unrest. The current economic system has led to wealth for some but at a harsh cost to many, and is, every year, exacerbating the planet's degradation, the triple crisis and the risks for our future. Disinformation campaigns and abuse of position and economic power undermine elections and put democracy at risk. The stark choices facing humanity now underline the need for system change, including reforming our economic system. Yet it is not all gloom, and resignation to the difficulty of corraling support for transformation efforts is not an option.

**Europe's strength lies in progressive policy rooted in robust social and environmental norms – we should not undermine this; we should build on it.** The European Green Deal was a starting point, catalysing part of the system change we need, strengthening EU's international credibility, and was proving to be a tool for EU competitiveness globally – we should move further.

Were the EU to back off now would only increase the risk of being outpaced by others, and diminish EU's global influence, leaving the path clear for industry in other countries to capture the growing markets for green technologies.

## ...to Hope

The shift to renewable energies, clean tech and circular product development will create millions of good-quality skilled jobs. Farmers' and fishers' livelihoods can be improved through fair prices, agro- and pesca-ecological practices, and nature protection and restoration efforts.

Disposable household incomes can increase through fair and redistributive taxation, decent working conditions, just wages and salaries, energy-saving building renovation and socially fair housing policies, access to healthy and affordable food, and more affordable public transport.

Committing to better access to infrastructures and services, and repairable and toxic-free products will make the safe and sustainable choice the easy choice.

These measures will also strengthen trust in leadership and decision-making.

We can and must reorient our economies from a focus on generating short term profits to filling human needs and long term viability and sustainability – through regulation and enhanced market signals, secured investments, and targeted financial support, the stimulation of innovation paving the way for a prosperous future economy in harmony with planetary realities.

# A Commitment to a European Pact for the Future

We must commit to an agenda of hope and confidence, an actionable and viable programme for our common future, and system change without leaving anyone behind. We need a global Just Transition in which everyone can be part of the solution. Clearly, a European and global partnership of this kind must protect the most vulnerable against negative externalities.

We propose a European Pact for the Future, a new green and social deal for a one-planet economy that reflects the fundamental choice that society now faces. This action plan of hope and courage is for now and tomorrow, for the young and future generations, allowing the older generation to leave a legacy of a world worth living in.

## Embrace the vision of Living Well within Planetary Boundaries

### 1 Have the European Pact for the Future – a green and social deal for a one-planet economy – guide the next 5-year legislative cycle.

**Flagship Action:** Continue to prioritise a green and just transition towards climate neutrality, zero pollution and thriving nature in the next political cycle from the Strategic Agenda onwards.

## Chart an Ecological Transformation

### 2 Fully address the linked triple planetary climate, biodiversity and pollution crises.

**Flagship action:** Table an Action Plan for 2030 with commitments for the ecological transformation needed by 2040 and 2050 and address areas of insufficient progress (in accordance with Art. 5 (2) of the 8th EAP). Address the legislative gaps, ramp up ambition, and address barriers to tackling the existential threats to households and humankind.

### 3 Reduce resource use and seize Circular Economy (CE) opportunities; shift to a wellbeing economy.

**Flagship actions:** Fast track the CE by resource use & material footprint reduction targets and resource efficiency measures. Refocus the economy on wellbeing & healthy people: replacing the Stability and Growth Pact with a Wellbeing and Sustainability Pact and adjusting the European Semester to put environmental and social justice goals at the heart of EU economic governance; create the fiscal space for countries to make investments in the transition.

## Fast-track towards a one-planet Economy

### 4 Support sectors in becoming resilient & competitive on sustainability.

**Flagship actions:** Ramp up support for skills development, training, job creation and research in key sectors of the green and climate neutral economy. Invest in smart electricity grids and wider infrastructure to help vanguard sustainable companies prosper. Design and launch a policy package for sustainable food systems. Strengthen chemicals legislation and implementation to support human health, catalyse innovation, and avoid toxic supply chains.

### 5 Drive system change through investments, fair taxation and distribution.

**Flagship action:** Commit to a Social and Green Investment Plan for the Green Deal transition, so all are on board – people and businesses. Reform taxation and pricing to ensure fairness and distribution, putting in practice the polluter pays principle.

### 6 Make the safe and sustainable choice the easy choice for people and business.

**Flagship action:** Use both supply and demand policies, and increase policy coherence and

cooperation across all levels of government to create the right “service and product environment” – the physical, economic, political and socio-cultural context within which citizens operate to make their choices. Citizens should be able to choose the sustainable options by default, whether for mobility, housing, energy, food or other necessary consumables. Revise sustainable public and corporate procurement policy to champion the market transformation.

## Promote a Just Transition

### 7 Develop a new social contract to leave no-one behind.

**Flagship action:** Commit to an EU-wide strategy and results-orientated social protection plan with monitoring via the European Semester to address inequalities and end poverty, ensure minimum income for all, systematically social proof policies to take account of gender, economic and other inequalities.

### 8 Strengthen environmental democracy & give a voice to youth and others too often forgotten.

**Flagship actions:** Support and promote the adoption of an additional Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights recognising the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; Implement a European Civil Society Strategy and civic dialogue, with a focus on younger generations and marginalised groups, and innovations in participatory democracy.

## Show Solidarity & Embrace Responsibilities

### 9 Support and manifest solidarity across an enlarging EU.

**Flagship action:** Roll out the green and just transition in candidate countries to support fossil-fuel independence, decent work, health and security with due legal, administrative and financial support. Reform EU governance to ensure decision-making is not undermined by EU enlargement.

### 10 Commit to global justice and drive partnerships to face common challenges.

**Flagship action:** Take responsibility for and scale back Europe’s negative externalities and resource exploitation, lead on global diplomacy for multilateral solutions and green-deal type partnerships and systematically push for the respect for the international rule of law.

## Implement our Commitments

### 11 Implement & enforce EU legislation to protect the rule of law and our health.

**Flagship action:** Set up an Implementation and Enforcement Action plan, with strong focus on an unerring commitment to upholding the rule of law across the EU.

### 12 Strengthen EU governance and trust in the European Project.

**Flagship actions:** EU strategy to combat disinformation, weed out inappropriate influence by vested interests, and strengthen public accountability. Appoint a Commission Vice president for the European Green Deal & Social Investments, a VP for Just Transition & a Commissioner for Youth and Future Generations.

**sign now**

*If you – as an organisation or individual – wish to support The European Pact for the Future and call for a green and social deal for a one planet economy, please read the extended version of the Dozen Demands and sign up here:*





## Foreword

# The European Pact for the Future - a green and social deal for a one-planet economy: An Action Plan to Deliver

In these complex times, as Europe confronts multiple crises and constant change that can create an atmosphere of fear, we need leadership committed to an agenda of hope and a clear action plan for delivery.

**There is strong political backing to continue advancing the European Green Deal (EDG).** It was the flagship initiative of Ursula von der Leyen's first Commission term, and her re-election by the European Parliament was based on her [Political Guidelines](#), where she promised to stay committed to the EDG and deliver a transformative clean industrial deal. The [EU Strategic Agenda](#), signed by Heads of State, recognised the triple climate-nature-pollution crisis. Despite serious concerns about the "simplification" agenda pushed by [the Draghi report](#), it recognised decarbonisation as a game-changer for lowering Europe's energy costs and boosting security. It also underlined the need for massive investment. Additionally, [the Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU Agriculture](#) resulted in a consensus among diverse stakeholders across the food chain and civil society on the urgent need to reform food production and consumption to stay within planetary boundaries. The [La Hulpe Declaration](#) called for a stronger social pillar.

**The need for a comprehensive action plan to deliver on the EDG's ambitions is undeniable.** This includes a new social contract that addresses these urgent needs, a commitment to sustainable food and farming systems, and a drive towards sustainability in industry and all business sectors.

**Focus on the facts to set ambition levels, not on false narratives.** The facts show that progress is too slow, the risks of inaction are too significant, and much more needs to be done. The [EU Climate Risk Assessment \(EUCRA\)](#) paints a stark picture of climate impacts on Europe. The [European Environment Agency's \(EEA\) progress report on the 8th Environmental Action Programme \(EAP\)](#) concludes that many commitments for 2030 are unlikely to be met. The World Economic Forum's [Global Risks Report 2024](#) warns that the top four risks in the next decade are extreme weather events, critical changes to Earth systems, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, and natural resource shortages. It is, therefore, crucial for EU leaders to maintain their commitment—and indeed go further—towards a green and social EU that embraces a one-planet economy.

**Progressive industry and business, too, are asking for change, demanding that the EGD remain a top priority for the new legislative cycle.** European policy must support the transition to a clean, decarbonised, zero-pollution, resource-efficient, and toxic-free circular industrial model, which can create quality jobs in Europe. Numerous letters from business leaders have repeatedly stressed this need.

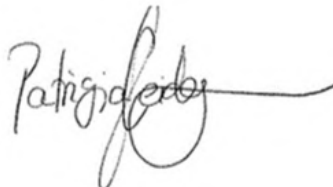
**For these reasons, we developed the European Pact for the Future through extensive consultation, along with Our Vision for a Prosperous and Sustainable Industry: A Positive Blueprint for the Future.** This detailed Action Plan for the European Pact for the Future offers a comprehensive menu of policy proposals for the 2024-2029 legislative cycle. We call on the leaders of the Commission, Parliament, and Council to embrace the Pact, the Blueprint, and this Action Plan, and to deliver the agenda of hope that Europe needs. We also urge other progressive forces in business, science, media, and civil society to support this vision.

This approach will restore faith in leadership, European institutions, the European Project, and democracy, while ensuring that future generations can thrive on a healthy planet.

EU leaders should not miss this rendez-vous with history.



Patrick ten Brink  
Secretary General, EEB



Patrizia Heidegger  
Deputy Secretary General, EEB



Faustine Bas-Defossez  
Policy Director, EEB





SCAN!



# THE EUROPEAN PACT FOR THE FUTURE

A GREEN AND SOCIAL DEAL FOR A ONE-  
PLANET ECONOMY

LET'S WORK TOGETHER!



#EU pact4future



The **European Pact for the Future** nurtures hope and courage, unlocks opportunities, promotes well-being for all, and stimulates competitiveness through sustainability. It propels the necessary transformative shift towards a sustainable future.

We ask for a commitment to a Green and Social Deal for a One-Planet Economy.

To declare your support scan the QR code & sign!

Thank you!

See you soon,  
the EEB ❤️



#EU pact4future



To: European leaders ☀️

In Brussels and beyond ~ ~ ~

From: the EEB 🌍

SIGN THE PACT!



# CONTENTS

<b>EMBRACE THE VISION OF LIVING WELL WITHIN PLANETARY BOUNDARIES.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Have the European Pact for the Future - A green and social deal for a one-planet economy - guide the next legislative cycle.....	12
<b>CHART AN ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION.....</b>	<b>15</b>
2. Fully address the linked triple planetary climate, biodiversity and pollution crises.....	16
3. Reduce resource use, seize Circular Economy opportunities and shift to a Wellbeing Economy.....	26
<b>FAST-TRACK TOWARDS A ONE-PLANET ECONOMY.....</b>	<b>31</b>
4. Support sectors in becoming resilient & competitive on sustainability.....	32
5. Drive system change through investments, fair taxation and distribution.....	37
6. Make the safe and sustainable choice the easy choice for people and business.....	40
<b>PROMOTE A JUST TRANSITION.....</b>	<b>43</b>
7. Develop a new social contract to leave no-one behind.....	44
8. Strengthen environmental democracy & give a voice to youth and others too often forgotten.....	48
<b>SHOW SOLIDARITY &amp; EMBRACE RESPONSIBILITIES.....</b>	<b>51</b>
9. Support and manifest solidarity across an enlarging EU.....	52
10. Commit to global justice and drive partnerships to face common challenges.....	54
<b>IMPLEMENT OUR COMMITMENTS.....</b>	<b>58</b>
11. Implement & enforce EU legislation to protect the rule of law and our health.....	59
12. Strengthen EU governance and trust in the European Project.....	62



EEB

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT



EUROPEAN PACT FOR THE FUTURE

# THE ACTION PLAN

A green and social deal for a  
one-planet economy







**EEB**

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT



# EMBRACE THE VISION OF LIVING WELL WITHIN PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

1. Have the European Pact for the Future -  
a green and social deal for a one planet  
economy - guide the next legislative cycle





# 1. Have the European Pact for the Future - a green and social deal for a one planet economy - guide the next legislative cycle

From 2019 to 2024, the first phase of the European Green Deal (EGD) saw **significant progress, particularly in climate and energy**. There has been a clear shift towards decarbonising the EU, which will help reduce energy bills for businesses and households through the roll-out of affordable renewable energy and energy-saving measures. However, **progress in other critical areas, such as toxic chemicals, water and noise pollution, nature protection and restoration, resource use, economic transitions, inequalities and global justice, was much slower—or, in some cases, non-existent**.

Many environmental challenges remain unmet, and many opportunities that impact day-to-day life have yet to be seized. **The social dimension of the first phase of the EGD was particularly weak**. Not enough was done to involve the whole of society in the ecological and economic transition. Similarly, the level of investments to fuel the transition was far short of what was needed to make the needed progress and get the benefits of the transition sufficiently felt.

The facts make it clear: progress remains too slow, and the risks and costs of inaction are too high. The [EU Climate Risk Assessment \(EUCRA\)](#) paints a stark picture of climate impacts on Europe. [The EEA's progress report on the 8th EAP](#) concluded that many commitments for 2030 are very unlikely to be met. The World Economic Forum's [Global Risks Report 2024](#) warns that the top four risks over the next decade are extreme weather events, critical changes to Earth systems, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, and natural resource shortages.

We therefore call on the EU to:

- **Stay committed to the EDG's objectives** as the overarching direction and plan. Address unfinished business, strengthen implementation efforts, and ensure that the benefits reach people, the economy, and the planet, while engaging all of society. A European Pact for the Future is essential. The costs of delay—in terms of health impacts, avoidable deaths, biodiversity loss, missed economic opportunities, and overall economic costs—far outweigh the costs of timely action.
- **Commit to a new social contract** that ensures wellbeing within the planet's ecological limits. This contract should address persistent and deepening inequalities and exploitative structures, both within the EU and globally. It should also tackle the cost-of-living crisis and the root causes of poverty, democratise the economy, and reduce dependence on continuous growth and unsustainable material extraction (see priorities #2, #3 & #7 for more details).
- This social contract must also **partner with businesses, farmers, fishers, and foresters** who are ready to engage in system-wide change and support the future economy. Adequate funding, economic signals, and transition measures must support these efforts (see priorities #4 & #5 for more details).
- **Commit to a Clean Industrial Deal**, as part of the EGD's follow-up, that promotes competitive sustainability in industry. This should drive a race to the

top for decarbonised, clean, and safe production and products, while embracing zero-pollution ambitions, resource efficiency, and non-toxic circular economy solutions. Regulation should be seen as a driver of innovation, competitiveness, and responsibility (see priority #4 for more details).

- **Implement the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment**, as recognised by the United Nations General Assembly. This will safeguard the rights of future generations and protect environmental defenders in Europe and beyond (see priority #10 for more details).
- **Focus on completing the work started with the EGD in the next legislative cycle.** Address the remaining gaps in ambition on nature, pollution, and climate by building on the successes, precedents, lessons, and learnings of the first five years. Establish new and robust legal protection standards based on the latest available science and increase efforts to implement what has already been achieved (see priorities #2 & #3 for more details).
- **Adopt a fully science-based systems-thinking and whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach** that incorporates the interconnections between ecosystems, society, and the economy into policy recommendations and implementation. Engage all stakeholders and sectors of society in the transition whenever possible.
- **Reflect the priorities of this proposed European Pact for the Future** in the Commission priorities, Work Programmes, in Council Conclusions, in the European Parliament's legislative work priorities and adoption of legislative proposals, and in the 8th EAP Plan of Action to 2030.

Everyone in Europe must see that policymakers genuinely have their interests at heart, are protecting their rights, and are taking their concerns for a sustainable future seriously. Policymakers must address the linked climate-biodiversity-pollution-social crises, while facing geopolitical challenges. Only in this way will leadership be viewed as legitimate and welcomed, providing an agenda of hope. This will also position the EU as a credible international partner, essential for global negotiations and influence.

Furthermore, sustainable businesses must see a clear commitment from EU institutions to system change, supporting emerging companies that invest in clean production and safe, clean products. Policies must not protect polluting incumbents. Clarity on the direction of travel—continuing the transformative path to a sustainable future—is crucial for business. Any backtracking would not only undermine future engagement but also damage the EU's competitiveness.

## Part 1: Facts and Further Reading

Facts to illustrate the 'costs' of inaction: While the cost of inaction, when looking at health, is primarily about human morbidity and mortality impacts measured in human suffering and early mortality, representation in economic terms can help communicate the scale of the burdens, too. Examples to illustrate the scale of the costs of inaction:

- The costs to society of ammonia on our health and environment have been estimated at EUR 187 billion annually.
- Health costs arising from public exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals have been estimated at €163 billion per year in Europe.
- Costs of air pollution caused by Europe's largest industrial plants are "substantial," averaging between €268 billion to €428 billion per year (EEA).
- The overall environmental costs of all reactive nitrogen losses in Europe are estimated at EUR 70–EUR 320 billion per year, much beyond the costs of reducing pollution at source.
- Direct healthcare costs from exposure to PFAS in Europe alone are €52-84 billion annually. If you add the fees for removing PFAS from the environment, so-called remediation, the figures are even more staggering: current costs to remove and destroy the total PFAS mass released annually into the environment would likely exceed the global GDP of 106 trillion USD.

On inequalities in the EU / globally: In 2022, 95.3 million people in the EU (22% of the population) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, i.e. lived in households experiencing at least one of the three poverty and social exclusion risks: risk of poverty, severe material and social deprivation, and/or living in a household with very low work intensity. Most affected are those without work and retirees, but also 9% of people working in the EU live in households affected by poverty. The wealth gap in the EU is staggering: the wealthiest 10% on the continent own 67%, while the bottom 50% of adults possess only 1.2%. The richest 22 men in the world own more than all women in Africa, that is, more than 740 million people.

#EU pact4future

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS





EEB

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT



# CHART THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

## 2. Fully address the triple planetary climate, biodiversity and pollution crises (land, freshwater, seas & oceans, planet)

- Upgrade efforts at climate change mitigation - this is a climate emergency
- Ramp up climate adaptation since we have no choice but to increase our resilience to climate change
- Wake up to the reality that biodiversity is essential for our survival, and its loss is completely counter-productive and unacceptable
- Commit to the availability of clean and safe water – for wellbeing, livelihoods and trust
- Shift away from harmful chemicals – for health, trust and avoiding a toxic circular economy and future liabilities
- Reduce exposure to Mercury at EU and Global levels
- Keep going on securing better air quality – for health and co-benefits of protecting the environment, reducing energy bills and climate mitigation
- Focus also on the problems of noise, light and space pollution – important gaps in policy attention





# CHART THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

**The European Green Deal (EGD) primarily advanced in the areas of climate and energy**, contributing to climate mitigation and reducing dependence on Russian fossil fuels. Over time, it will significantly cut fuel import bills and lower household energy costs, with renewable energy now being the cheapest available source. The EGD also advanced some aspects of water and air pollution, waste and circular economy but remained weaker on climate adaptation, was poor on chemicals with the shelving of the REACH revision and as well as poor on biodiversity following the multiple attacks on nature-related legislation and a weakened Nature Restoration Law.

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was a failure. Worse still, it was undermined by supporters of industrial agriculture, who propagated the false narrative that weakening environmental protections would solve the fundamental challenges facing farmers. With 20% of the farmers getting 80% of EU subsidies for agriculture and with power concentration in the supply chain and trade squeezing the prices paid to farmers, the problems lay elsewhere. And worse still, in the last months of the mandate, we witnessed a further dismantling of the CAP's last environmental safeguards, leaving that budget empty from any sort of basic environmental conditionality while failing to address farmers' actual problems: low income, unfair prices and climate change impacts coupled with biodiversity loss.

The Strategic Dialogue completed in late August 2024 was, however, a positive development, with cross-stakeholder consensus on the need to change (business as usual not being an option), the need to maintain and enforce key environmental legislations such as nitrates, water framework and birds and habitats directives

as well as nature restoration, tackle consumption and unhealthy diets and to overhaul the CAP current payments, in order to target the ones most in need in the first place and foster ecosystems delivery in the other one. There is significant unfinished business and deep merits – for human health, for society, the economy and for nature – of the unfinished business being delivered in the next legislative cycle.

The agenda is not only about crises and protecting what we have - our wellbeing, health and cultures, our homes, land and essential infrastructures, our natural and cultural heritage from the ravages of climate change, biodiversity loss and ecosystem tipping points, and risks from pollution and chemicals - but also about opportunities and needs. Opportunities of the transition, such as job creation in solar power and wind, are also vast in the areas of circular economy. Opportunities for innovation for safe and sustainable solutions and learning are endless. Here, policies have started, but much more can and needs to be done.

The transformation also requires all sectors to engage in system change (e.g. from linear to circular economy, the complete transition to a 100% renewable energy grid, from fossil fuelled private transport to zero emissions mobility for all, with a shift to public and active transport where appropriate). The path to 2030, 2040 and 2050, started with the EGD, needs to continue without pause, addressing the triple crises, the opportunities and the wider need for system change set out below. **To make our commitments credible and to guide the transition, a serious and convincing path to 2030, 2040 and 2050 is needed, else the objectives will remain empty aspirations, and we will all bear the consequences.**

## CHART THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

### 2. Fully address the triple planetary climate, biodiversity and pollution crises (land, freshwater, seas & oceans, planet)

The EGD is committed to a carbon-neutral Europe, adherence to the 1.5 degrees global warming Paris target, zero pollution ambition, a toxic-free environment, net positive gain in biodiversity, and a regenerative economy. The reality contrasts with the ambition, even after the EGD has been launched. The cost of inaction or the cost of delayed action in terms of health, social, economic, and political is much bigger than the cost of tackling the problems (recall Box 1). The EU must continue to tackle the triple climate-nature-pollution crisis, which is also leading to health, economic and social crises.

#### Upgrade efforts at climate change mitigation - this is a climate emergency

Despite the commitments, the 1.5-degree global warming limit agreed in Paris was already reached this year, and in Europe, we can expect temperatures to rise at twice the global average. This is likely to create massive risks of coastal and inland flooding, cause droughts and water shortages, and affect agriculture and forestry (EEA, 2024a). The news from across the world underlines, day after day, that we are in a climate emergency, and we need a climate emergency response. The fit-for-55 package, and the 2040 decarbonisation communication have been good steps in the right direction and need to be implemented, with targets needing to be significantly overshoot if we are to not err past the 1.5 degrees warming target. The work is not complete with the current commitments. The expected fit-for-90 package will be a fundamentally important next step.

- Care should be taken to make sure citizens are on board with climate policy, particularly through the implementation of the **ETS2 and the Social Climate Fund**, ensuring mid and low-income households get support, and regarding member states' top-up of those funds as a needed and positive investment for social justice and for emissions reductions. Direct payments to citizens enable countries to help all citizens cope with higher prices, not only those who own cars and homes – and enable countries to adapt to high prices in a very reactive way. The Commission should clarify that such direct payments are in line with the rules on expenditures of ETS-2 revenues. Governments should be reminded of the potential of complementary (regulatory) climate policies in reducing prices in ETS2 – and that high prices are a direct consequence of a collective failure to implement effective non-price policies.
- Show that addressing energy poverty is not in contrast with climate mitigation objectives, but there are win-win-win policies: renewable energies are cheaper than other energy sources, and the rollout of renewables has the potential to make energy more affordable directly and eventually via electricity prices (pending market rules in place in different countries), help achieve the EGD objectives and reduce energy dependency from imports. Rolling out public transport and active modes of transportation in urban areas benefit the most vulnerable households while also reducing emissions.

- **Avoid false solutions** – ones that will only come online too late, are too costly, technologically unconvincing or risky – especially if they now distract political attention and the limited amount of potentially available money from readily available solutions. Examples of false solutions include new nuclear power plants, given their very high costs and time taken to get new plants up and running and health and security risks, and carbon capture and storage applied outside energy-intensive industries, given the risks of sidelining investments from GHG reductions and technological risks. Green hydrogen, while offering important promises, given the costs, should be focused on hard-to-abate sectors as electrification combined with renewables can be a more cost-effective solution for energy demand elsewhere. Investments in false solutions may delay rather than advance climate action.

## **Ramp up climate adaptation since we have no choice but to increase our resilience to climate change**

The [European Climate Risk Assessment](#) gives a stark warning to Europe. Temperatures are set to rise at twice the global average, three times in Scandinavia and Spain, with dramatic risks of inland and coastal flooding, droughts and water stress, storms, and fires. These, as well as invasive alien species and pathogens risk having severe impacts on our agriculture. Already in 2022, heatwaves were estimated to have caused over 60,000 excess deaths and the area where vegetation productivity suffered increased five-fold in 2022 compared to the average over 2000 to 2021. These risks will only grow more severe, hence:

- **Table a new Climate Resilience Law that prioritises nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change**, including flagship measures on water resilience and climate adaptation aiming at making clean water available for nature and for people, reduce water needs by tackling our unsustainable diets and foster a move to more plant-based diets, sustainable agro-energetic projects that improve water retention in the soil and prevent evaporation, forestry and land-management techniques that help prevent landslides and floods.
- **Make the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Agreement a reality** by fostering effective nature protection and restoration across Europe based on a strong Nature Restoration Law backed up by a new nature fund to support farmers, fishers and landowners, making it a win-win strategy for both climate and biodiversity targets and employment.

## **Wake up to the reality that biodiversity is essential for our survival, and its loss is completely counter-productive and unacceptable**

Biodiversity became the unfortunate fall guy in the pre-European Parliament election political point scoring, seeking to erode the EGD, despite biodiversity being our life support system, critical for resilience to climate change, despite ecosystem health being a fundamental driver of farm, forestry and fishery productivity and despite the intrinsic benefits of nature.

A constant of the last hundred years is that biodiversity has been, and continues to be, lost across continents and ecosystems degraded (including many land and aquatic ecosystems essential for farming, forestry and fishing), reducing their many contributions to society and weakening their resilience to climate change. It is also a question of ethics and what type of “civilisation” we wish to be. To avoid the continuation of a model of exploiting nature and undermining it and our own future, to help ensure nature and people thrive together:

- Maximise the full potential of the **Nature Restoration Law** to tackle biodiversity and climate crisis, and finalise the adoption of the **Soil and Forest Monitoring Laws**.
- Put biodiversity on a path of recovery by prioritising the **implementation and funding of the EU Biodiversity Strategy**, as well as **commitments under the Kunming Montreal Biodiversity Agreement**.
- **Prevent backtracking from environmental objectives of the established environmental acquis and support enforcement and implementation of nature, water and marine laws** to deliver on national and EU legal obligations and global commitments, including achieving co-existence with large carnivores. Ensure that existing legal protection and funding are fully used for that; any lowering of the protection status needs to be based on the best science and proper assessments.
- **Put the Regulation on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides back on the table** – this is essential for biodiversity, including importantly pollinators and

through them on food provision, on human, animal and ecosystem health, as well as for water quality (see below)

- **Ensure the next EU budget has dedicated nature funding**, including a specific focus on nature restoration.
- **Systematically communicate how essential biodiversity is for society and for sectors of the economy** to the public and in education – via roll out of projects that support links between ecosystems and local and regional communities, social systems and economic players (e.g. ramp up support via the LIFE fund which has proven a cost-effective source of essential funding), and integrate the understanding into political discourse and policy making to avoid biodiversity being so politically easy to decimate and where society as a whole loses.
- **Remind and communicate how biodiversity, land, coastal and seascapes and ecosystems are part of natural and cultural heritage** – of deep meaning to local communities and their identity – and sources of local development and livelihoods – and that measures taken and investments made to protect, adapt and build up the resilience of this natural heritage.
- Complete the updates and implementation of water pollution and air quality standards, soil and forest monitoring laws and set an **Ocean Blue Deal / Ocean Package**, and publish a **Water Resilience package** and develop a new **Climate Resilience Law** that builds in the **adaptation benefits from ecosystem restoration and land management** – each will help biodiversity.



- **Overhaul the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** and its incentives to make it an instrument of the transition and ensure farmers committed to agro-ecological practices are duly supported and that their engagement in climate adaptation and prioritisation of natural pest control mechanisms through Integrated Pest Management (IPM) are supported. The consensus found in the strategic dialogue is a good basis to start from with a clear call to move away from non-targeted hectare-based payments.
- **Commit to One-Health policies** that recognise that the health of people, wild and domestic animals, ecosystems, and the wider environment are closely interconnected and interdependent, and integrate it across policies to support policy coherence and effectiveness and avoid unnecessary and damaging trade-offs.

## **Commit to the availability of clean and safe water – for wellbeing, livelihoods and trust**

This is a growing challenge across many parts of Europe, partly due to climate change-related droughts, part through over-abstraction, and part through pollution (microplastics, pesticides, PFAS, nitrates and other chemicals). People need to be able to trust in the quality of the water they drink and enjoy. However, evidence of the “forever chemicals” PFAS in food, water, soils across Europe, undermine this trust, creating worries across households of risks of cancer, thyroid disease, cholesterol, weakened immune systems, etc. Additionally, the cost of water pollution is falling disproportionately on the public budget and water bills for Europeans and not polluters. To ensure safe and sufficient water for nature and society:

- **Make the existing Water Framework Directive (WFD) the key tool** to tackle numerous pressures affecting our rivers, lakes and groundwater, ie ensuring its implementation and enforcement on the ground.
- **Finalise the update of priority water pollutants and complement the WFD** with a promised package of measures to make EU more water resilient including setting a requirement for Member States to create EU Natural Water Reserves to protect critical water supplies and their catchments in the Climate Resilience Law; and as noted above:
- **Relaunch the Regulation on Sustainable Use of Pesticides** – this is essential not only for biodiversity, but for water quality (cutting pollution at source), costs saving and farm worker health, and which would be a key tool to deliver on the Farm to Fork objective to cut the use of hazardous pesticides in half by 2030.
- **Deliver the promised Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan** (also called for in the strategic dialogue), which should lay out how the EU will reach its objective of reducing fertiliser use by 2030 and tackling significant water pollution.
- **Overhaul the incentives in the CAP** to be fit for the now and the future, eliminate subsidies harmful to biodiversity and make the polluters pay. Ensure fair support distribution to ensure small farmers have sufficient income and viable agro-ecological practices. As noted above, the cross-stakeholder consensus in the strategic dialogue is a good basis to start from - with its clear call to move away from non-targeted hectare-based payments and to properly target environmental payments for

results-oriented practices that go beyond environmental (water, biodiversity) and climate legislation requirements.

- **Enforce the rule of law and address illegal abstraction and pollution to waterways.** Polluters should not be able to get away with it. This only creates unfair burdens on others.

## **Shift away from harmful chemicals – for health, trust and avoiding a toxic circular economy and future liabilities**

Chemical pollution greatly threatens human health and exacerbates climate change and biodiversity loss. One in ten premature deaths is linked to pollution, over a quarter of a million cancer deaths are linked to environmental causes, and reprotoxic and developmental health problems stem from exposure to chemicals. These, too, are emergencies - for the individuals, communities and society as a whole.

To secure a healthy environment for current and future generations and propel the green transition, we must swiftly phase out harmful chemicals and promote safe, sustainable alternatives. This requires prompt action, driven by ambitious targets and investment in research. Every month, more evidence emerges of the health impacts of toxic chemical exposure in our air, water, soil, food and daily products. Legislation to protect public health is urgently needed. Currently, it takes years, even decades, for the EU to phase out chemicals with known harmful properties. Without decisive action, public trust in governments will erode, if health and the environment are not prioritised.

- **Ensure that the REACH revision facilitates the phase out of harmful and toxic chemicals from the market. The REACH Revision**, as outlined in the chemicals sustainability strategy (CSS), as committed to by all three institutions in the 8EAP), is essential to safeguard our health, environment, climate and biodiversity. This will provide stability, predictability and a level playing field for businesses while fostering innovation and global competitiveness.
- **Enforce the 'no data, no market' principle.** This is essential- chemicals should only enter the market with proven safety.
- **Accelerate regulation and research to shape the market of tomorrow and boost European industries' competitiveness in sustainability**, positioning the EU as a global leader.
- **Embrace protective, preventive and precautionary approaches** and hold polluters accountable for their impacts, and ensure people have access to justice.
- **Ban all non-essential uses of PFAS given the ever-growing evidence of “alarmingly high” levels of exposure to PFAS**, and the wider range of important health risks (some PFAS have been shown to be linked to risks of cancer, infertility, weak immune system, developmental disorder, learning difficulties, hyper-activity, physical malformation and other hormonal problems) and the unaffordable costs of remediation.

## Reduce exposure to Mercury at EU and Global levels

Mercury and its compounds are highly toxic, can damage the nervous system and are particularly harmful to foetal development. Mercury ‘travels’ globally, bioaccumulates up through the food chain, especially in certain predatory fish, and presents a human exposure risk. The revised EU mercury regulation (2024) includes bans for dental amalgam from 1st January 2025 and fluorescent and other lamps by December 2025 and 2026, depending on the categories.

At the global level, the Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted in October 2013 to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic mercury emissions. During the Fifth Conference of the Parties (COP5) to the Convention (2023), important decisions were taken, further strengthening the Convention by phasing out more mercury-added products and processes, developing clear mercury waste management requirements and release guidance, and assisting its effectiveness evaluation. The mercury-added skin-lightening cosmetics challenge came to global attention, and additional information was requested by Parties towards strengthening the enforcement of the relevant mercury ban. COP 6 and COP 7 are expected to take place in 2025 and 2027 respectively.

The EU leadership on mercury should continue in the coming years at EU and global levels by:

- **Promoting EU leadership in strengthening the Minamata Convention on Mercury** including, by supporting initiatives towards 1) widening its scope on mercury-added products and processes to be phased out, including lamps, dental amalgam

and vinyl-chloro- monomer, and 2) controlling and, where feasible, eliminating mercury compounds’ trade; as well as supporting a programme of work to better enforce the mercury ban on cosmetics.

- **Ensure that the revised EU Mercury Regulation** is properly implemented while setting swiftly the ground for developing a draft guidance on abatement technologies for mercury emissions from crematoria as well as for assessing the need to regulate further mercury compounds, remaining mercury uses and waste sources. Mercury-relevant EU law should be further strengthened, including the revision of **RoHS** annexes.
- **Promote a Product Liability Directive** and a **Cosmetics Regulation** that holds e-platforms that sell illegal and dangerous chemicals and products containing them, such as mercury added skin-lightening products, accountable and ensures that failure to comply with those requirements results in meaningful consequences.

## Keep going on securing better air quality – for health and co-benefits of protecting the environment, reducing energy bills and climate mitigation

This will improve well-being, avoid health impacts, and further reduce the unacceptable losses of life and ecosystem damage across Europe. This is an area of good news – air pollution in the EU has been reduced in the last decade, meaning that if the right actions are put in place, things can improve. However, air pollution in the EU is still estimated to cause around 300,000 premature deaths per year and a series of health issues, including cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

In its Zero Pollution Action Plan, the EU has committed to at least reduce by 55% by 2030 (compared to 2005 levels) the health impacts related to air pollution. The achievement of this objective will hopefully be helped by the revised ambient air quality directive. However, there is still an urgent need to agree on more ambitious air quality standards and national emission reduction targets, accompanied by effective laws and policies to cut pollution at source as the levels of death (and a broader range of other health impacts) are still clearly unacceptable. Citizens have a right to clean air.

- **Finalise and implement the new ambient air quality directive and complement it with additional measures to achieve the WHO recommendations** as soon as possible and at the latest by 2035 (as demanded by the European Parliament in its position adopted in September 2023) and advance to reach the zero-pollution ambition.
- **Quickly complete the review and start the revision of the National Emission Reduction Commitments Directive**, so to accelerate the cutting of overall national emissions of the already covered five pollutants and expand its scope to additional ones, black carbon, mercury and methane, establishing binding reduction targets for 2035 and 2040;
- **Engage in the ongoing process of revision of the Gothenburg Protocol** to ensure that its scope is expanded and its level of ambition is increased, in line with science and civil society views as expressed in that framework;
- **Strengthen efforts at cutting pollution at source – including from industry, agriculture, transport – including shipping – and domestic heating:**

- **Engage with cities, who are often champions of progress, to keep improving air quality**, and pushing down the risks of early mortality and the range of respiratory diseases.
- Similarly, **engage with health professionals and secure strategic collaborations** with the health sector and policy-makers to build bridges, recognising the fundamental links between health and environment policies and objectives.

### **Focus also on the problems of noise, light and space pollution – important gaps in policy attention**

Despite the very clear scientific evidence, environmental noise—estimated to affect 20% of the population—remains an undertreated environmental health risk, impacting human health and the environment. Long-term exposure to noise can lead to health effects, including sleep disturbance, negative impacts on the cardiovascular and metabolic systems, and cognitive impairment in children. Light pollution is often forgotten but is also a factor in sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation also impacts biodiversity, especially pollinators, and undermines the ability to see the stars. Space is becoming littered with satellite waste, creating hazards. These unfinished business areas need initiatives during the next legislative cycle.

- Table a proposal for a revised **Environmental Noise Directive**, securing the introduction of mandatory noise standards in line with the WHO Environmental noise guidelines for the European Region:
- **Develop a strategy to reduce levels of light pollution** to improve wellbeing, save energy, and protect biodiversity.



## Part 2: Facts and Further Reading

### Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

There is a real risk that the already weakening Gulf Stream (the “AMOC: Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation will reach a tipping point as early as 2040, which would be a global disaster, with heat remaining in the equator and, for Europe, would risk plunging temperatures by 10 to 30 degrees in winter periods.

- EEA, 2024a: [EU Climate Risk Assessment \(EUCRA\)](#).
- [Policy Brief: A sustainable hydrogen strategy for the EU](#)
- [Nuclear Phase-out: How renewables, energy savings and flexibility can replace nuclear in Europe](#)

### Sustainable Food Systems

- [A brighter future for EU food and farming](#).

### Chemicals

- [Toxic-free Pledge](#)
- [PFAS explained](#)
- [The European Commission’s Mid-Term Review of the 8EAP, published on 13 March 2024](#)

### Water Quality

- [EEB POLICY BRIEFING: Toxic tide rising: time to tackle PFAS National approaches to address PFAS in drinking water across Europe](#)
- European Court Of Auditors [Special Report 12/2021](#): The Polluter Pays Principle: Inconsistent application across EU environmental policies and actions

### Air Pollution

- [WHO global air quality guidelines](#)
- [Europe’s air quality status 2024](#)
- [EEB’s analysis: National Air Pollution Control Programmes: analysis and suggestions for the way forward](#)
- [Views and expectations on a revised Gothenburg Protocol](#), EEB
- [Where there's fire, there's smoke Emissions from domestic heating with wood](#), EEB
- [Tackling Methane Emissions: Now And In The Future](#), Methane Matters Coalition

### Noise Pollution

- [Environmental noise guidelines for the European Region](#)
- [Report on the implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive](#)

[#EU pact4future](#)

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS





**EEB**

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT



# CHART THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

## 3. Reduce resource use, seize Circular Economy opportunities and shift to a Wellbeing Economy

- Raw materials and tackling over-production
- Towards a Wellbeing Economy



## CHART THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

### 3. Reduce resource use, seize Circular Economy opportunities and shift to a Wellbeing Economy

**If everyone on Earth consumed like Europeans, we would need three planets to satisfy global demand.** Currently, in the EU, we consume more than 14 tonnes of raw materials per capita each year, a figure that surged to 14.8 tonnes in 2022, marking a 6% increase over the past decade. This unsustainable and irresponsible material footprint underscores the urgent need for measures to address resource use. Shifting from a linear take-make-use-dispose model to a genuine circular economy offers a multitude of benefits: it will help preserve resources, reduce costs, cut greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen resilience to price volatility and supply-chain disruptions, and avoid the emergence of highly destructive & exploitative practices like deep-sea mining.

Despite these clear benefits, the circular material use rate in the EU has essentially stagnated over the last decade (11.5% in 2022, less than a one-percentage-point increase since 2010). This demonstrates the substantial untapped potential and, hence, the opportunities for a more decisive shift towards a circular economy that aligns resource consumption with planetary boundaries.

The [EEA state of play assessment on the circular economy](#) concluded that “decisive action is essential to drastically reduce waste, prioritise reduction of resource use, improve recycling rates and improve the introduction of products that are designed for circularity from the outset ” noting that: “We are still far from the ambition to double the Union’s circularity rate by 2030.” The EEA explicitly called for “moving beyond the current strong focus on waste to address resource use more directly.” Finally, the EEA

stressed that “now is the time to accelerate the shift to a more circular Europe” as this will help save resources and energy, reduce energy bills, [create jobs](#) and support [consumer choice](#).

While there have been important commitments to the circular economy within the EGD, the European economy is still largely dependent on the wasteful model of extract-take-make-use-dispose, and far too little still on the circular economy of reduce-reuse-repair-remanufacture-recycle. The economic signals, therefore, still maintain an unfair advantage for the energy and resource-intensive linear model, exacerbated by the false impression that saving resources contradicts business development and consumption freedom. Evidence shows that sufficiency measures and resource saving business models create more jobs and that consumers’ freedom is clearly affected by the lack of accessible alternatives to wasteful choices. To advance:

- **Commit to establishing an EU target on reducing resource use** (material footprint) and its impacts (consumption footprint) **in line with planetary boundaries**, mirroring the impactful emissions reduction targets which have unleashed transformative climate actions across the European and global economy. This law shall set binding EU resource use reduction targets, based on material and consumption footprint in line with the best available research on sustainable consumption levels, with indicators to monitor and ensure progress, mechanisms to steer Member States to develop implementation

strategies (including economic and fiscal instruments to achieve the targets). This EU framework on sustainable resource use will also act as a compass for existing CE legislation, ensuring a more effective implementation of the waste hierarchy prioritising prevention, repair and reuse to minimise resource use and reduce material flows. This would address the EU's structural resource overconsumption and unleash progress on climate change, biodiversity protection, and reduced pollution as the overall impact of products and materials is reduced.

- **Introduce ambitious measures to design waste out of the system**, starting with accelerated and more stringent eco-design measures for durability, repair and resource efficiency.
- **Setting of systematic waste prevention targets** (as now considered for food waste and packaging) **for all types of waste**, including commercial and professional waste, which are still largely neglected in EU policy. In addition, differentiated targets should be set for reuse versus recycling, accompanied by supporting measures requiring disassembly and recyclability of products, and uptake of recycled content. In line with our long-established waste hierarchy, eco-design requirements should become progressively more stringent. In contrast, waste prevention and reuse targets should be increased to further incentivise resource-saving business models and support job creation in the reuse and repair sectors.
- **Commit much more institutional capacity to developing, implementing and enforcing product policy** and accelerate regulatory efforts to make safe and sustainable products the

- norm, including social and due diligence aspects throughout the supply chain, starting from the severe social and environmental impacts of raw material extraction, processing and refining.

## Raw materials and tackling over-production

### We need to transform the way we manufacture and use our products.

Europe's heavy reliance on imported raw materials highlights our vulnerability in a fragile geopolitical context. To build resilient economies, we must go beyond enhancing the circular economy and resource efficiency—though these are essential steps in enabling industries to achieve more with less. The primary focus, however, should be on sufficiency, reducing our overall material footprint. By integrating sufficiency metrics into raw material demand models. Additionally, we need to address overproduction and its drivers (e.g. advertising), targeting luxury emissions such as private jets, yachts, cruises and large SUVs, which not only eat up resources but also exacerbate social inequalities. With the EU prioritising demand-side reduction, for instance, by ensuring affordable public transport and reducing the number of individual passenger cars on Europe's roads, or by moving away from fast to slower consumption of durable and recyclable goods. The EU can significantly lower projected demand, ultimately reducing the pressure for further extractive activities while ensuring the security of material supply.

- **Include sufficiency levers and social policies** within raw materials management and in-demand projections. Work towards concrete measures as outlined under demand moderation in the Critical Raw Materials Regulation and consider the need for intergenerational resource justice and sufficiency legislation needed.



- **Mitigating over-production through economic instruments**, such as setting progressive taxation on the volume of products placed on the market, associating bonus and malus schemes to durability and reparability criteria in extended producer responsibility systems.
- **Prohibiting, without delay, the destruction of unsold goods in all sectors.** End the most harmful cradle-to-grave supply chains and reform them into circular cradle-to-cradle processes.
- **Revise the Mining Waste Directive** to allow the use of the best-available techniques, strengthen measures on community participation, and facilitate the valorisation of mining waste.
- **Address advertising to tackle overconsumption** by using existing frameworks like the Tobacco Advertising Directive. Regulating advertisements for cars and digital consumer devices should be a priority to help curb metal consumption associated with the green and digital transitions. Policies could also establish 'sanctuary spaces,' restricting advertisements' size and density and banning consumerism-driven events like Black Friday. Additionally, advertising reforms should aim to prevent disinformation, false claims, and harmful impacts on society. This should be supported by a rigorous enforcement of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive and supported by the swift adoption and implementation of an ambitious Green Claims Directive.
- To ensure inclusive and sustainable global development, **the EU should focus on making the raw materials partnerships with countries in the global south** in guidance to sustainable development goals, facilitating the

transition from fossil extraction to new minerals while helping them to integrate their supply chains and create added value for third country's sustainable development.

- **Design a transformation of international trade and investment law** to ensure that it fosters local and regional trade, protects and creates opportunities for those who are marginalised within economies and gives primacy to the national policy spaces needed for governments to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

## Towards a Wellbeing Economy

A wellbeing economy is about equality and creating a good life for people and nature, rooted in the principles of care, cooperation and solidarity. The current EU economic system clearly fails to achieve these goals as it is significantly overshooting planetary boundaries while not meeting its own social aims, such as healthcare needs or the gender gap in employment.

One of the core problems is that our economies are organised around the constant expansion of extraction, production, and consumption measured as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This gets us into a situation where work that is most valuable for society such as care work, environmental quality or art outside the market, is being excluded from calculations of GDP, rendering it invisible and undervalued.

Moreover, the reliance of the so-called free market, that is sold as being more efficient in managing public goods, fails to regard the interconnectedness of the economy, our society, and the environment. This misguided belief also persists because the European economy is structurally dependent upon continued GDP growth. That's why the

EU needs to shift to a wellbeing economy that thrives within the ecological limits of the planet, going beyond growth, reducing inequalities, and reducing our structural dependence on continuous economic expansion and material extraction.

- **Foster economic models beyond profit** at the local, regional and national levels, including alternative ownership, finance and enterprise models prioritising social and environmental wellbeing. At the same time, curb and reduce the (de facto) monopolisation of markets and other forms of corporate power to much lower levels in all sectors of the economy.
- **Boost the acknowledgement of non-wage labour** relative to other important forms of labour, especially care work.
- **Replace the existing Stability and Growth Pact, which is based on an indiscriminate economic growth paradigm, with a Sustainability and Wellbeing Pact.** This new framework must foster green and care jobs, uplift vulnerable communities, and improve the wellbeing of both people and nature.
- **Advance and use wellbeing indicators outside of GDP** to measure progress and business models that do not rely on shareholder value and profit maximisation.
- **Foster economic models beyond profit to social and environmental wellbeing** placed at the heart of their mission and practices.
- **Mobilise significant public resources and budgets for the transformation of core key sectors of the economy and infrastructure**, including health, social services and care, education and culture, transport and mobility, and housing.

- **Offer universal access to essential services**, such as healthcare, education, housing and water through public or communal provision and provide security to all through universal social protection, taking into account the ecological impact of welfare policies and designing these in a way that takes account of socio-ecological needs. In addition, **give priority to investing in skills, training and job creation** in key sectors of the green and low-carbon economy, including care and education, committing to quality jobs, the respect of workers and trade union rights, the promotion of collective bargaining, safety at work, fairness and equality across genders, class and ethnic minorities.

**And given the links between nature, one-health and wellbeing:**

- **Facilitate access to nature and green spaces**, given their physical and mental health benefits.
- **Advance the one-health agenda** – working on links between climate, environment human and animal health – both on policies and on bringing stakeholders together to advance on a common agenda.

## Part 3: Facts and Further Reading

### Raw materials and tackling over-production:

- [8th Environment Action Programme Mid-Term Review](#).
- A joint NGO letter calling for a resource use reduction: [White Paper for an EU within Planetary Boundaries](#)
- Joint Open letter: Yes to an EU legislation on Sustainable Resource Management

### Towards a Wellbeing Economy:

- EEB report [Towards a Wellbeing Economy that serves People and Nature](#)
- EEB report [Why the European Green Deal needs ecofeminism](#)
- EEB position paper [Time for a Sustainable and Wellbeing Pact](#)
- EEB policy brief [Reimagining work for a just transition](#)
- EEB report [Escaping the jobs and growth treadmill](#)

[#EU Pact4future](#)

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS





**EEB**

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT



## FAST-TRACK TOWARDS A ONE-PLANET ECONOMY

### 4. Support sectors to become resilient & competitive on sustainability

- All sectors of the economy must work on the transformation challenge humanity faces
- Catalyse and support EU industry to be a global frontrunner in detoxification, de-pollution, decarbonisation and restoration
- Embrace sustainable food systems

### 5. Drive system change through investments, fair taxation and distribution

### 6. Make the safe and sustainable choice the easy choice for people and business





## FAST-TRACK TOWARDS A ONE-PLANET ECONOMY

### 4. Support sectors to become resilient & competitive on sustainability

#### All sectors of the economy must work on the transformation challenge humanity faces

Other countries understand this too – judging by the level of funding allocated to the Inflation Reduction Act in the US, and the level of investment in China in renewable energy technologies and electric vehicles. There is a growing competition globally on sustainability: who can gain the leadership and market share on solutions, whether wind turbines, heat pumps, electric or hydrogen vehicles, or green chemicals? Competition based on deregulation has proven itself not to work and is a lose-lose for the environment, health and innovation. On the other hand, competition for safe, just and sustainable solutions is a win-win, securing the industry's future. Additionally, an effective and future-proof industrial policy addresses economic governance structures and policies, such as labour rights, social, climate and nature protection, taxation and redistribution, macro-economic and fiscal rules, and rules governing corporations and quality public services.

#### Catalyse and support EU industry to be a global frontrunner in detoxification, de-pollution, decarbonisation and restoration

Industry is a major source of jobs, products, income, but also pollution and resource impacts. We need an industrial policy that works for safety and sustainability, for communities, workers, and the environment. The "industry vs environment" narrative does not make sense when looking at the needed transition – industry relies on environmental inputs, and is not immune to climate change, ecosystem degradation and

pollution or toxics in supply chains. Europe's global strength lies in effective policies rooted in robust social and environmental standards.

- **Embrace the shift to zero pollution, toxic-free, socially just and decarbonised industry. Commit stakeholders to become a global frontrunner for decarbonization, detoxification, depollution and restoration**, by continuing with and strengthening the EGD, and other relevant industrial policies.
- **Endorse and support the main asks of the joint industry-NGO *"Vision for a prosperous and sustainable industry: a positive blueprint for the future"*** in the context of EU industrial policy in initiatives such as *"A competitive European industry driving our green, digital and resilient future"*.
  - The EU Strategic Agenda shall be about **sustainable competitiveness** that serves the people's and future generation's interests for a prosperous future, not an exclusive economic agenda allowing laggard industry operators to stay off-track with planetary boundaries and compromise labour and health standards.
  - **Implement the Zero-Pollution Action Plan through a 'Toxic Free and Zero-Pollution Compatibility Check'** for new or revised pieces of relevant legislation as well as state aids and subsidies. Ensure a level playing field by a strict enforcement of EU standards, prioritising pollution prevention guided by a restoration mindset.

- **Commit to an industrial strategy that includes a dynamic policy mix** of regulation that drives innovation that serves the public interest, including subsidies and incentives with conditionalities to help guide direction. Strengthen the application of the rule of law to ensure a level playing field and avoid erosion by illegal practices or imports and unfair competition (including through the implementation of CBAM).

- Success depends on having a **strong, coordinated, and coherent European industrial policy** that removes constraints placed by the Single Market and is backed up by an adequate and permanent investment capacity.
- **Address green funding gaps** by focusing on proven and innovative (disruptive) techniques that can ensure rapid and efficient achievement of health, environmental, and strategic autonomy goals at once. Funding should not enable a lock-in of activities at the origin of pollution and should be conditional on clear social criteria, such as up/reskilling, decent work, and respect for social and labour rights.
- Success also depends on **data openness and tools to facilitate enforcement**, forward-looking criteria for standards setting, e.g. Best Available Techniques to ensure the EU becomes a front-runner and innovation leader. Commit to fast-track innovation and substitution of toxic chemicals
- **Support lead markets for the uptake of decarbonised and depolluted and circular materials and products**, help to systematise

decarbonisation and circular economy strategies in industry. Unleash the potential of Green Public Procurement and private buyers initiatives.

- **Accelerate the phase out of the most harmful chemicals and fossil fuels**, particularly all forms of subsidies not aimed at their phase out, to break the EU dependency on undemocratic regimes, improve air, soil and water quality and tackle the climate, pollution and biodiversity crises at once.
- **Commit to engaging with industry to develop real transition “deep transformation” pathways, not ones focused at supporting the status quo or being satisfied with incremental change** but embracing the needs for system change in an integrated way:
  - **Identify the lock-ins, barriers, enabling measures** and what action at what level of governance is needed. Enable the industry to transform from a cause of environmental and climate troubles to a solutions provider.
  - **Integrate Precautionary, Pollution Prevention and Polluter Pays principles, Do No Significant Harm, One Health and Energy Efficiency First** in all relevant pieces of legislation, and thrive to bring the industry within planetary boundaries while respecting just transition principles. Reverse the burden of proof on the manufacturer of substances of concern. Adopt the ‘no safe, no market’ and ‘no evidence of absence of harm, no right to pollute’ principles and accelerate phase out and substitution of chemicals of concern, incentivise and support responsible business and safe and sustainable chemicals, make toxic-free products the norm.

- **Implement the pollution prevention hierarchy and the polluter pays principle** to encourage responsible behaviour and respect for the industry's licence to operate.
  - **Communities near pollution hotspots should receive justice** by having thorough pollution prevention action, monitoring, remediation, ground sanitation, health, and other plans implemented in response to their needs. Polluting companies should be held accountable for the costs of pollution prevention at the source and for compensation and contribute to independently managed funds dedicated to depollution.
  - **Ensure full accountability** on environmental, climate and human rights impacts of value chains globally.
- **Ramp up investments in skills and quality job creation in key sectors of the green and climate-neutral economy**, supported by essential infrastructure to support resilient and sustainable industries and prosperous societies.
  - **Keep workers' and communities' involvement at the centre of industrial transformation processes** and ensure that all society is on board in the transition. Preserve and improve social standards along industrial value chains in industrial and trade policies and make worker reskilling and upskilling mandatory, with full respect for due diligence measures.
- **Avoid the people vs environment narrative.** Transparency, public participation, civil and social dialogue are key to strengthen social acceptance and justice and the basis for buy-in of any industrial operation. Fair and science-based rules are pivotal to guide investments and ensuring predictability.
  - **Streamline rules, notably through digital infrastructure, but not at the expense of health, workers' and environmental protection**, scientific robustness, public deliberation, and transparency of permitting and assessment procedures. Make digital safety information, permitting, and reporting the norm.
  - **Provide robust and more efficient assessment and permit / other authorisation procedures** through digital tools and more staff resources to achieve the same acceleration but without collateral damage to democracy and the zero-pollution ambition.
  - **Provide public, user-friendly tools to enable tracking of progress toward achieving the toxic-free and zero-pollution ambition** of all actors (e.g., improved industrial Emissions Portal, ECHA's SCIP database, and product passports).
  - **Resist the weakening of protection status to protected areas and endangered species** for the sake of industrial development.

Without these measures, the new generation of sustainable industries will not be able to emerge, thrive, and compete internationally.

## Embrace sustainable food systems

**The current industrial food system is making us sick**, driving biodiversity collapse and climate change, and exploiting millions of farmers, fisheries and food sector workers, as well as furthering the needless suffering of millions of farmed animals. Our food system is based on an over-exploitation paradigm, and defined by stark inequalities, with the EU split between general overconsumption and the reality of over 36 million citizens not being able to afford a quality meal every second day, while around 20% of all the food we produce goes wasted. It does not need to be so; **the EU can and must build a food system that respects and protects workers, animals, nature, consumers, and the bio-physical limits of our planet.**

- **Set a clear direction of travel and coherent policy mix for a just transition to sustainable food systems within a legislative framework for Sustainable Food Systems**, which should include science-based, quantitative and binding intermediate and long-term targets for member states and the EU.
- **Make healthy and sustainable diets the easy choice** by restructuring production, processing, distribution, marketing, and consumption processes to facilitate a shift to diets rich in vegetables, fruits, pulses, wholegrains, and nuts, with fewer highly processed foods and fewer and better animal products.
- **Transform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to support and incentivise farmers in the transition to agroecology**, which will increase their resilience in the face of climate change, thereby securing our long-term food security and competitiveness. This must include a clear timeline for the phase-out of area-based income support payments over the next two CAP cycles and the immediate end to environmentally harmful subsidies.
- **Commit to a robust transition to sustainable public procurement** (and efforts for sustainable private procurement) to encourage the purchase of products ensuing from agroecology – this will develop the market for these products, support farmers' incomes and deliver healthier, sustainable nutrition to citizens. In 2020, 9.1% of the EU's agricultural area was farmed organically, and retail sales doubled between 2015 and 2020. This trend needs to be supported and accelerated.
- **Ensure that farmed animals enjoy the highest animal welfare standards** – publish, pass and effectively implement the revision of the EU animal welfare legislation, which is currently outdated, unscientific, and no longer in line with citizens' expectations. The revision should also include a timeline and credible plan for the phase-out of the use of cages in farming, as demanded by EU citizens in the successful European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) "End the Cage Age".
- **Step up the implementation and enforcement of EU nature and water legislation and act to put an end to systemic non-compliance in the agriculture sector** (including through repeated but unjustified derogations). Protecting our natural resources better is paramount to secure the productivity and resilience of agriculture in the context of increasing extreme weather events and hence safeguarding our long-term food security.
- **Engage with civil society and progressive farmers' voices in the search for constructive solutions to the challenges of our times** – steering away from short-term political fixes which risk further exacerbating the environmental and social crises.



## Part 4: Facts and Further Reading

### Industrial Transformation for a more Resilient Future

- For more information see the "sustainable industry specific Blueprint initiative» / «Support the Joint Industry-NGO vision for a prosperous and sustainable industry: a positive blueprint for the future“ – sign on still possible
- Towards a cleaner industrial production (and the role of the IED).
- Initiating the 3rd industrial revolution (The need for a forward-looking policy framework to speed up the transformation of industrial production)
- For other briefings specifically on Industrial Emissions Directive and industrial Emissions Portal see <https://eipie.eu/briefings-by-eeb/>

### Sustainable Food Systems

- A brighter future for EU food and farming
- Hungry for Change: An EU Sustainable Food Systems Law for People and Nature
- Breaking Free. Europe's animal welfare crises and the brighter future within reach
- Organic farming in the EU: a decade of growth

#EU pact4future

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS



## FAST-TRACK TOWARDS A ONE-PLANET ECONOMY

### 5. Drive system change through investments, fair taxation and distribution

The ecological, economic, and societal transformation demanded by science cannot take place without sufficient funding and a comprehensive reform of the system of incentives in our economies. At the same time, a deep reform of EU fiscal rules and commitment to a Wellbeing and Sustainability Pact are necessary to ensure all Member States have fiscal space for green investments & just transition:

- **Commit to an Investment Pact for the Green Transition that ensures everyone – people and businesses – is fully engaged.** This plan should leverage an overhauled **EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) and a permanent EU investment capacity following NextGeneration EU** to unlock over one trillion euros by 2030 towards a more autonomous and fully sustainable Europe. The focus must be on radically increasing public investments in climate, environment, social and infrastructure projects while aligning all private investments and ensuring polluters take responsibility and are held accountable. It is essential to ensure that all Europeans can participate in the green transition.
- **Align public expenditures with environmental and social goals:** end harmful subsidies without any delays, ensure a systematic and rigorous implementation of the “Do No Significant Harm” (DNSH) principle for all EU funds and promote greater use of green budgeting practices in the Member States. This entails, amongst others, **removing excise tax exemptions for ships and aviation**, as well as reforming the CAP so that support goes to agro-ecological practices and farmers in need.

- **Progress on sustainable and ethical Public Procurement at all relevant levels of governance** – Seek to make public procurement and private procurement aligned with sustainable goods, services, and investments and fair working conditions public procurement accounts for 14% of EU’s GDP and it should be leveraged as a strategic driver to incentivise investments that contribute to the deep transformation of the climate, environment, social and infrastructure envisioned for the EGD. This approach will help fast track the development of the market, create economies of scale and make sustainable solutions more accessible and affordable.
- **Steer private investments by revising and strengthening the EU Taxonomy to restore a robust science-based framework** rewarding truly sustainable and socially just activities and ensuring the substantial application of the DNSH principle. The sustainable finance framework must remain science-based and not be swayed by political pressures and vested interests which undermine its credibility.

**Make fiscal policy work for the green transition** targeting extreme consumption, profit and wealth, alongside a shift of the tax burden from labour to pollution and resource use, while ensuring that polluters pay. This approach will not only generate the funds and incentives for the green transition, but it will also be more just.

- Given the balance of EU and Member State competencies on tax issues, and the unanimity requirement, progress and collaboration with Member States should **make greater use of the Semester process and have an Open Method of Coordination** to advance on a common challenge.
- In light of the triple planetary crises, a **decisive move to Qualified Majority Voting and ordinary legislative procedure for tax matters** is urgent and necessary **to advance environmental taxation at the EU level**. The starting point should be a more systematic and strategic activation of the passerelle clause (Article 192(2)(2) TFEU) to move to the ordinary legislative procedure for certain environmental provisions.
- The EU should **establish a dedicated high-level commission or committee on beyond-growth futures** to assess and advance post-growth strategies and pathways.
- **To address inequality and raise funds for the green and just transition, Member States and OECD partners should work on a wealth tax and taxing windfall profits.** This can and should be a source of income to finance the needed transition. It is also about justice and trust in government.

**To be able to help new enterprises emerge, drive competitive sustainability and thrive with 2040 and 2050 in mind, new business models are needed** that go beyond the shareholder model with its short-term profit motive. They need to recall the license to operate comes with responsibilities to the country and society, factor in their dependence on nature and a clean environment and commit to regenerative roles, be transparent on liabilities and due diligence responsibilities.

## Part 5: Facts and Further Reading

### Key Facts

A large share of wealth across the EU-22 is concentrated among a few individuals: 1% of the population owns 32% of total net wealth, while the poorest only hold about 4.5% of net wealth. Over the last years, the richest 1% have seen their wealth increase dramatically while some of the biggest corporations have made record-breaking profits.

### Further Reading

- EEB and Eunomia: [Circular taxation: a policy approach to reduce resource use and accelerate the transition to a circular economy](#)
- [EEB work on green & fair fiscal reform](#)
- EEB work on EU fiscal rules ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).
- EEB: [The case for a wealth tax](#)
- CIVAM: [The hidden costs of our broken food system \(FR\)](#).

[#EU pact4future](#)

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS





## FAST-TRACK TOWARDS A ONE-PLANET ECONOMY

### 6. Make the safe and sustainable choice the easy choice for people and business

The safe and sustainable choice must be the easiest, most accessible one for individuals, households, communities, schools, hospitals and businesses. Without this, social injustice will be further aggravated, and opportunities for engagement will be missed. Everyone should be able to choose healthy and nutritious food whose production respects the environment and ensures a decent revenue for producers, including small ones. Households should be able to insulate and upgrade their homes, and tenants should have the right to insulated flats at affordable prices and buy efficient, safe and sustainable products, with direct public financial subsidies or transfers, where needed. Parents should be able to provide non-toxic, non-poisonous and healthy food, clothes, and toys to their kids. Businesses should not be tempted to compete based on cheap materials and products that pollute the environment and harm people along their value chains.

Today, however, sometimes there is no sustainable choice available (e.g. missing public transport connections) or supply chain (e.g. clean chemicals), accessible (e.g. home insulation or upgrade), information may be poor so people and businesses can't make an informed choice, or prices such that the option not affordable (e.g. current electric vehicles, heat pumps, long distant train rides, healthy foods or sustainably produced clothes) without government support, affordable leasing options or business commitment. This reality is changing but needs a range of policy interventions and commitments to fast track it, to make the safe and sustainable choice the easy, affordable, even default choice. It requires measures across all sectors to enact system change and leveraged by policy, collaboration and funding.

- **Commit to universal basic services and infrastructure to ensure availability, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability.** Everyone needs healthy, accessible, affordable, sustainable basic services, including education, health, housing and mobility, each of which needs to reflect and be part of the just transition and needed system change.
- **Invest in affordable public transport, complementing local, regional and national funding with EU money,** using its leverage as well as strategic orientations of the European Semester to catalyse system change. Commit to public transport accessibility (e.g., within a 15-minute walk in urban areas) and strengthen peri urban and rural connectivity to reduce the need for the use of cars. Engage with cities to support the shift to the “15-minute city” – where key infrastructure and services are accessible to all within a 15-minute walk. Invest in a strengthened network of night trains and connections across the EU. Require ticket sales for year-ahead booking to facilitate planning and level playing field of choice.
- **Make sustainable energy provision the easy choice by ramping up availability of heat pumps and solar power for households** through investment, subsidies, skills training, enabling free mutual recognition of installers across the EU, and targeted use of the Social Climate Fund linked to poorer households, and clear rules and incentives for property owners to invest to make their property low carbon while capping rents. Focus also on rural community own nature and people friendly renewable energy production

- and facilitate the connection to the grid, helping with energy savings, autonomy, and agency, helping this community benefit from and engage in the clean energy transition.
- **Support the movement for available, affordable, and healthy nutrition by implementing the Farm to Fork strategy and putting the sustainable food systems law and the sustainable use of pesticides regulation back on the table.**
- **Complete the implementation of the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability's promise to make toxic-free products the norm.** It is not acceptable that everyday products to which people are exposed contain chemicals that can cause cancer, infertility, children's developmental disorders, thyroid, obesity, diabetes, and allergies.
- **Promote sustainable public and private procurement** to make safe and sustainable choices the default choice—e.g., schools, hospitals, and canteens. Making procurement truly sustainable will leverage an order of magnitude more money than the EU budget alone could supply, as the MFF represents only 1% of EU GDP. Private procurement should also be systematically encouraged.
- **Safe and clean products in the value-chain:** Product passports and Industrial Emissions portal should be systematically used to make available transparent information on performances and impacts of products and facilities, including on chemicals ingredients to help clean value chains and prevent future toxic legacy.

## Part 6: Facts and Further Reading

### Key Facts

More than 30% of Europeans do not own their home and depend on affordable and insulated flats.

### Further reading

- [Eurocities Pulse Majors Survey 2024](#)
- EEB: [European stakeholders united for a level playing field for online marketplaces and effective enforcement](#)

[#EU Pact4future](#)

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS





**EEB**

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT



## PROMOTE A JUST TRANSITION

7. Develop a new social contract to  
leave no one behind

8. Strengthen environmental democracy  
& give a voice to youth and others too  
often forgotten





## PROMOTE A JUST TRANSITION

### 7. Develop a new social contract to leave no one behind

**Ensuring the full integration of just transition measures into European Green Deal (EGD) policies is essential to leave no one behind and to ensure that all in society are actively on board in the transition.** This needs to recognise the challenges for both the poorest and marginalised segments of society and the middle classes, also challenged by the transition. The transition, if done wrong, can exacerbate existing inequalities and further exclude parts of society. For example, not all can currently afford heat pumps or solar panels on their roofs or balconies, with many people not even owning their homes. To avoid some being penalised or excluded from the transition, we need to make sure everyone has access to affordable and sustainable housing, food, mobility and health care alongside other basic needs.

Therefore:

- **Reiterate that the respect for civil, workers and human rights, fundamental rights and the European Pillar of Social Rights** are cornerstones of EU policies.
- **Fully implement the European Gender Equality Strategy and ensure full gender equality by 2030**, closing income and pension gaps, giving value to predominantly 'female' sectors such as care and education, eradicating violence against women and tackling all other systemic hindrances that keep women and non-binary people from enjoying all their rights.
- Launch an **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** and propose an **EU Framework Directive on Adequate Minimum Income** to set minimum standards for
  - calculating adequate income support schemes and ensuring their non-discriminatory access, and to raise the living and working conditions of millions of people currently experiencing poverty and social exclusion.
- **Support fair and decent work for all**, including measures to halt in-work poverty, and precarious forms of work, such as those carried out by informal, seasonal and gig workers, by extending the full respect of workers and trade union rights, with specific consideration of the gender pay gap and low-paid sector with a majority of woman workers.
- **Ensure universal access to public services**, such as healthcare, transport, food, affordable housing, education and better care infrastructure. These public services are not only essential to ensure decent social standards and well-functioning economies, but they are also central pillars of a fair and green transition. Universal access to public services must be gender transformative, considering, for instance, healthcare or mobility needs of women and non-binary people, as well as ensure accessibility for marginalised groups.
- **Adopt an EU Just Transition Policy framework** and Directive for the world of work to address inefficiencies and weakness in current transition policies and establish a strong legal basis ensuring coherence with other EU legislation.
- **Prioritise investments and targeted supportive schemes to advancing the just transition**, for example, in building

- renovation to address fuel poverty. Live up to the promises and use EU-ETS revenues and SCF for this purpose and complement with local, regional and national funding as the SCF on its own is not enough, making sure that investments and schemes are gender transformative, e.g. when seeking to tackle fuel poverty.

- **Public spending, subsidies and investments in sustainable infrastructure** should ensure benefits for all, notably the poorest households, and be based on robust equality assessments (e.g. who benefits from subsidies for EVs or who benefits from lower ticket prices in public transport). This needs to make sure that new infrastructure is gender transformative, e.g. by ensuring affordable public transport in which women, racialised or LGQBTI people are and feel safe.
- **Public transport infrastructure must be a key investment priority for affordable and accessible mobility.** Public transport is essential to social fairness for zero-emission solutions for mobility needs, reducing congestion, improving urban wellbeing, and reducing demand for materials, hence mining and associated impacts. A shift away from fossil-fuelled vehicles should not lead to a one-to-one replacement with zero-emissions vehicles. Investment in active transport infrastructure (e.g. cycling path networks), public transport and modal connectivity is key.
- Invest in **skills, training and learning** and create opportunities for decent, high-quality, and safe and sustainable jobs for all, making sure to pay particular attention to gender equality and groups currently marginalised in the employment. This will help make the transition possible and fair for all and reduce the risk of resistance to needed change.

- **Systematically social proof policies and spending to take account of inequalities** - impacts, affordability, ability to act – and all dimensions of socio-economic inequalities including along axes of gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, migrant status, disability, and applying an intersectional lens. All policies, internal and external, should be designed with the aim to leaving no one behind.

Policy change should also be developed reflecting **wider system change needs, factoring in the short, medium and long term**, and include fair and adequate transition measures to enable system change rooted in dialogue.

- **Better take into account the realities and needs of communities** – such as **farming and fishing communities** – and communities reliant on activities facing particular acute change, such as the **Saami people whose way of life is threatened by climate change.**
- **Farmers seeking to shift away from intensive agricultural practices and embrace agroecological practices should be fully enabled to do so**, including through support in accessing additional markets or income for their products and practices. In addition, support the diversification of income sources (e.g. through agro photovoltaics) where these leads to nature friendly renewables and strengthened rural communities, demonstrating the synergies. This needs to consider the situation of women farmers who remain largely invisible until today.
- **Communities near pollution hotspots** (such as PFAS, the forever chemicals), should see justice - by having "source control measures" aimed to prevent pollution, and having thorough monitoring, remediation, ground sanitation, health and other plans

- implemented in response to their needs, and having companies held accountable for the costs and compensation. There are over 20,000 sites in the EU contaminated with PFAS, of which 2300 are considered as “hotspots” - locations where PFAS concentrations are levels experts consider hazardous to health (100 ng/L)<sup>4</sup>. This cannot be acceptable.
- Revisit all support schemes, including the MFF and the CAP, to ensure that funding goes to the poorer farmers (currently 80% of CAP funding goes to 20% of farmers, missing many in need), the support for fishers goes to artisanal not industrial fishing.

If all of this is committed to, people will recognise that governments have their interests and rights in mind and strengthens governments legitimacy.

## Part 7: Facts and Further Reading

### Key Facts

- 54% of mayors surveyed in 2024 by Eurocities, said making access to affordable housing should be a European priority.

### Further Reading

- [Reimagining work for a just transition](#)
- [Escaping the growth and jobs treadmill](#)
- [NGOs call for a Green Investment Plan for a prosperous and just transition](#)
- [Sufficiency in the built environment: a factsheet](#)
- [Demand No. 4: Industrial Blueprint](#)

[#EU pact4future](#)

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS





## PROMOTE A JUST TRANSITION

### 8. Strengthen environmental democracy & give a voice to youth and others too often forgotten

The EU and its member states are all parties to the Aarhus Convention, which enshrines fundamental environmental rights—the rights to access to information, to public participation, and to access to justice in environmental matters. Guaranteeing these rights is key to ensuring environmental democracy for all and allowing the public to participate in important environmental decision-making.

70% of children aged between 10 and 18 expressed concerns about the impacts of climate change, and 69% said they were dissatisfied with politicians' efforts to address it. In a separate [Lancet study](#), 84% of 16-25-year-olds were worried about climate change, 75% said that they think the future is frightening, and 83% said that they think people have failed to care for the planet. There is an undeniable imperative for the current adult generation to embrace their responsibilities and for new adults to engage in driving solutions. There's a moral obligation to leave the world in a better state for youth and future generations. However, given the ongoing pollution, climate, biodiversity crises, and the increasing frequency of resource-related conflicts, there's a real risk that the next generation will inherit a planet in a significantly worse ecological state than our own. This is not acceptable. The EU can and must act.

**We should leave the world a better place for the next generations, but with current pollution and climate crises and biodiversity loss, youth and future generations are at risk of inheriting a dystopia.** Current decision-making structures are not sufficiently responsive to the voices of those in need and the interests of those in vulnerable situations. Democratic

structures need to evolve, reform, and innovate to ensure their ability to represent all of society, and especially those who are defending basic human and environmental rights. We therefore ask EU decision makers to:

- Fully implement the Aarhus Convention both at EU and Member State level and ensure compliance with all obligations.
- **Reform and strengthen actual public participation pathways at European institutions and in member states to improve policy making by building on often unheard and unheeded voices.** Engaging citizens in innovative deliberation mechanisms around transition topics and have citizens' recommendations experience direct political follow up. Avoid any form of 'citizen-washing'.
- **Invest in the health and resilience of European democracy and institutional legitimacy** by giving a stronger role for public interest groups and civil society through a European Civil Society Strategy and clearly defined civic dialogue so that public interest considerations are strengthened vis-à-vis for-profit interest lobbying and changing Commission expert group rules or Council work practices to improve inclusive governance, so as to ensure full transparency and accountability to the 'Green Oath' and to improve the balance of public versus private interests.
- **Hear and heed the voices of marginalised groups, youth and the needs of future generations** to inform EU policy making in the next legislative cycle.

- **Systematically ensure fair treatment of people, communities and people in vulnerable situations** who are exposed to pollution, toxic chemicals, flooding, heat, water pollution, ecosystem changes, threats to their cultures (including the Saami and Roma) and people subject to social exclusion e.g. homeless, lower-income families, religious or other minorities, migrant communities, and those with disabilities.
- **Defend rights: environmental defenders** need protection through recognition of their status as they put themselves on the line to speak up in the interest of the environment who does not have a voice. **The right to peaceful protest should be safeguarded as a critical element of democracy:** eroding the rights of citizens and civil society engagement in public discourses damages everyone's right to freedom of expression and erodes healthy democracy.

## Part 8: Facts and Further Reading

### Key Facts

- The EU and its member states are parties to the 25-year-old UNECE Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. The EU itself is currently needs to adjust its legal framework to comply with the convention on grounds of public participation and access to justice.

### Further reading:

- Progress review on EU's implementation of decisions on compliance
- Compliance Committee findings 2015/128 regarding the EU's non-compliance with obligations regarding access to justice in state aid decisions.
- Lancet study
- Position Paper by UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention.
- Bearing the brunt report: Roma and traveller experiences of environmental racism
- Case studies on 'Citizenwashing' - the Greenwashing of democracy

#EU pact4future

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS





**EEB**

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT



## SHOW SOLIDARITY & EMBRACE RESPONSIBILITIES

9. Support and solidarity in an enlarging EU

10. Commit to global justice and drive  
partnerships to face common challenges



## SHOW SOLIDARITY & EMBRACE RESPONSIBILITIES

### 9. Support and solidarity in an enlarging EU

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has accelerated commitments to an enlarging EU and underlined the need for strengthened solidarity among nations. These and wider geopolitical developments underline the need for the EU to fast-track strategic autonomy and strengthen global partnerships with countries and regions that share democratic values and with whom the EU can lead the sustainability transformation. Geopolitical developments and common interests and challenges also underline the fundamental need for strengthened collaboration between the EU with EFTA countries, the UK, European neighbours and like-minded countries across the globe. With climate change increasingly impacting regions' abilities to produce sufficient food for their people, the availability of water and exacerbating competition for many resources, it is inevitable that the risks of conflicts will increase and provoke waves of migration – internal to countries and regions, and internationally. The EU needs to work to prevent conflicts, which all create loss and suffering, divide and distract from addressing common challenges. In light of these:

- **Divest the EU of fossil fuel dependency and stop the flow of fossil-fuel money to Russia and other regimes violating human rights.** Implement and strengthen EGD policies for a decarbonised future and invest in nature-friendly renewables, energy efficiency, sufficiency, circular economy and strengthened smart grids, with strengthened connections to neighbours across Europe. Divest also dependency on Russian uranium and nuclear power technologies as these are deeply incoherent with ambitions and create dependency and future risks.
- **Roll out the EGD across Europe, with particular effort in EU Candidate Countries and the Western Balkans.** The EGD is a peace project and will ensure Europe's resilience and independence by reducing financial flows to Russia and reducing leverage based on materials dependence, and risks from antagonistic targeting of sensitive infrastructures, including nuclear power plants.
- **Rebuild the post Brexit relationship with the UK** as opportunities for a "rapprochement" emerge and strengthen multi-level ties with EFTA countries and neighbours.
- **Forge partnerships for a just transition and green deals** where possible, based on mutual respect and mutual learning, recognising the diversity of cultures and approaches, and facing, together, the common challenges. Strengthening bilateral and international ties.
- **Get ready for EU enlargement by revisiting treaty rules on decision making** to avoid creating a non-functioning EU through unanimity and veto rights that can lead to policies being held hostage for political gain. This is already evident from the current constellation of Member States to the detriment of the European Green Deal needs.
- **Invest in civil society, citizen participation and democracy, and the rule of law in candidate countries** to prepare for EU membership and strengthen resilience to outside influences seeking to undermine the EU. Support this also in existing Member States given the erosion of the citizen rights to protest and demonstration, and engagement in decision making that erode the health and resilience of democracies and the European model.



## Part 9: Facts and Further Reading

Current candidate countries are [Albania](#), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Georgia](#), [Moldova](#), [Montenegro](#), [North Macedonia](#), [Serbia](#), [Türkiye](#), [Ukraine](#), and [Kosovo](#) is a potential candidate.

[#EU pact4future](#)

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS



## SHOW SOLIDARITY & EMBRACE RESPONSIBILITIES

### 10. Commit to global justice and drive partnerships to face common challenges

**EU and Member State policies and practices, trade patterns and consumption choices can all have positive or negative impacts on the rest of the world.** Negative externalities range from climate change impacts from current and historic emissions to the impact of extraction of raw materials and products we use, to health impacts caused by highly hazardous chemicals and pesticides we sell abroad. **EU policies can have a major positive impact abroad, too,** as they lead to improved environmental, social, and human rights standards in the supply chains of those wishing to sell to the EU market or contribute to creating value and decent work in third countries.

The EU must enter partnerships based on equality and fairness and ensure that they are oriented to the needs of people and communities in partner countries. It can share technology and knowledge under fair and equal terms to increase wellbeing and health and enable other countries' path to decarbonisation. It can and should stop double standards of exporting highly hazardous chemicals, including pesticides that are banned in the EU, to third countries. Our own path to decarbonisation cannot come at the cost of resource and energy exploitation in poorer parts of the world, and we must stop being a net importer of food and agricultural commodities. Walking our own EGD talk also increases the EU's credibility in international negotiations – as seen in the additional EU heft and impact on the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity agreement and in the negotiations towards a global Plastics Treaty.

**The EU must recognise that historical injustices and inequalities persist today. It must embrace responsibility for wrongs of the past and decolonise its relationships**

**with the Global South when it comes to exploiting labour and natural resources.** The EU has a responsibility to minimise its negative impacts globally, to ensure fair conditions for trade and balanced financial flows between the Global North and South, and it has an opportunity to lead by example, learn from others' leadership and to cooperate on the common challenges at eye level with its partners in the Global South.

- **In the next legislative cycle, EU external policies should all be guided by human rights equity and global justice, living up to Europe's current and historic responsibilities.**
- The EU should fully implement the promises made in the context of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the 2030 Agenda and commitments under the Paris Agreement, the Global Biodiversity Framework, the Global Framework on Chemicals and all environmental agreements to show responsibility and respect for global processes and the community of actors trying to construct a better future. Consistency and leading by example are important for credibility.
- **Internationally, the EU should systematically invest in supporting and strengthening ties and the global rules-based system** to avoid demagogues, autocrats and conflicts from eroding multilateralism, global partnership and peace. We can all learn from and be inspired by each other and strive towards joint solutions.
- **We need the EU and Member States to be the leading voice of environmental multilateralism, going into negotiations**

with high ambition, putting forward funding to support international negotiations, building strong partnerships with countries in the Global South and speaking up for meaningful civil society engagement.

- We need the **EU to set the global environmental agenda** also on emerging issues, such as resource governance or the regulation of chemicals. For instance, regarding hazardous chemicals, we need the EU to promote high standards for the identification and classification of hazardous chemicals (EDCs and PBTs) at the global level.
- **Accelerate global “Green Deal” diplomacy** by positioning the EU as a global frontrunner in detoxification, de-pollution, decarbonisation and restoration. Promote dialogue and cooperation with like-minded countries around the world and build new partnerships to encourage de-pollution and decarbonisation of industrial production. Secure “reciprocity clauses” going beyond carbon emissions to oblige companies willing to enter the EU Single Market to comply with the EU social and environmental standards, while developing such standards in close cooperation with trade partners to make sure the interests, concerns and needs of EU trade partners are fully understood and accounted for.
- **The EU must closely collaborate with low-income countries to prevent and reduce potential negative impacts on economic development caused by EU measures**, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) or the Deforestation Law. It needs to reinvest monies levied through CBAM in decarbonisation measures and community-access to renewable energy in low-income countries.
- **The EU needs to make sure we decolonialise decarbonisation**, that is, we become true partners for countries in
  - the Global South supporting their transition to net zero. The EU needs to make sure we do not support energy imports from Global South countries where those countries are unable to fulfil the most basic energy needs of their own population or where energy production undermines those countries' biodiversity, nature and water resources. Africa cannot be a source of cheap renewable energy before all Africans have access to affordable green energy.
  - **In many ways, trade structures and imbalances set up in colonial times still impact the flow of resources**, goods and money globally. Today, the global North drains commodities worth \$2.2 trillion every year from the Global South. That amount of money would be enough to end extreme poverty, globally, fifteen times over, and is a stark illustration of the need for global justice.
  - **The EU's trade policy needs to be reoriented at ensuring partner countries in the Global South** are not locked forever at the bottom of the global value chain by providing cheap resources and labour, with most profits flowing to the North. The EU needs to end labour and raw material exploitation and unfair trading practices and refocus trade on delivering wellbeing for people in respect of planetary boundaries.
  - **Implement the new Sustainable Corporate Due Diligence Directive** and support member states in transposing it into national legislation to stop human rights violations and environmental harm caused by European supply and value chains.
  - **The EU needs to work towards reforming the global financial architecture**, in particular towards ending the debt spiral in which many countries in the Global South are locked in. These countries are falling into a vicious cycle of debt and austerity that

only exacerbates the multiple crises. The EU needs to champion a new international debt resolution mechanism.

- **The EU needs to end its resistance to a global tax framework** supported by an overwhelming majority of states in the UN General Assembly. Such a framework, eventually a Global Tax Convention, is needed to ensure international tax cooperation at eye level, going beyond the current OECD framework, which is dominated by the wealthiest economies and is seen as unfit to prevent tax havens.
- **The EU and Member States must engage fully in the Climate Loss and Damage Fund (LDF)** - privileged countries need to pay a fair share for the mitigation and adaptation of environmental damage, in line with their disproportionate responsibility for breaching planetary boundaries. Financial flows need to be reversed, to flow from those countries that have benefited most from the unjust structures to those that have been disadvantaged. We need to EU to drive decision-making at the international level to tap into new funding sources, including new taxes and levies, for instance, levies on fossil fuel extraction. Historic responsibilities should be explored also in other areas (e.g. fisheries, minerals extraction).
- As one of the leading actors in international development cooperation, **the EU needs to ensure that funding for sustainable development is fully aligned with its objective of carbon neutrality, zero pollution and biodiversity and nature protection** and that all projects funded by EU monies deliver on gender equality and social justice with a clear human rights-based approach. We need the EU to champion the localisation of aid, as currently just above 2% of donor money goes to local organisations with the biggest chunk of international cooperation funds still channelled to governments, government agencies, and organisations operating internationally.
- **The EU needs to play a leading role globally championing and promoting high standards and cooperation and partnerships with third countries** to support their capacity to assess and manage environmental issues in a sound manner. The EU has already committed to partnerships with Africa, for instance, for chemicals and waste management, and established funds to support them, and needs to establish more programmes and funding lines to work on environmental issues in conjunction with measures to reduce poverty.
- **The EU needs to make sure our products do not pollute people and nature in third countries.** The EU should stop the export of harmful chemicals, including pesticides if it does not allow them to be used here, nor import products it does not authorise production of within the EU. This will support human health, embrace ethics, and support coherence and EU credibility. The EU needs to ramp up the Waste Shipment Regulation and its implementation in order to stop the export of waste in particular to the Global South, in particular where hidden as items for the second-hand market.
- In summary, **the EU should work systematically with third countries to support a just transition**, including through appropriate trade, aid and diplomacy, complemented by clear recognition of own responsibilities and common challenges as well as recognising diverse paths to address common challenges.
- **Finally, the EU should do all it can to be brokers of justice and peace** and push for international collaboration on climate, zero pollution, nature restoration and resource management, green deals, and a fair global trade and financial architecture to work towards equity and justice and to prevent future conflicts.

## Part 10: Facts and Further Reading

In a recent paper published in the journal *New Political Economy*, the authors quantify the scale of drain through unequal exchange in the post-colonial era. Today, the global North drains from the South commodities worth \$2.2 trillion per year, in Northern prices. For perspective, that amount of money would be enough to end extreme poverty, globally, fifteen times over. The drain increased dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s, as neoliberal structural adjustment programmes were imposed across the global South.

The Tax Justice Network warned that countries could lose nearly \$5 trillion in tax revenue over the next decade as multinationals and wealthy individuals continue to use tax havens to whittle down their tax bills.

#EU pact4future

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS







**EEB**

FOR PEOPLE AND  
NATURE SINCE 1974

50 YEARS

SIGN THE  
PACT



## IMPLEMENT OUR COMMITMENTS

- 11. Implement & enforce EU legislation to protect the rule of law and our health
- 12. Strengthen EU governance and trust in the European Project



## IMPLEMENT OUR COMMITMENTS

# 11. Implement & enforce EU legislation to protect the rule of law and our health

**Implementation of commitments – stemming from the European Green Deal, in international fora, and the existing environmental and social protections in EU law – is essential for benefits to accrue and trust in the policies and the governments and institutions driving them.**

This means that the EU institutions and all the regulatory bodies and administrations in the Member States must take their share of the responsibility to ensure that laws are transposed and applied in full respect of the subsidiarity principle. The EU institutions, in cooperation with authorities from the Member States, have a responsibility to map the gaps and needs - whether in terms of finances (see priority 5), human resources, skills, or deepened intra-EU cooperation - so that the laws in place are coherent and effective in realising our goals under this Action Plan for the European Pact for the Future.

- **Review and, working together with Member States, align all incentives—EU, national, local, business, and private—to catalyse the transition, fast-track economies of scale and system change, and avoid blockages to progress that risk undermining faith in progress.**
- **Identify and prioritise projects of particular interest for the green and social transition – to work as lighthouse projects** where environmental, social and community interests are all reflected. These can inspire replicability and reduce opposition to the green transition.
- **While optimising public resources for implementation is essential, we must resist so-called “pragmatic implementation”,** whereby we cherry-pick the rules that are easiest to comply

with. This could mean lowering standard of protection by non-implementation of certain rules, whereas we need to ensure that we have a system change which is fair and just for all, without making concessions to polluters or anyone who has a share of responsibility to make the change the planet needs.

- **Build capacity for sound environmental governance so that people can help with implementation and enforcement:** investing in transparent process, meaningful public participation in decision-making and allowing people to challenge decisions that harm the environment, not only is a requirement under the Aarhus Convention (see priority 8), but gives people agency to implement the EU environmental framework.

**Enforcement of the law is essential for trust in government, institutions, and to ensure an economic level playing field in the EU internal market:** A strong commitment to implement and enforce the EGD and wider environmental law, with full engagement of Member States, is essential to deliver agreed objectives, avoid unfair competition for those companies respecting the law, and keep trust in the EU rule of law, bolstering EU accountability, credibility and democracy.

- **Strengthen EU governance, accountability and democratic mechanisms** when implementing policies and laws, by upholding Europe's rules-based approach through increased transparency in institutions and decision-making and allowing for public scrutiny.

- **Complement with better access to justice** in the Member States, including viable options for the public concerned to challenge decisions in line with the right for effective remedies, including a cap on legal expenses and the possibility for compensation rights.
- **Improve monitoring - e.g. use satellites and associated programmes such as EU's Copernicus** for improved information to the general public and inspectors to understand the state of the environment (e.g. water eutrophication, forest cover - extent, state, carbon storage), critical trends and tipping points, even illegal activities (e.g. forest felling, dumping of waste, quarrying and minerals extraction, non-registered swimming pools in water-stressed areas) to support inspection and enforcement.
- **Promote dissuasive fees and fines at the national level**, supporting the implementation of the polluter pays principle and supporting the efficient functioning of the internal market without market distortions based on externalities.

**The EU must adopt a “better compliance” agenda, demonstrating a clear willingness to dissuade non-respect of EU law.**

- **Commit to faster initiation and full transparency of infringement procedures** and significantly increase in EU Commission staff capacity for enforcement with more dissuasive financial and reputational sanctions for market actors and non-compliant Member States.
- **Empower the European Public Prosecutors office** to tackle environmental crime, in particular given the high economic cost to society and the hidden profits that environmental crime generates, often based on corruption and fraudulent practices that involve more than one Member States.

- **Pass a new law to set minimum standards on inspections** for Member States to strengthen enforcement and deepen cooperation between authorities in a systematic way.

**A better compliance agenda will create a level playing field and requires the harmonisation of environmental liability.**

- Make an ambitious revision of the EU liability and compensation framework, notably through **the Environmental Liability Directive**, and make sure that the polluter pays principle and the precautionary principle remain the bedrock of EU environmental law and that they are implemented throughout legislation.
- Remain committed to transposing and implementing **an effective Corporate Sustainability and Due Diligence Directive** by applying the widest access to remedies possible nationally, increasing meaningful and impactful stakeholder engagement, and work to extending its scope in order to tackle the climate, environmental and human rights abuses in the high-risk sectors.
- **Recognise the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for current and future generations as a fundamental human right.** This will boost the enforcement of environmental law throughout every measure adopted within the EU and will galvanise the application of the Aarhus Convention which enshrines it as a core foundation for environmental governance.

## Part 11: Facts and Further Reading

### Further reading

#### On implementation:

- On the role of civil society for the implementation of environmental laws in the Member States, visit the [Implement for LIFE page](#).

#### On Enforcement:

- Provisional analysis of the rules on [Access to Justice](#) introduced in [European Green Deal](#) proposals
- EEB's opinion on the Update on the [Commission Notice on Access to Justice](#)
- EEB's assessment of the [Environmental Crime Directive](#)

#### On Compliance:

- [Stepping up enforcement](#) for a 'better compliance' agenda
- [Gaps in the CSDDD](#)

[#EU pact4future](#)

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS



## IMPLEMENT OUR COMMITMENTS

# 12. Strengthen EU governance and trust in the European Project

**Good governance is essential for fair and effective decision-making that is accepted as legitimate by stakeholders and the public.** We need to strengthen EU governance, accountability, and democracy, innovate citizen participation and increase transparency when developing and implementing new policies while upholding Europe's rules-based approach through full implementation and enforcement of all environmental policies. We also need equal representation of women in decision-making as well as representation of minorities and Indigenous Peoples, all generations, and a diversity of peoples and beliefs to represent the diversity of European society.

**To deliver on these priorities, a strong governance set-up for the European Commission would include:**

- **Appoint an Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal and Social Investments** to accelerate and complete the EGD's work and fully align it with the social dimension. This Executive Vice President must continue to bear responsibility for climate, nature, and zero pollution, directly overseeing relevant Directorates-General to keep their mission on track.
- **Appoint a VP for the fair and sustainable food systems transition** to help tackle one of the most urgent system changes we need and enable farmers to get the support they need for the ecological transition and people to get the quality food they need at affordable, fair prices;
- **Appoint a Commissioner for youth and future generations** to avoid decision-making being focused on yesterday's reality and priorities, and to act as the

- guardian of rights of future citizens integrated across all EU policy areas.

**The policy making framework needs to be fair.**

- **Strengthen impact assessments** to include greater focus on the cost of inaction, include a just transition check, an inter-generation check, a gender impact assessment, and consider the potential impacts on low- and medium-income countries and population brackets potentially affected. There needs to be an ever-strengthened commitment for transparency and to support the emergence of the information we need for good governance.
- **Innovate public participation**, including through citizen assemblies and other deliberative processes, to ensure all voices are heard and realities reflected, and to minimise the bias of vested interests being reflected in final decisions.
- **Strengthen civil society and protect civic space** by agreeing on a Civil Society Strategy, establishing Civic Dialogue, ensuring fair funding mechanisms for civil society organisation, and opposing any legislation or practices seeking to crack down on civic space.
- **Reform “Better Regulation” so that it is truly about effective, responsible regulation** which benefits society, and not about enabling deregulation where social and environmental protections risk being compromised and with it the health and wellbeing of people and state of the environment upon which our societies rely.



- **Every commissioner should commit to non-regression principles to avoid deregulation and risks of loss of environmental and social protections.**
- **Improve the use of “practicability and enforceability” checks when designing or reviewing legislation and engage inspectors and enforcement professionals** to ensure legislation is designed to be implementable and enforceable.
- **Reform the “Fit for Future” platform to ensure that it** really focuses on the transformation needs, system change, and needs of future generations, moving beyond the too-tight focus on “burdens” and “simplification” of legislation. The Platform should rather look at the wider benefits to society, implementability and effectiveness of measures.

**Particular efforts are needed to prevent the risks of greenwashing and the spreading of deceiving sustainability allegations on the one hand and, on the other hand, avoid undue and inappropriate influence on policy-making** that leads to a bias in decision-making but blatant cases of corporate capture. Just like health policies should not be dictated by tobacco companies, chemicals, climate and energy policies should not be prey to the deleterious influence of chemicals and fossil fuel industry bent on protecting their markets to the detriment of health and environmental protection, climate change and the wellbeing across the planet. Private benefits on the back of much bigger public costs cannot be the way forward. The maths simply does not stack up as it can only be a destructive spiral.

**Put limits to corporate access to decision-making and limits on revolving doors to avoid undue influence on decision-making;** Without this, the future we need will be delayed and maybe never realised. It is also unfair for progressive businesses that wish to help create the future we need.

**Ban conflict of interests in the European Parliament** (e.g. in Parliamentary committees like in agri and fisheries committees, trips for MEPs sponsored by corporate interest groups, etc.).

In this **era of disinformation** — where fake news, false facts, misleading claims and narratives, buried information, and other efforts to undermine progressive policies are launched by short-term vested interests, political point scoring, the far right pushing anti progressive narratives, and foreign destructive interference — it is essential for decision-making, for the health of democracies, for the European Project and for protecting and empowering people, to enforce political promises and to:

- **Ensure appropriate communication of the EGD across the EU at national, local level starting with schools and universities.**
- **Embrace a fact-checking portal and service, also open to industry and civil society requests to immediately debunk false claims**
- **Ensure good media balancing at EU level**
- **Better communicate environmental scientific consensus** and ensure scientific consensus remains at the centre of any expert groups, discussion groups, civil society exchanges organised by the EU Institutions
- **Implement and enforce the green claims legislation to ensure a more fairly and correctly informed public and prevent greenwashing.**

Finally, **systematically communicate the benefits of action** (including cumulative benefits of action against cost of inaction), of policies and measures.

People need to see that they personally benefit—whether through lower fuel or water bills, lesser exposure to water and air pollution and toxics and hence lesser risk of illness or early mortality, better product repairability, greater availability of nutritious food and clean water, improved accessibility to nature, and associated physical and mental health benefits.

If people are unaware of the benefits, they cannot appreciate the EGD's importance and have confidence in institutions and governments.

Without better information about what Europe and national, regional, and local governments do for them, people are at greater risk of being convinced by fake news and disinformation campaigns and losing faith and trust in the European Project, elected officials and institutions, and democracy.

**Engage all in the solutions:** Transformative change can only work if all of society, rich, middle-class, and poor, benefits from and has agency in the transition. This is possible with the due design of the packages of measures outlined in this action plan. Furthermore, the challenges can only be met and opportunities seized if all governance levels engage with due coordination to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

- **All three EU institutions – The Commission, Parliament and Council – need to show leadership and accountability,** focusing on scientific facts and the evidence of risks and costs of inaction and benefits of action to create a future-proof policy and enabling framework – by adopting the measures noted in this Action Plan and engaging with all levels of governance to make a collective difference. This will also strengthen public perceptions of and support for EU institutions and, hence also the European Project.

- **Courts of Justice, Court of Auditors and the EU Ombudsman** – to ensure respect for the rule of law, a level playing field, and accountability.
- **Agencies, academia and independent think-tanks:** To provide evidence to support evidence-based policy making and help avoid policy making on ideological grounds and polarisation. Facts and science are universal. In these times of disinformation, their roles are particularly important.
- **Member States given their competencies and responsibilities for their citizens,** to safeguarding public goods and providing public services, their many levers of power and financing capabilities, their role in national tax policies to set incentives, and powers for implementation and non-compliance enforcement.
- **Cities and regions are powerful drivers of change** – and are active and needed to fast-track initiatives, prove how the transition can be made to work and bring benefits to communities. Cities have unique potential in driving a circular economy transition, with waste, recycling and repair infrastructure. They are key for climate mitigation and adaptation, for sustainable food systems and short supply chains with contracts to local farming communities. City support for affordable energy efficient housing, active and public transport, public procurement for canteens and healthier food are each essential. As are, measures to mitigate air, noise and light pollution. Cities can play and should play a key role in consulting and supporting citizens on health, access to infrastructure and nature, and engage and empower communities to make the difference we need. Mayors should communicate to national policymakers that change is possible, that change

brings benefits and communicates what solutions work well and why to help support the wider rollout and upscaling success.

- **Communities and community engagement:** democracy is not only about a vote every four years; a healthy democracy needs engaged communities and mechanisms of citizen deliberation to complement existing communication channels via citizen groups and civil society organisations.
- **People should have a right to protest to communicate their concerns:** The right to protest is a core and essential right in a healthy democracy. These rights should be protected, including from excessive legal penalties and police responses.
- **Youth engagement** to ensure those with the most at stake for the future are heard and heeded by decision-makers. See also details under Action Plan Priority 8: Strengthen environmental democracy & give a voice to youth and others too often forgotten.
- **Engage all relevant stakeholders to help decide on the right solutions and get their buy-in and engagement in implementation.** For example, adaptation to climate change requires engagement by farmers, foresters, fishers and protected area and land managers to ensure healthy, resilient and, hence, productive ecosystems. It requires municipal, riverine and coastal authorities and engineering corps to protect people and infrastructure. We need those responsible for safeguarding cultural heritage sites (built and natural) to protect what contributes to Europe's unique identity, attractiveness of regions and local livelihoods. We need doctors, nurses, psychologists and social services

to support those affected across generations and ensure social justice. This requires a move away from silo thinking towards system thinking through enhanced communication, cooperation and recognition of common challenges. **We are all in this together. The way forward can only be a whole-of-society approach across generations for a common future.**

**In these complex times, as Europe confronts multiple crises and constant change that can create an atmosphere of fear, we need leadership to clearly commit to an agenda of hope and a clear action plan for delivery. We invite all decision-makers to explore this action plan of measures, and commit to all actions within your powers and competencies, catalyse tangible progress, and create credible hope.**

## Part 12: Facts and Further Reading

### Further reading

- Responsible Regulation' instead of 'Better Regulation' – is the European Commission's better regulation proposal fit for future? By Patrick ten Brink in [ELNI Review 2022, pp. 1-9](#).
- Reprotecting Europe: The EU Green Deal v The War on Regulations. [NEF and EEB](#)
- [Case studies](#): Citizenwashing – the greenwashing of democracy

[#EU pact4future](#)

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS







## WHO IS THE EEB?

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) is Europe's largest network of environmental citizens' organisations. We bring together over **180 member organisations** from **41 countries**, and work for a better future where people and nature thrive together.

## WHAT DO WE DO?

The EEB tackles the triple **climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution crisis** by setting the agenda, monitoring and advising on the best ways for the EU to deal with them based on science. This year, we are celebrating our 50th anniversary.

To solve the triple crisis, we need a comprehensive approach—a Green and Social Deal for a One-Planet Economy. That's why we, alongside thousands of organisations, sustainable businesses and individuals, are calling a new **European Pact for the Future**. With 12 demands, we release an actionable and viable programme to drive the transformational change needed for a prosperous future for everyone within the boundaries of a single healthy planet.

Want to know more? Let's have a chat!

@EEB\_EUROPE / @GREEN\_EUROPE



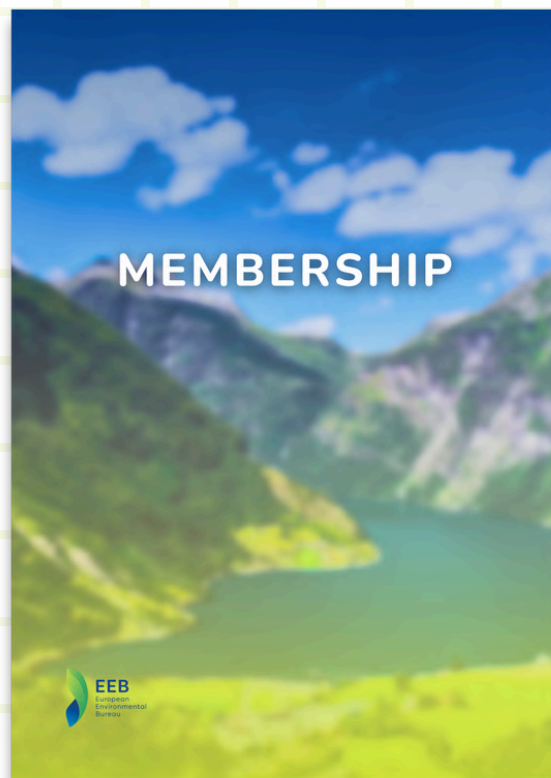
## WHO TO CONTACT?

- Secretary General, **Patrick ten Brink**: [patrick.tenbrink@eeb.org](mailto:patrick.tenbrink@eeb.org)
- Deputy Secretary General, **Patrizia Heidegger**: [patrizia.heidegger@eeb.org](mailto:patrizia.heidegger@eeb.org)
- Policy Director, **Faustine Bas-Defossez**: [faustine.bas-defossez@eeb.org](mailto:faustine.bas-defossez@eeb.org)
- Director of Membership and Development, **Emma Ernsth**: [emma.ernsth@eeb.org](mailto:emma.ernsth@eeb.org)
- Head of Zero Pollution Industry, **Christian Schaible**: [christian.schaible@eeb.org](mailto:christian.schaible@eeb.org)
- Head of Chemicals Policy, **Tatiana Santos**: [tatiana.santos@eeb.org](mailto:tatiana.santos@eeb.org)
- Policy Manager for Agriculture and Food Systems, **Célia Nyssens-James**: [celia.nyssens@eeb.org](mailto:celia.nyssens@eeb.org)
- Policy Manager for 'Zero Mercury' Campaign, **Elena Lymberidi-Settimo**: [elena.lymberidi@eeb.org](mailto:elena.lymberidi@eeb.org)
- Policy Manager for Environmental Law and Justice, **Francesca Carlsson**: [francesca.carlsson@eeb.org](mailto:francesca.carlsson@eeb.org)
- Policy Manager for Economic Transition and Gender Equality, **Katharina Wiese**: [katharina.wiese@eeb.org](mailto:katharina.wiese@eeb.org)
- Policy Manager for Air and Noise, **Margherita Tolotto**: [margherita.tolotto@eeb.org](mailto:margherita.tolotto@eeb.org)
- Policy Manager for Water and Biodiversity, **Sergiy Moroz**: [sergiy.moroz@eeb.org](mailto:sergiy.moroz@eeb.org)
- Policy Manager for Climate and Energy, **Luke Haywood**: [luke.haywood@eeb.org](mailto:luke.haywood@eeb.org)
- Deputy Policy Manager for Circular Economy and Fiscal Reform, **Marco Musso**: [marco.musso@eeb.org](mailto:marco.musso@eeb.org)
- Communications Lead, **Christian Skrivervik**: [christian.skrivervik@eeb.org](mailto:christian.skrivervik@eeb.org)

[WWW.EEB.ORG](http://WWW.EEB.ORG)









# European Pact for the Future

A green and social deal for a one-planet economy



**EEB**

European  
Environmental  
Bureau

#EU pact4future

FOLLOW OUR  
SOCIALS

