





Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200, Brussels

Brussels, 22 January 2025

**Subject: It's time to end "the worst pollution crisis in human history": Ban PFAS**

Dear President von der Leyen,

We, civil society representing millions of European citizens, write to you with urgency and a profound sense of outrage with the latest revelations on the PFAS file. The findings of the recent [Forever Lobbying Project](#) have uncovered yet another PFAS pollution scandal within the EU. These revelations are a wake-up call to act with determination against what has become the 'poison of the century' and probably 'the [most serious](#) pollution crisis humanity has ever faced'.

Since their introduction in the 1950s, the largely unregulated use of PFAS in countless industrial and consumer applications has left Europe poisoned. Scientists have long [warned](#) us about the terrible truth of these so-called "forever chemicals": PFAS are linked to cancers, immune and endocrine systems disruption, infertility, and other severe illnesses. These chemicals contaminate the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe. Every European citizen, especially teenagers, young children, pregnant women and thus, even unborn babies, now carries [alarming levels of PFAS](#) in their bodies, compromising their health and our shared future.

Last week, the Forever Lobbying Project revealed another alarming situation: "an ongoing orchestrated lobbying and disinformation campaign by the PFAS industry and its allies" to weaken the [EU's proposal](#) to restrict 'forever chemicals' and to shift the costs of this pollution onto society. The results of the [research reveal](#) that the campaign is built on fearmongering and misleading messaging, mirroring strategies well known to be used by Big Tobacco and fossil fuel industries. The material exposed reveals that these efforts have infiltrated EU politics, influencing public debate and prioritising corporate interest over public health and wellbeing.

The investigation confirms that, for decades, the PFAS industry has knowingly allowed toxic chemicals to contaminate our bodies, our water, our food, and our air while concealing safety risks from the public and authorities. PFAS pollution has eroded fundamental human rights, including the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, while the PFAS lobby campaign further distorts the public institutions responsible for safeguarding them. These chemicals are not only progressively poisoning our bodies, but the companies that produce them and their massive undisclosed lobbying campaigns also threaten the integrity of democracy itself, undermining trust in regulatory systems and public accountability. Yet, these companies have still avoided paying for the catastrophic damage they've caused, leaving citizens to bear the unaffordable costs of pollution—both financially and with their health.

The Forever Lobbying Project's investigation also revealed the staggering cost of inaction: [€2 trillion](#) over 20 years, and €100 billion annually in perpetuity, just to clean up PFAS contamination—excluding other societal costs like the [€52–84 billion annually](#) in some healthcare costs from PFAS exposure, unless robust decisions are taken. In some cases, cleanup is nearly impossible. Removing certain PFAS, such as TFA, from mineral water requires advanced methods that are not only costly but also strip the water of its minerals. The conclusion is clear: the current legal and industrial model shields polluters

from accountability while burdening society and future generations with the devastating costs of their actions.

We call on the EU to end this sabotage of our future. The time has come for decisive action. Europe has the opportunity to lead globally in protecting its natural assets, safeguarding public health and preserving the environment. Through robust regulation and the promotion of innovation, the EU can set an example of a toxic-free, future-proof, and competitive economy.

As representatives of civil society across Europe, we urge you to act with boldness and moral clarity. We call on you to:

1. **Defend a comprehensive PFAS ban to cut pollution at source.** Protect the proposed [universal PFAS](#) restriction from being watered down and strengthen pesticide, biocide and pharmaceutical legislation to tackle all sources of PFAS pollution.
2. **End industry interference:** Corporate lobbying can undermine public health. The EU should minimise, publicise and fully minute meetings with PFAS industry seeking exemptions, ensuring decisions are based on independent science, not corporate disinformation.
3. **Hold polluters accountable.** Enforce the polluter-pays principle and corporate responsibility, requiring chemical companies to cover the costs of the pollution they cause.
4. **Implement a monitoring and remediation plan.** Partner with Member States to perform human and environmental monitoring, clean up contaminated water and soil, invest in technologies to restore ecosystems, and ensure polluters bear the cost.
5. **Support affected citizens.** Provide health, psychological, legal and financial redress to those harmed by decades of negligence, ensuring justice and relief for victims.
6. **Boost the supply of safe alternatives.** Accelerate the phase-out of PFAS and boost innovation by supporting companies marketing and developing safer, non-toxic replacements for PFAS.
7. **Modernise the EU's chemicals law.** Strengthen the REACH Regulation to prevent future PFAS-like scandals and speed up chemicals control by streamlining processes, prioritising persistent, mobile and bioaccumulative chemicals for phase-out, making generic and group bans the norm and closing data gaps to ensure transparency and effective chemical control.
8. **Support PFAS regulation at global level.** Support measures under the Stockholm Convention, a Global Plastics Treaty, and the Global Chemicals Framework.

This is our generational duty: to protect our children, uphold human rights, safeguard our environment, and secure a resilient, sustainable future. The EU must take a stand against forever pollution and the powerful lobby that sustains it. Acting now is the only wise investment for the years to come.

We request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter further and collaborate on actionable solutions.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Yours faithfully,



Patrick ten Brink, Secretary General

On behalf of:

Alliance for Cancer Prevention  
Anemos  
An Taisce, the National Trust for Ireland  
Arnika  
ATTO PRIMO Salute Ambiente Cultura  
BLOOM Association  
Bond Beter Leefmilieu  
BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany)  
Canopea  
Cantine sans plastique France  
CEEweb for Biodiversity  
Centar za životnu sredinu/Center for Environment/FoE BiH  
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)  
Centro di iniziativa politico-culturale Romano Carotti - Bassano  
ChemSec - International Chemical Secretariat  
CHEM Trust  
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)  
CILLSA Cittadini per il Lavoro, la Legalità, la Salute e l'Ambiente  
ClientEarth  
Comitato No tunnel TAV  
Community Action Against Plastic Waste  
Coordinamento tutela territorio Breganze  
Corporate Europe Observatory  
Danmarks Naturfredningsforening (Danish Society for Nature Conservation)  
Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.  
Earth Thrive  
Ecologistas en Acción  
ECOS - Environmental Coalition on Standards  
ECO-TIRAS International Association of River Keepers  
Ekologi brez meja  
Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)  
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)  
European Cave Protection Commission  
European Research Institute  
Exit Plastik Alliance  
Fédération SEPANSO Aquitaine  
Fédération Spéléologique Européenne  
foodwatch international  
Forbrugerrådet Tænk (Danish Consumer Council)  
Forum italiano dei movimenti per l'acqua

Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung  
France Nature Environnement  
Friends of the Earth - SPZ, Slovakia  
Friends of the Earth Cyprus  
Friends the Earth Europe  
Friends of the Irish Environment  
Fundacja Kupuj Odpowiedzialnie  
Future in our hands, Norway (Framtiden i våre hender)  
Gallifrey Foundation  
Générations Futures  
German Speleological Federation VdHK  
GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria  
Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)  
Health and Environment Justice Support (HEJSupport)  
Hogar sin Tóxicos  
Humusz Szövetség  
Il mondo di Irene  
Institute for Sustainable Development Foundation (Poland)  
ISDE, International Society of Doctors for Environment Italy  
Italia Nostra - Consiglio regionale del Veneto  
Jesuit European Social Centre  
Legambiente  
Mamme no PFAS  
Naturvernforbundet  
Natuurmonumenten  
No Plastic In My Sea  
Ocean. Now!  
Opzione ZERO ODV  
Pesticide Action Network Europe  
Pestizid Aktions- Netzwerk e.V. Germany  
Peter Lysy, Lutheran Pastor Head of Kirchlicher Dienst in der Arbeitswelt Bayern  
PFASLand  
Plastic Change  
Polish Ecological Club  
Polish Zero Waste Association  
Rete G.A.S. vicentina  
Rete Toscana in movimento  
Rethink Plastic alliance  
Safer Chemicals Alternative (ALHem)  
Seas At Risk  
Surfrider Foundation Europe  
Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)  
Tegengif  
Tudatos Vásárlók Egyesülete (Association of Conscious Consumers)  
Umweltdachverband  
VOICE Ireland  
WECF Women Engage for a Common Future  
WeMove Europe  
Women's Environmental Network  
WWF Terre del Piave OdV

Zelena akcija / FoE Croatia

Zemljane staze (Earth Trek) Croatia

ZERO - Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System

Žiedinė ekonomika, VŠĮ