

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

**Brussels, 4 November 2024**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Notes

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

## Signed by:

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

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

## Signed by:

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

## Signed by:

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