11 June 2019, Brussels

Open letter to EU leaders: Our sustainable future must start now

Dear EU Heads of State and Government,

Society expects adults to educate children but it is our kids who are schooling the grown-ups, with their regular protests demanding climate action and sustainable living. Moreover, the streets of Europe, from its largest metropolises to its smallest towns, have been the scenes of regular demonstrations and marches, demanding everything from climate action and extinction rebellions to women's rights and socio-economic justice.

In the wake of the European elections, where voter turnout reached a 20-year high and which registered significant gains for progressive causes, it is clear that European citizens are more engaged now, together, at the EU level, than they have been in over two decades – representing an active and proactive antidote to Euroscepticism. As confirmed by poll after poll, European citizens desire an EU that will deliver social and environmental justice. Scientists, business leaders, cities, regions and civil society have all made the case for a new direction for Europe. The leaders of 30 private, public and civil society platforms, representing millions of EU residents, have united behind a strong call for sustainable development to become the EU's number one political priority.

Do you hear those calls?

Despite progress in some areas, efforts to date have been woefully inadequate to meet the magnitude of the social and environmental challenges ahead of us. Urgent action is needed to address escalating inequalities and tackle the climate crisis, stop the rapid loss of biodiversity, ensure sustainable consumption and production and quality employment for all, and manage a just transition towards an economic system founded on wellbeing and quality of life.

At the European Council Summit on 20-21 June, EU leaders will discuss the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024. We call on you to show that you have heard our calls by making sustainable development the overarching objective of the European Union's priorities, both inside and outside Europe, for at least the next five years. To bring about real and lasting change, sustainable development must be the golden thread running through all EU policies. You must stop looking at the economy merely as a means to create "prosperity" and "competitiveness" and, instead, view it as a tool to promote inclusive, sustainable and just societies that meet the needs of all, within the boundaries of our planet's precious resources and the limits of its life-giving ecosystems.

The will for action among citizens and stakeholders is strong – all that is missing is your political will. As European, national, regional and international organisations working on very diverse social, environmental, economic, governance and international issues, together representing tens of millions of people in Europe, we will continue to raise our voices. But it is up to you as political leaders to steer us towards a better future in a Europe that prioritises the wellbeing of people and planet over short-term gains. We stand ready to support you in this endeavour.

Yours sincerely,

Logos of all the signatories

The Signatories

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL SIGNATORIES:



NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL SIGNATORIES:




SOS Loire Vivante
volonteurope
TERRA CYPRIA
umwelt dachverband
NaturochMiljö
Waddenvereniging
Zaļā brīvība
ZELENA AKCIJA
ZERO
COALITION 2030 FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Centrul National Productie si Consum Durabile