



Make Europe the World Leader of Sustainable Development: A Unique Opportunity to Build a Stronger European Union

Europe Ambition 2030: The Agenda for a Sustainable Europe Rome May 21st, 2019

Sustainability action is not a matter of choice anymore. The complex challenges facing our world have grown into threats that cannot be managed by traditional governance approaches. In recognition, Europe must unite and show leadership in building an environmentally, socially, and economically just, sustainable world that can strike the right balance between people, planet and prosperity.

Our ambition is to make the European Union the global leader, a true champion of sustainability within the framework of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. To achieve this goal, the European Union, its Member States and European society at large, both at individual and collective levels, must take immediate action to scale up and accelerate the adoption and concrete implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

More than ever, citizens demand a sustainable world where well-being, social justice and environmental harmony are the key pillars of civilisation. They are calling for peaceful, prosperous and inclusive development, within the capacities of our planetary boundaries. If this demand goes unmet and if leaders remain detached from these fundamental calls for change, the risk of instability will grow, and eventually the fire of social unrest, instability and threats to peace and security will be ignited as we have already seen in several countries across Europe.

Therefore, the European Union must adopt a holistic Vision on these grounds, anchored in Europe's rich cultural and social diversity and develop a new, collaborative model of economic, social and environmental governance. A model built on 'unconventional alliances' between public and private sector actors and citizens, one that mobilises all Europeans, especially the youth as the main stakeholders in our sustainable future. A model based on collaboration that increases our preparedness to effectively take on global risks, such as climate change, biodiversity collapse and growing socio-economic inequalities and injustices. This approach must be proactive, bold and strategic.

We, Europeans are in a uniquely fit position to start this change. Our ethos is built on the solid foundations of peaceful development, inclusivity, solidarity and empathy, which are all cornerstones of sustainability. We are present in the field of sustainability action and cooperate actively with champions of the SDGs across the entire world: our track record and success stories are numerous. We also have a significant capital of knowledge in Systems Thinking, which is essential to addressing the complex challenges facing us.

In making the brave but necessary leap on this path, we expect our leaders and institutions to show unwavering support and take determined action: a clear commitment to a sustainable design, collaborative action and inclusive systems leadership. In particular, the European Union and its Member States must develop strategic, transparent, strong and innovative governance tools to achieve the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and our Climate Neutrality goals, as well as shape the future of our more prominent social and environmental policies that can offer the greatest impact in achieving these outcomes. Simultaneously, the process and outcomes of transformative governance should guide and underpin the EU Green Budget ("MFF") towards 2027.





Make Europe the World Leader of Sustainable Development: A Unique Opportunity to Build a Stronger European Union

Our leadership and institutions, in cooperation with civil society, must recognise the challenges and perils confronting us and assume bold steps towards sustainable development, progress and peace in the interest of European citizens and the world. Unity must be forged across the European Union to urgently address the existential risks inherent in climate and eco-systemic emergencies through just transition approaches rooted in science and solidarity. That is our demand.

Taking this vision into consideration, we call upon the Members of the European Council to lead on sustainable development, and deliver a better future for all by:

- Electing as President of the European Council, European Commission, European Central Bank an individual who would have expressed his/her clear vision and dedication to an ambitious implementation of Agenda 2030;
- Making Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals the overarching framework of the EU Leaders Agenda 2019-2024 to be debated early June by the European Council, in consultation with civil society, to pave the new development model;
- Including into the EU Leaders Agenda 2019-2024 a European people-centred agenda – as proposed by the OECD¹ - with a new social contract and, tackling global challenges, sustainable production and consumption patterns;
- Deciding in June to convene an ‘Agenda 2030: Enhanced Partnership’ meeting, chaired by the President of the European Council with the participation of the Members of the European Council and other strategic partners in an era of ‘polylateralism’² and to convene its first annual meeting before the end of 2019;
- Agreeing to convene in 2020 a European Youth Convention on Agenda 2030 with the objective to contribute to the EU Action Plan 2020-2030 and to related treaty reviews.

As the European Partners for the Environment and its allies, we aim to achieve this by contributing to development and justice through the Four Big ‘I’s of transformation described by the German Advisory Council on Global Change.³

Together with our partners all over the world, we are calling for a movement - uniting values of economic development, social equality and justice, environmental integrity and solidarity - to lead a new social, economic and financial model, relaunching “A European Vision” in the service of humanity and of our European society.

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019). ‘The European Union: A People Centred Agenda’.

² ‘The conduct of relations between official entities and at least one unofficial, non-state entity in which there is a reasonable expectation of systematic relationships, involving some form of reporting, communication, negotiation, and representation’ in Wiseman, G. (1999). “Polylateralism” and New Modes of Global Dialogue”

³ innovation, infrastructure, investment, inclusion

