



YOUR PLANET.
YOUR EU.
YOU DECIDE.

Your
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Your EU.

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A new
legal approach
for a thriving
EU.



A new legal approach for a thriving EU

In June 2024, EU citizens will head to the polls to vote for lawmakers who will shape the EU over the next five years, with direct impacts on the health of people and nature. The climate, biodiversity and pollution crises, as well as the socio-economic impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, mean that securing people's right to a clean and healthy environment has never been more critical. The people we elect will set the EU's trajectory for decades to come. Their decisions will impact present and future generations.

Our lives, societies and economies are already being impacted by environmental crises, with rampant wildfires, devastating floods and life-threatening heatwaves sweeping across Europe. Such events affect our ability to feed ourselves, breathe healthy air and access clean water. To protect our future, we need urgent action to address these crises, or we risk slowly making the EU and our planet uninhabitable.

To respond to this challenge and build a healthy, fair, and socially responsible future, we need a European Union that empowers people and our economies. We need to change the way we take decisions and hold policy-makers to account. That means integrating environmental protection across all decision-making processes, laws and institutions. Putting the environment, health and the just transition at the heart of decision-making will guarantee a holistic approach to progress across the EU and mean that no decision is taken at the cost of people and nature. Embedding these principles will transform how companies are managed, how investments are made, and how we use and consume the Earth's natural resources.

We have already started to rethink our relationship with nature and take transformative action. Five years ago, the European Commission concluded that Europe's future depended on a healthy planet. The EU adopted the 'European Green Deal' – a set of ambitious laws and policies that aimed to restore and protect our environment for the long-term benefit of people. The European Green Deal set the foundation for genuine change by giving the environment a seat at the decision-making table. But today, **we need to fill in the Green Deal's gaps, ensure its full implementation and enforcement, and guarantee its social fairness.**



The good news is that the European institutions have the legal foundation from which to make this transformative change. One of the EU's core legal texts, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), states that "*environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and activities*". It is high time decision-makers take this obligation seriously.

To truly apply environmental integration across decision-making, we call on political parties and the next legislature to strengthen governance and the rule of law. We urge them to implement all of the Green Deal in a consistent, planned, and timely manner.

To do so, we need:

Institutions:

- Appoint a European Commission Vice-President for People and the Environment, whose role is to follow through and build on the European Green Deal's climate, nature and social commitments and integrate them across all EU decision-making. This Vice-President would be in charge and accountable for the consistency and planning of the implementation of the Green Deal.

Budget and funding:

- Review the EU's funding to end public financial support to any harmful activities (starting with fossil fuels and energy intensive industries), increase support towards a just transition, and apply the polluter pays principle.

Enforcement:

- Significantly increase capacity and resources dedicated to environmental implementation by the enforcement bodies both at EU and national level.

Accountability:

- Strengthen environmental democracy to uphold access to information, public participation, and access to justice rights to enable civil society to play its role in enforcing relevant laws.



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