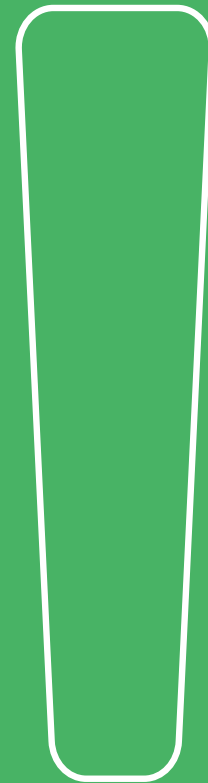


# PRINCIPLES FOR TRANSFORMATION

HOW THE  
EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL  
CAN ACHIEVE  
SYSTEMIC CHANGE



## A “MAN ON THE MOON” MOMENT

Plans for a ‘European Green Deal’, unveiled at the end of 2019, were presented by the European Commission as a “man on the moon” moment, which it claimed would herald an economic paradigm shift. But while the language is full of promise – echoing calls made by Friends of the Earth and our allies for many years – the strong rhetoric disguises only moderate proposals. The package may go further than the European Union has before, but it falls short of what’s needed to tackle the climate and ecological emergency. Bold and urgent action – taken in solidarity with those worst impacted and most vulnerable, and recognising Europe’s historical responsibility and greater capacity to act – is required to achieve the systemic change we need.

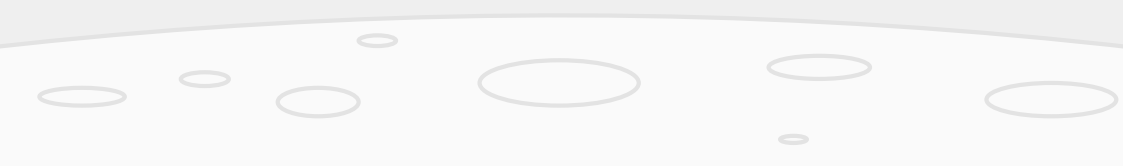
From the outset, the European Green Deal has focused on ‘green growth’. This failure to challenge the paradigm of increased consumption and endless economic growth means the proposals are fundamentally flawed and will prevent Europe from bringing our socio-economic system within all planetary boundaries in time to avert climate and ecological breakdown.

Just one week before the European Commission released its growth-oriented plan, the European Environment Agency published a five-year review of Europe’s environmental

performance that concluded the EU “will not achieve its sustainability vision by continuing to promote economic growth and seeking to manage the impacts”. This was after, 11,000 scientists from 153 countries warned that human suffering is avoidable only if we make huge shifts in the way we live: “Our goals need to shift from GDP growth... toward sustaining ecosystems and improving human well-being by prioritizing basic needs and reducing inequality”.

We cannot afford to ignore this message. A European Green Deal needs to build a socio-economic system that provides for the needs of all people, in Europe and globally, by narrowing inequality, prioritising well-being and respecting the Earth’s limits. We should not be deceived that continued growth can be made sustainable by sticking the words ‘green’ or ‘regenerative’ in front of it.

The legacy of decisions taken today, and actions implemented in the next five years, will have major impacts for decades to come. From this moment on, every single policy decision needs to put people, and our environment and climate, first if we are bring our societies within sustainable limits. Policymakers must come forward with genuinely transformational solutions. We need nothing less than system change.



## TO ACHIEVE SYSTEM CHANGE...

To achieve system change, vested interests in the status quo – from fossil fuel companies to agribusiness – cannot be allowed to continue shaping the agenda. The European Green Deal proposal has the fingerprints of corporate lobbying all over it: inadequate reduction targets, unrestricted access to raw materials, and an emphasis on techno-fixes and failed market-based solutions, are some of the same-old signs. For a European Green Deal to really succeed, the obstacles that prevent transformational action and prolong business-as-usual – from corporate capture to the trade regime – must be removed. (See below: Obstacles to Europe's Transformation for more details).

Having removed these obstacles, we believe there are important principles that should be followed in Europe's transformation. Friends of the Earth Europe has developed five over-arching principles to guide decision-making around a European Green Deal.

We believe that a European Green Deal capable of delivering systemic change, and putting us on a path to a just and sustainable future, must be based on the following Principles for Transformation:

- » **Urgency and scale**
- » **An economy within Earth's limits**
- » **Equity**
- » **People's solutions and participation**
- » **Global justice**

We will apply these principles to policy areas covered by the European Green Deal – circular economy and resource use, climate and energy, food and agriculture, forests and biodiversity, and just transition – to assess whether they do what is needed for system change.



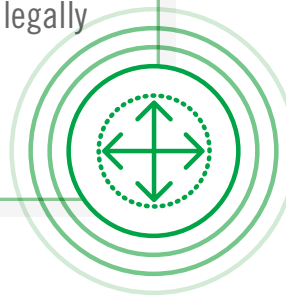
**BECAUSE  
NOTHING LESS  
WILL DO!**

# PRINCIPLES FOR → TRANSFORMATION

## #1 Urgency and scale

We are facing a planetary emergency. In the face of climate and ecological breakdown, incremental change just won't cut it anymore. Only radical measures – in the shape of a full-scale transformation of our economic system – will suffice to tackle the multiple crises faced by Europe, and the rest of the world.

All responses within a European Green Deal must be scientifically-sound and commensurate with the scale and urgency of the transformation needed. This means rapid action in the next five to ten years. Policies must deliver results within the lifetime of this European Commission – setting targets for delayed action will not suffice. Nor will voluntary goals – targets must be legally binding and enforceable.



## #2 An economy within earth's limits

A European Green Deal will be doomed to fail if its policy proposals are embedded in a consumption and growth-obsessed economic model. It is time for Europe to abandon the fallacy of endless consumption and growth, including so-called 'green growth' or 'regenerative growth'.

We cannot achieve sustainability by continuing to promote growth and seeking to mitigate its impacts. The Green Deal must not rely on failed market mechanisms, or other false economic solutions. It must contain effective measures to cap overall demand – for energy, resources, and products. This is Europe's moment to lead the way in creating an economy that cares for everyone within the Earth's limits.



### #3 Equity

Measures in a European Green Deal must be designed to tackle the gross inequality that exists, and make Europe fundamentally more equitable. It is not enough to seek only to minimise inequality, or not to make it worse.

A European Green Deal must be based on solidarity – between countries, and regions, and with marginalized members of society and frontline communities. A society in which sustainability, equity and solidarity are core values should be the ultimate goal of a truly transformational European Green Deal.



### #4

### People's solutions and participation

We cannot afford to let corporate interests undermine a European Green Deal. To protect people and planet, its policies must be decided transparently and entirely in the public interest. This will require breaking the current stranglehold of corporate interests on our politics, starting with fossil fuel companies.

Civil society organisations, workers and trade unions, people and communities should all be actively involved in discussions and decision-making. Initiatives such as food and energy cooperatives, people's assemblies and community solutions should be prioritised and supported. Policy-making around a European Green Deal should actively involve civil society organisations.





#5

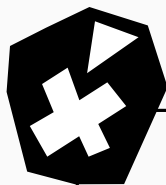
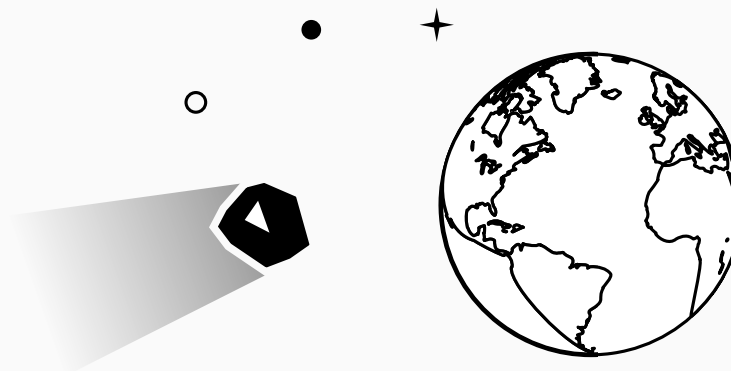
## Global Justice

All decisions around a European Green Deal need to take account of Europe's historic responsibilities, its impact around the world, and its capacity to act. The EU is a historical contributor to ecological and climate breakdown, and its model of production and consumption results in massive negative social, environmental and political impacts across the globe.

Europe's solutions to the crises we face must not further negatively impact countries outside Europe, which are already disproportionately affected. Our response must be in line with Europe's 'fair share' – both of resources and action. For the EU to be a global leader in the transition to just and sustainable societies, no elements of a European Green Deal should be conditional on, or watered-down by, the inaction of others.

# — I OBSTACLES TO EUROPE'S TRANSFORMATION I —

A European Green Deal that delivers systemic change will only be achieved if the existing obstacles to such transformation are removed. This means that some of the EU's current policies and approaches need to be overhauled or eliminated, including:



## **‘One in, One-out’ principle**

This approach, under which any new EU measure must be compensated for by removing an equivalent ‘burden’ in the same policy area, is fundamentally incompatible with the goals of a European Green Deal. Arbitrarily cutting regulations puts existing social and environmental standards at risk, and would undermine long-term goals. The ‘One-in, One-out’ approach to law-making panders to big business’ desire to reduce perceived ‘red-tape’ and increase their profits. Like the rest of the deregulatory ‘Better Regulation’ agenda, it has no place in a just and sustainable future, and must be abandoned.



## **Innovation principle**

Invented by industry lobbyists as a means to block social and environmental protections, this so-called principle is a direct threat to the European Green Deal we need. It would handcuff regulators and limit their ability to enact the transformational legislation needed. Instead, a European Green Deal should be guided by the precautionary principle, which is enshrined in the EU treaty. The 'innovation principle' should be scrapped as the corporate lobbying tool it is.



## **Voluntary agreements**

Too many of the EU's policies are based on voluntary deals when mandatory, enforceable legislation is needed. Such arrangements too often let companies 'off the hook' and leave them unaccountable. Throughout a European Green Deal, voluntary agreements must not be used as substitutes for binding obligations.



## **Lack of transparency**

Inadequate transparency rules, and implementation of them, have allowed vested interests too much sway over EU decision-making, and impeded greater democratic participation. Equitable and transparent consultation and participation must be guaranteed for all stakeholders at every stage of the process to develop and implement a European Green Deal.





## Corporate capture

An effective European Green Deal is dependent on breaking the current stranglehold of corporate interests on decision-making. Industry lobbyists have unacceptable levels of influence, and have delayed, weakened, and sabotaged environmental and social measures that would dent their profits, for decades. A European Green Deal can only deliver transformation if it is free from excessive corporate influence.

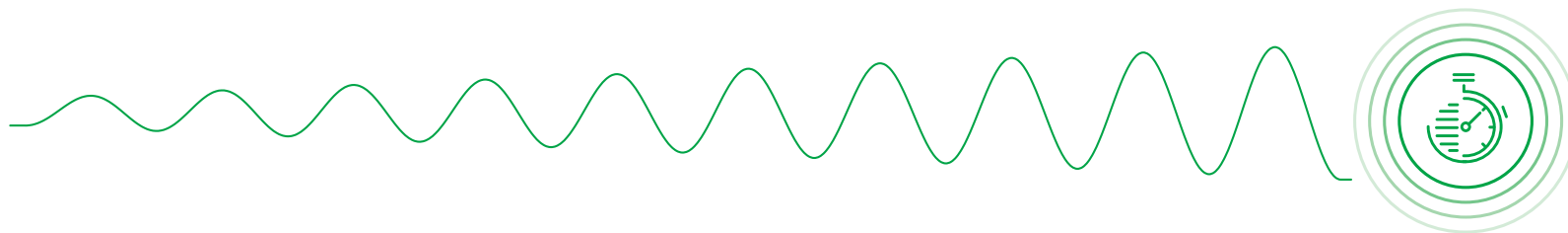


## Europe's trade regime

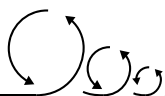
Many aspects of the EU trade and investment regime are irreconcilable with efforts to achieve a just and sustainable Europe. Current trade rules stand in the way of governments' ability to implement the changes needed for a successful European Green Deal, including in the areas of biodiversity, food standards, climate and energy, and resource use. For example, the rights given to multinationals, to claim damages through Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanisms, restrict governments' capacity to enact laws in the interest of the public and the environment. ISDS, and variants like the Investment Court System, are incompatible with the transformation Europe needs. Excessive rights for investors – from ISDS to 'regulatory cooperation' that gives big business more influence over rules – must be ended.



## URGENCY AND SCALE

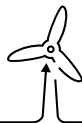


## Circular economy and resource use



- Introduce measures **to cap and reduce overall consumption** – of land, water, materials and greenhouse gases.
- Set a binding target to **halve the EU's material footprint** by 2030.
- Place **limits on total waste** generation per capita by 2030.

## Climate and energy



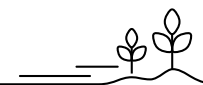
- Upscale short-term climate action and deliver **greenhouse gas emission reductions** in line with the fair shares approach and limiting global temperature rise below 1.5°C, based on historic responsibility and capacity to act.
- Increase steeply binding targets for **renewable energy and energy savings** for 2030.
- Prepare new EU legislation on minimum standards of **energy efficiency** in homes, and urgently speed up the renovation of buildings.
- Work towards a **Fossil Free Europe** – this means ensuring that there are zero fossil fuels, including gas, in the energy sector by 2030.
- Prioritise the decommissioning of Europe's **fossil fuel infrastructure**.

## Forests and biodiversity



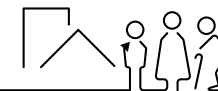
- Adopt and implement targets to **halt biodiversity** loss across all policy areas. Including agriculture.
- Develop measures to **make biodiversity resilient** to climate change.
- Set targets for the **restoration of natural habitats** such as wetlands, forest and grasslands, including a target to restore at least 15% of the EU's land surface.
- Promote measures to minimize **intense land use** and depletion of water resources.
- Restore all **peatlands**.

## Food and agriculture



- Transform our food and farming systems towards **agroecology** – with urgent and radical actions.
- Take a **holistic approach** that addresses all aspects of the food system.
- Set clear targets to reduce **artificial inputs**, including a binding and enforceable target to cut pesticides by 80% by 2030.
- Reduce **industrial meat and dairy** production.
- Cut **food waste** drastically by setting a farm-to-fork reduction target of 50% by 2030.
- Promote methods of food production that are **climate resilient** and can withstand crises.

## Just transition

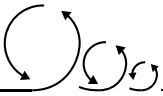


- Ensure substantial **public investments** in the Just Transition. This must be new money, not just repackaged existing funds.
- Increase the size of the **Just Transition Fund**, at least tenfold.

# AN ECONOMY WITHIN EARTH'S LIMITS



## Circular economy and resource use



- Ensure that **reduction in resource use is absolute** – seeking only to ‘decouple’ economic growth from resource consumption is a distraction and does not work.
- Prioritise new legislation to **ensure that products are long-lasting**, reusable, repairable, upgradable, toxic-free and recyclable at end of life.
- **Reject the greenwashing** of metal and mineral mining companies, and their claims about the need for more resource extraction, and security of supply, in the green transition.

## Climate and energy



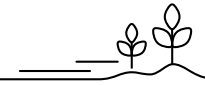
- End all **funding of fossil fuel projects**, including gas, with EU taxpayers' money, by:
  - removing them from the Projects of Common Interest list, the EU budget (MFF), and EU investment banks;
  - ruling out further support for fossil gas projects by revising the Ten-E regulation, and ending their funding from the Connecting Europe Facility.
- Prioritise real **proven solutions** over so-called 'clean gas', carbon capture and storage, clean hydrogen, energy storage, fuel cells and other alternative fuels.
- Reject the **EU Emissions Trading System** as a key instrument for decarbonisation.
- Tackle **energy waste** in buildings to reduce energy consumption and facilitate the transfer to renewables.

## Forests and biodiversity



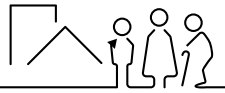
- Start developing a **post-extractive economy**, which preserves biodiversity rather than destroys it, by removing the pressure on ecological systems from the pursuit of endless economic growth and consumption.
- Adopt targets to **cut demand for agrocommodities** that drive deforestation and damage biodiversity, including bioenergy, feed crops, palm oil and soy.
- Reject market-based biodiversity **offsetting schemes**, and so-called 'nature-based solutions' as a means for industry to offset its emissions.

## Food and agriculture



- Improve **workers' conditions** and ensure **fair incomes** for farmers.
- Promote **agroecological principles**, and re-localised distribution and trade.
- Make the **consumption** of regional produce, seasonal and locally-produced food core to a new food system.
- Preserve and ensure **access to land, seeds, water** and other resources for small- scale and sustainable producers.
- Enable different **consumption patterns** by ensuring our food and farming system fosters healthy, nutritious, seasonal, local, culturally appropriate and affordable diets.
- Cut dependence on **fossil-based inputs** such as fertilizers and pesticides.

## Just transition

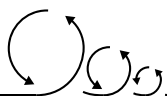


- Have the goal of a **just ecological transition** at its heart, and not merely seek to fuel a new investment cycle to maintain economic growth.
- Create a **just economic system** that operates within planetary boundaries and provides for the social and economic needs of all.
- Take action to limit profit extraction by **private investors** in the transition.
- Prevent **industries** that caused the climate crisis from receiving any Just Transition funds.
- Recognise, and publicly declare, that the pursuit of endless **consumption and growth**, including 'green growth', is incompatible with a Just Transition to a sustainable socio-economic system that operates within Earth's limits.





### Circular economy and resource use



Guarantee that truly **sustainable products**, as well as systems for the reuse, repair, and upgrading of products and packaging, are accessible and affordable for all.

- Develop more local **jobs in reuse and repair**.

### Climate and energy



Decrease **inequality** among people and between regions through an adequately funded Just Transition Fund.

Help impacted **communities and workers** transition into new sectors and jobs, with support from the Just Transition Fund.

- Create decent jobs through a wave of **building renovation**, and tackle energy poverty by ensuring that every home in the EU is energy efficient.

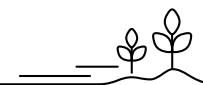
### Forests and biodiversity



Endorse the **Right to Nature** principle, which will help ensure that all communities have access to the well-being benefits of nature.

- Reject a system based on payment for **ecosystem services**, because the financialisation of nature puts private profit before public interest.

### Food and agriculture

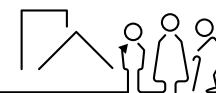


Guarantee fair incomes and **decent working and living conditions** for all those working in the food and farming sector.

Ensure that **nutritious, seasonal, local and culturally appropriate food** is affordable and available for all.

- Make it easier for **consumers** to diversify their diet, reduce their consumption of industrial meat and animal products, and purchase ecologically-produced food from small-scale producers.
- Encourage **local authorities** to support seasonal, local and sustainably-produced food.

### Just transition



Be designed in a way that decreases **inequality**, between regions, and for impacted people and communities.

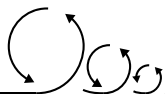
Provide support to **communities and workers** most impacted by the phase out of fossil fuels, to enable them to transition to sustainable sectors and jobs – the burden of the ecological transition must not fall on the poorest parts of society.

- Take an **intersectional and inclusive approach** to the development of policies and measures – involve people with disabilities, minority groups, all genders, youth, the elderly, people on low incomes, etc, to ensure their needs are considered.

## PEOPLE'S SOLUTIONS AND PARTICIPATION

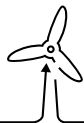


### Circular economy and resource use



- Bring the **Right to Repair** and a **ban on planned obsolescence** into law.
- Provide support for the creation of **more co-operatives** in the package-free retail, reuse and repair sectors.
- Stop supporting and promoting European companies' **false solutions and technologies**, particularly outside of Europe.

### Climate and energy



- Provide sufficient support for **community-owned renewable energy**.
- Respect local communities' decisions to phase-out, and refuse development of, **fossil fuel projects**.
- Exclude fossil fuel companies and lobbyists from decision-making, and resist all forms of their influence, to bring about **Fossil Free Politics**.
- Ensure that there is meaningful **engagement of citizens**, and a recognized and respected role for organized civil society, in the proposed European Climate Pact.
- Place **people and cooperatives** at the heart of a new, more equitable energy system, by ensuring that the renovation wave is publicly-funded and people-led.

### Forests and biodiversity



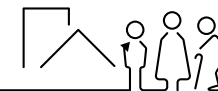
- Involve the public and local communities, as well as indigenous peoples, in the management of protected areas and forests, and promote **community management**.
- Dismantle the power and influence of **damaging industries**, including agribusiness, over decision-making, to prevent the watering down of legislation, policies and actions designed to halt deforestation and biodiversity loss.
- Break up the **monopolies** of transnational corporations in the agri industry.

### Food and agriculture



- Move away from **'techno-fixes'**, such as GMOs or high-tech farming to cut emissions, towards agroecological solutions led by affected and local communities.
- Ensure and strengthen the role of **local and farming communities** in creating solutions and decision-making.
- Limit the influence of **agribusiness**, and dismantle their monopolies.
- Raise people's awareness of the impacts of **animal product consumption** on their own health, on farmers, animals and the environment.

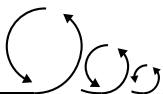
### Just transition



- Ensure **transparency** of investments, both public and private.
- Guarantee the **active participation** of citizens and organized civil society, bringing in voices and solutions from the grassroots.
- Maintain and increase **civic space**, defend freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and the right to protest, and funding and access for civil society organisations to fulfil their watchdog role.
- Limit **corporate lobbying**, and safeguard policy-making from the undue influence of big business – profiting from the status quo puts their interests at odds with a just ecological transition.



### Circular economy and resource use



- End the exportation of **consumerist and capitalist models of production and consumption** – simply bringing them under a ‘circular economy’ umbrella doesn’t fix the problem.
- Ensure that **resource extraction**, particularly outside of Europe for European end-consumption, is reduced to an ecologically viable and socially just level.
- Bind European mining corporations operating abroad by a legal **corporate accountability** framework. This should include human rights due diligence obligations, liability for harm caused, access to remedy for victims, and the ability for host countries to sue companies.

### Climate and energy



- Raise the ambition of the EU's 2050 **net-zero target** in line with the fair shares approach, taking into account Europe's greater capability and responsibility.
- Prioritise the phase out of Europe's **fossil fuel imports**.
- End all **financing for fossil fuel companies** and projects through development aid and overseas investments – including via the EU budget, European Investment Bank and European Central Bank.
- Increase support to countries in the **Global South** that are coping with climate change impacts, through transfer of funds and technology for adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage.
- Pledge that **Europe's level of ambition** will not be conditional on, or watered-down by, the inaction of others.

### Forests and biodiversity



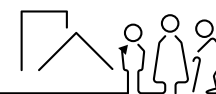
- Reduce the EU's **resource footprints**.
- Provide **support for countries in the Global South to transition** to an economic model that isn't based on destroying their natural resources for export.
- Accept that **restoring biodiversity in the Global South** is not an alternative to reducing carbon emissions – and cannot be used by industry to offset them.
- Recognise, protect and ensure the role and rights of **indigenous peoples** and local communities in defending ecosystems and managing forests – protecting the basic rights needed for this is vital.
- Advance **community-based forest and land governance** as core aims of any EU action on deforestation.

### Food and agriculture



- Move away from global supply chains towards **localised food production**.
- End the EU's **inequitable overconsumption** of resources beyond its borders, in particular of vegetable oils and products of animal origin.
- Embrace **transformative change** from industrial agriculture to agroecology around the world.
- Ensure **trade deals** do not limit governments abilities to keep GMOs out, or to prioritise local food production.

### Just transition



- Redesign **trade and investment policy** to serve sustainable economies, support international agreements on climate and sustainability, and operate transparently and under democratic control.
- Revise trade agreements to ensure the implementation of high **environmental and social standards**, and to eliminate investor protection mechanisms like ISDS, or equivalent.
- Go beyond investment in renewables in Africa and EU Neighbourhood countries, as currently proposed, to enable **transfer of knowledge, resources and technology** for the transition.

## FOR THE PEOPLE — FOR THE PLANET — FOR THE FUTURE

**Friends of the Earth Europe** campaigns for sustainable and just societies and for the protection of the environment. We unite more than 30 national groups with thousands of local groups and are part of the world's largest grassroots environmental network, Friends of the Earth International.



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