

POWER TO THE



PEOPLE

CARE FOR THE



PLANET

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
EUROPE

**DEMANDS
FOR THE 2024
EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT
ELECTIONS**



INTRODUCTION

The next five years will be crucial to humanity. Every single policy decision needs to put people, and our environment and climate, first if we are to bring our societies within sustainable limits. The political direction of the European Union will have historical impact on our joint future. Now is absolutely not the time to slow down the EU legislative framework towards those goals, as some propose.

Bold and urgent action to tackle the climate and ecological emergency needs to be the primary priority of the next European Parliament and European Commission. This action needs to be taken in solidarity with those worst impacted and most vulnerable, and recognising Europe's historical responsibility and greater capacity to act. A green and socially fair transition needs to be achieved this decade. Europe bears much of the responsibility for causing historical climate emissions and must do its fair share to keep global warming below 1.5°C. This means an urgent and just transformation to a fossil free energy system by 2030 and support to countries in the Global South.

The excessive power of corporations is undermining European democracy. Vested interests are the main obstacles to a just and fast green transition. We need to urgently limit the impact of corporate interests on decision makers in Europe, as they hinder the transformation and subsidise polluters and their profits, instead of providing support to people to transition away from fossil fuels.

To dismantle the power of corporations and strengthen people power, a democratic and open society is a prerequisite. In line with the Civil Society for Europe manifesto, we demand an EU where civic space is strengthened, not weakened, and actively supported.

It is time to step up the game. Significantly more effort is needed to bring our socio-economic system within planetary boundaries in time to avert climate and ecological breakdown. We need to move towards 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. The European Green Deal has failed to challenge the economic growth paradigm, leading the EU to continue to extract, produce and consume beyond planetary limits and preventing a socially fair transition.

Friends of the Earth Europe believes that decision-making capable of delivering systemic change, must be based on the following principles for transformation:

1. URGENCY AND SCALE

In the face of climate and ecological breakdown, incremental change will not cut it anymore. Only radical measures – a full-scale transformation of our economic system – will suffice to tackle the multiple crises we face.

2. AN ECONOMY WITHIN EARTH'S LIMITS

It is time for Europe to abandon the fallacy of endless production, consumption, and growth. We cannot achieve sustainability by continuing to promote growth and seeking to mitigate its impacts.

3. EQUITY

A society in which sustainability, equity and solidarity are core values should be the goal of a truly just transition for Europe. It is not enough to reduce symptoms of inequity, while not addressing structural causes. Europe needs to dismantle patriarchy, ableism, racism and other forms of systemic oppression.

4. PEOPLE'S SOLUTIONS AND PARTICIPATION

To protect people and planet, policies must be decided transparently and in the public interest. This will require breaking the stranglehold of corporate interests on our politics, starting with fossil fuel companies.

5. GLOBAL JUSTICE

Europe's model of production and consumption results in massive negative social, environmental, and political impacts globally, particularly in the Global South and former colonized countries. Our solutions to the crises we face must not further negatively impact countries outside Europe. Our response must be in line with Europe's "fair share" – both of resources and action.



THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WILL BE CRUCIAL TO HUMANITY. EVERY SINGLE POLICY DECISION NEEDS TO PUT PEOPLE, AND OUR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE, FIRST IF WE ARE TO BRING OUR SOCIETIES WITHIN SUSTAINABLE LIMITS.



OUR KEY DEMANDS

**1. MOVING BEYOND GROWTH AND ENSURING
ECONOMIC AND RESOURCE JUSTICE**

**2. ENDING FOSSIL GAS, ENERGY POVERTY
AND SECURING REAL ENERGY SOLUTIONS**

**3. TRANSFORMING THE FOOD AND
AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

4. PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE

5. STRENGTHENING PEOPLE POWER

1. MOVING BEYOND GROWTH AND ENSURING ECONOMIC AND RESOURCE JUSTICE

The next European Parliament and Commission needs to overhaul its neoliberal, neocolonial growth-based approach to economics, to one focusing on economic and resource justice, and responding to the multiple and systemic environmental, social, economic, and geopolitical crises we face. The EU needs to downscale its production and consumption to within planetary boundaries, not only to survive but also for Europe to thrive.

Sufficiency, beyond growth policies and trade agreements that are protecting human rights and environment in Europe and globally need a central place on the EU policy agenda.

Within this broader paradigm shift, our specific demands for the next European Parliament and Commission are to:



1 MOVING BEYOND GROWTH AND ENSURING ECONOMIC AND RESOURCE JUSTICE

1. DEVELOP A NEW EU FRAMEWORK ON SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

Set a legal objective and plans for the Union to reach a sustainable level of resource consumption in relation to its biocapacity.

2. DEVELOP “BEYOND GROWTH” EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS:

Constitute permanent structures at the Commission, the Council, the Parliament, to assess beyond growth socio-economic strategies and pathways.

3. ADDRESS THE DEMAND OF CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS:

Ensure the implementation of the the Critical Raw Materials Regulation addresses the demand side, and significantly reduces material and energy demand.

4. STOP EU-MERCOSUR:

Put a final stop to the negotiations on the toxic EU-Mercosur trade agreement.

5. CREATE A JUST TRADE SYSTEM:

Ensure that trade agreements have strong environmental and human rights provisions with enforcement and implementation mechanisms while providing support for their implementation in the Global South. Remove any investor state dispute mechanisms from trade agreements.

6. FREE OUR POLITICS FROM FOSSIL FUELS:

Build a firewall between EU decision makers and fossil fuel lobbyists. Put a stop to meetings, conflicts of interest, partnerships, or collaborations with fossil fuel lobbyists in our democratic EU institutions.

“ THE EU
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7. PREVENT REVOLVING DOORS:

Introduce restrictions on moving from the public sector to the fossil fuel industry or vice-versa.

8. SET GLOBAL RULES FOR BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS:

Contribute to a strong UN Treaty on business and human rights that ensures that companies can be held accountable for human rights violation and that provides affected people access to justice in the home country of a company.



2. ENDING FOSSIL GAS, ENERGY POVERTY AND SECURING REAL ENERGY SOLUTIONS

It is crucial that the next European Parliament and Commission prioritise a just transition to a new energy future. This is necessary to meet the EU's own climate commitments, to safeguard people's right to clean, affordable energy, as well as to counter opposition to the transition. The transition needs to deliver solutions to citizens fast and at scale, prioritising Europe's poorest first, and showing people that a fossil free world, with a reimagined energy system will be better for all. People must have a say over how their energy is produced and priced, and those who have benefited from pollution have to pay for the transition, not ordinary people. People are suffering under the current system: at least 1 in 4 households in the EU, over 50 million individuals, cannot afford to adequately heat, cool or light their homes. We recognise energy poverty is a political choice which calls for a political response.

Our specific demands for the next European Parliament and Commission are to:



2 ENDING FOSSIL GAS, ENERGY POVERTY AND SECURING REAL ENERGY SOLUTIONS

1. ENSURE A PHASEOUT OF FOSSIL FUELS:

Set a clear end date for fossil gas in Europe in the EU's 2040 climate targets.

2. STOP FALSE SOLUTIONS:

Stop dangerous distractions that delay our ability to tackle the climate crisis. Say no to carbon capture storage, to non-renewable hydrogen, and to incorrect or misleading labelling of these projects as “sustainable” or “low-carbon”.

3. RENOVATE DEEPLY AND AT SCALE:

Roll out large scale programmes for subsidised deep renovations to ensure decent, safe and energy efficient homes for all.

4. BAN DISCONNECTION:

Effectively ban disconnections across the EU, including the use of prepayment meters.

5. TAX FOSSIL FUELS:


Put in place a continued windfall tax on the extortionate fossil fuel profits.

6. REDUCE ENERGY DEMAND:

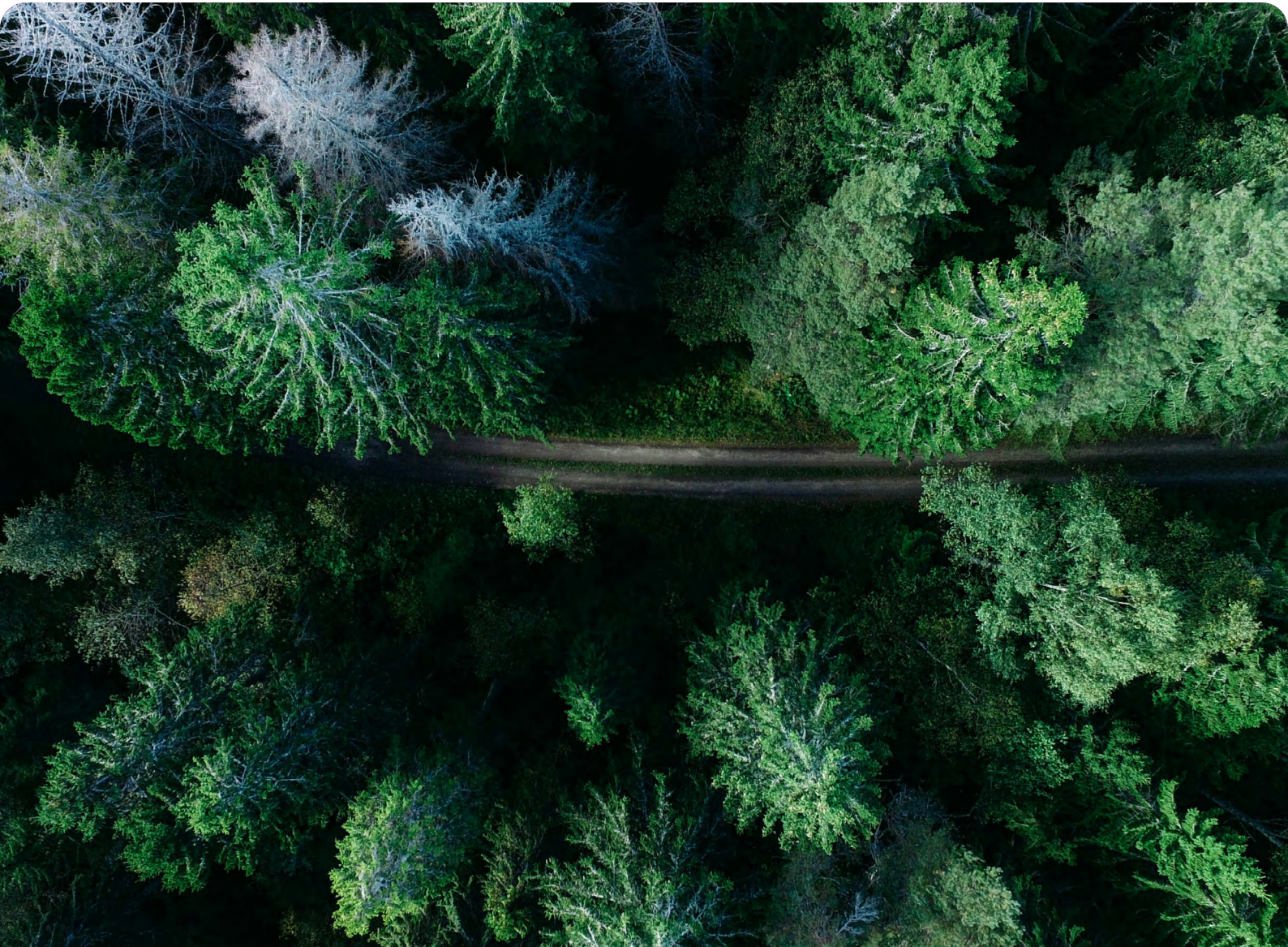
Move towards energy sufficiency and seize opportunities to reduce inequality-driven energy demand while ensuring everyone has the Right to Energy.

7. SUPPORT COMMUNITY ENERGY:

Ensure the implementation of robust enabling and regulatory frameworks for renewable energy communities, the streamlining of administrative procedures and the provision of adequate technical and financial support for the development of citizen-led community initiatives.



“WE RECOGNISE ENERGY POVERTY IS A POLITICAL CHOICE WHICH CALLS FOR A POLITICAL RESPONSE.”



3. TRANSFORMING THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

The next European Parliament and Commission need to move to action and organise a real transition towards sustainable food systems that goes beyond greenwashing initiatives. Progressive environmental legislation in the farming sector has been thwarted and blocked by EU Commission and Parliament in 2023 and 2024 fulfil the wish list of agribusiness. Europe's food and farming sectors need to move to agroecology, through transitioning away from industrial production, establishing shorter food chains and increasing local ownership and fairly reward farmers.

Our specific demand to the next European Parliament and Commission are to turn the Farm2Fork and Biodiversity Strategies into action by putting in place policies that aim to:



3 TRANSFORMING THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

1. REFORM THE CAP:

Make it a key tool to build more localised sustainable food systems based on agroecology, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions from the sector, to protect biodiversity and nature and to ensure lively rural livelihoods. The next CAP should move away from supporting the industrial model of production and ensure a future-proof just transition of the sector.

2. STOP FACTORY FARMING:

Introduce measures at national and EU level to regulate the industrial livestock sector to reduce pollution, deforestation, improve workers' conditions and animal welfare while supporting sustainable ways of breeding livestock.

3. KEEP GMOS REGULATED:

Ensure consumers right to know by keeping transparency for all generations of GMO and safety checked before they can be grown to limit the growing corporate control via patented seeds.

4. SAVE BEES AND FARMERS:

Significantly reduce the use and risks caused by practices that harm climate, biodiversity, and human health, such as pesticides, in a binding way. The EU should adopt as soon as possible a regulation for the reduction of pesticides aligned with the demands of the Save Bees and Farmers ECI.

4. PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE

To reverse the rapid loss of biodiversity, it is necessary for the next European Parliament and Commission to regulate and address the current drivers of ecosystem destruction, and ensure binding regulations for the protection and restoration of nature. We oppose the idea that nature can be used to offset emissions and reject other “nature-based solutions” that promote the commodification and financialisation of nature.

Our specific demands for the next European Parliament and Commission are to:



4 PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE

1. ADDRESS DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS:

Stop intensive agriculture, massive animal feed imports, large infrastructure projects, and overconsumption of natural resources. End harmful subsidies, including from the CAP.

2. USE THE TOOLS WE HAVE:

Avoid watering down and ensure proper implementation of existing laws, including on Natura2000 and the protection of threatened species. Uphold Green Deal commitments and ensure implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy and Global Biodiversity Framework. Ensure the Regulation on deforestation-free products is properly implemented and includes obligations for the financial sector.

3. BUDGET FOR NATURE:

Better align existing EU funds with the needs of nature and increase public funding for nature protection and restoration.

4. STOP THE COMMODIFICATION AND FINANCIALISATION OF NATURE:

Keep all forms of offsetting, including hidden behind so-called nature-based solutions, out of EU policies.



5. STRENGTHENING PEOPLE POWER

Environmental activists are increasingly facing repression, spying, police violence, and intimidating public campaigns (sometimes led by governments). It is crucial that the next European Parliament and Commission works to stop the shrinking of civic space and growing criminalisation of environmental activism in Europe. An open, safe, accessible, and enabling regulatory and political environment is a prerequisite for civil society to thrive and meaningfully play its fundamental role. All restrictions to civic space and barriers to action must be removed, and freedom of association, assembly and expression must be guaranteed at any time in all civic matters, as enshrined in EU and international law.

Our specific demands for the next European Parliament and Commission are to:



5 STRENGTHENING PEOPLE POWER

1. DEVELOP A CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY:

Strengthen civil society organisations (CSOs), environmental activists, and human rights defenders and protect them from attacks and smear campaigns.

2. PROTECT THE PROTECTORS:

Protect civil society staff and volunteers, human rights and environmental activists and defenders, as well as the communities they represent, from all forms of discrimination, and from judicial or other forms of harassment, violence, or ill-treatment. Special attention should be placed on minorities, marginalised groups and those who defend them, who are more frequently under attack.

3. FUND PEOPLE POWER:

Guarantee access to multi-annual, consistent, and flexible structural funding for CSOs to respond to operational needs and ensure stability, long-term planning, and independence.



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