

## **2024 EU Overshoot Day: Appeal to EU leaders to prioritise a fair and inclusive green transition in the next political mandate**

Dear Heads of State and Government,  
Dear President von der Leyen, President Metsola and President Michel,  
Dear Members of the European Parliament,

**Today, 3 May 2024, the EU has used up nature's budget for the entire year.**

**With just one month until the EU elections, we appeal to you to make a top political priority of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution given the devastating impacts and growing intensity and frequency of climate-related events for ecosystems, health, economies, social justice and cohesion.**

**Our societies and economies are supported by what nature provides** – food, water, fibre, timber, carbon absorption, and land to build infrastructure. The EU accounts for less than 6% of the world population but uses between 70% and 97% of the 'safe operating space' available for the whole world. We would need 3 planets to satisfy our demand if everyone on Earth lived like Europeans. This is not only unsustainable, it is irresponsible.

The consequences of our ecological overshoot include global deforestation, biodiversity loss, collapse of fish stocks, water scarcity and pollution, soil erosion, air pollution, and climate change, leading to more frequent extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and wildfires. This concerns us all, as Europe is set to suffer temperature increases double that of other continents due to climate change. And risks linked to resource exploitation such as violence, poverty and poor governance put global peace and security at risk.

**In the coming months, you have the momentous opportunity and responsibility to turn the tide.** The EU launched the European Green Deal in 2019. While it is still far removed from its initial promise, the prioritisation of a 'climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe' represented a remarkable shift in policy making. However, in recent months, politicians across Europe have begun breaking their promises in favour of short-term interests of those that lobby hardest, further undermining the credibility of the EU. Scrapping existing environmental safeguards, or putting new green laws on hold will only bring our nature closer to the brink of collapse, along with our economies.

**We urge you to act before it is too late. Current and future generations need you to step up your political commitment to work towards a climate-neutral, zero-pollution and nature-positive economy, that protects citizens and our industries. You can do this by committing to:**

- **Deepen and accelerate the Green Deal, by fully implementing recently agreed goals and addressing ambition gaps on nature, climate as well as pollution** by further establishing robust, legally binding targets and new ambitious protection standards based on the latest science available. Only with continued efforts can Europe safeguard our health, nature, safety and economy and create crucial links between those.

- **Radically increase public climate, environment and social investments**, while aligning all public and private investments with the objectives of the green transition and ensure big polluters are fully held accountable. Only then, will Europe be able to boost its competitive sustainability.
- **Strengthen EU governance, democracy and the effective participation of civil society**. The role of citizens at national and EU levels needs to be strengthened, and equal access to decision-makers as well as justice across Europe needs to be ensured.

**These actions are essential to unlock the societal and industrial benefits of a well-executed green and fair transition.** Already today, citizens are benefiting from the transition. In 2023, renewables used for our electricity production rose to a record 44% share - increasing our energy independence and stabilising soaring energy bills. In 19 Member States, electric cars are already cheaper than a petrol or diesel equivalent. The EU has been working on making rail travel cheaper, cleaner and easier, with notable successes. As a result of EU laws, air quality in cities and industrial areas has started to improve, saving lives and preventing illnesses. And the EU has seen substantial growth in green jobs, spanning various competencies and accommodating diverse skill levels, totalling 5.1 million jobs in 2020.

In the coming months, you will have the opportunity to set a political agenda that prioritises people and the planet, thereby creating even more benefits. Recent and forthcoming reports, such as the one on the future of the EU single market, highlight the political imperative to act. We urge you to respect the broad majority of EU citizens who continue to believe that climate, health and social issues should be top priorities.

Your sincerely