

25 June 2024

Dear EU and member state leaders, ministers, and parliamentarians,

Time to prioritise needs of people and the environment

As member state and European leaders gather to decide on the strategic agenda of the EU for the coming five years, we need real political solutions to the multiple crises we are facing. That is why we are writing to urge you to abandon the 'Industrial Deal' agenda promoted by business associations which would be disastrous for people and the environment.

Big polluting corporations led by the chemicals lobby group CEFIC have launched a plan for an EU '[Industrial Deal](#)' also called the 'Antwerp Declaration', and further initiatives by [BusinessEurope](#) and the [European Round Table for Industry](#) echo this approach. They don't propose any reduction in energy consumption or toxic pollution; instead what these corporate interests demand includes:

- **Getting access to more public money** to boost their interests despite the needs of people and planet. This includes massive public funds at EU and national level to de-risk investments in infrastructure and 'net-zero' technologies. These include carbon capture and hydrogen which will [lock-in](#) further disastrous fossil fuel use and which, alongside more nuclear power, will effectively enable business-as-usual for Europe's biggest polluters.
- **Far-reaching and speedy deregulation** under the guise of 'competitiveness' and 'innovation' including the rolling back of existing social and green rules, and undermining the development and implementation of effective regulations in the future. Boosting the 'better regulation' agenda will exacerbate the existing prioritisation of competitiveness and economic factors in law-making.
- **'Completing' the single market** with stronger enforcement to enable corporations and the European Commission to [block](#) much needed bold plans for a social and green transition at the national and municipal levels. Remarkably, initiatives which promote a socially just ecological transition, public services, or collective labour law are not exempt from legal challenges under single market rules.
- **More 'free trade' and other measures**, including what EU strategists call 'hard power', to secure ever more raw materials and energy supplies. This will see big corporations [extracting resources](#) from global south countries which will have to deal with the social and environmental destruction and the lost opportunity to use the resources for their own development.
- **A more [business-friendly](#) way of making EU decisions** through the use of forums and dialogues with industry-biased membership and no public accountability mechanisms.

We urge EU and member state leaders to reject these unsustainable industry projects, put forward by those with the deepest pockets and the smoothest public relations machines.

After all the industry promotion of this agenda comes after the same lobbies successfully sabotaged a range of important legislative proposals that were desperately needed to protect nature, biodiversity, and public health, including the [Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability](#) and the [Farm to Fork](#) ambitions.

And this corporate lobby campaign comes at a time when we are facing multiple crises that

hit communities and the very environment we live in and depend on. We face an ecological [crisis](#) of unknown proportions, from climate disaster to species extinction, which is already impacting Europeans' daily lives, threatening our energy and food security, ecosystems, infrastructure, water resources, financial stability, and health.

Meanwhile the [cost of living crisis](#) has seen basic living costs like food, housing, and utilities increase massively in comparison to wages for millions of Europeans, driven by corporate profiteering, particularly by the fossil fuel and military industries, exacerbating poverty and inequality across the continent. To add insult to injury, 'economic governance' policies including [austerity](#) are being restarted, harming social standards and the climate transition, and undermining public services in member states. Not properly addressing issues of poverty, inequality, and poor public services are important (but preventable) drivers of the growth of extreme-right groups in various member states.

The EU and member states should have an agenda based on prioritising the needs of people and the environment. This should include:

- **Redistributing wealth** to secure well-being: investing in public services, creating a meaningful [Just Transition](#) for all workers, especially those in polluting industries, and abandoning austerity policies. People at the impoverished end of the economy should not have to pay for the urgently required ecological transition.
- **Reshaping the EU and member state economies** towards systemic change including [decent work](#), fairness, safe products that do not contain hazardous substances, and real sustainability. The so-called 'Industrial Deal' agenda should be dropped. Instead an EU industrial strategy must be public interest-based in order to deliver a really fair and sustainable transition that works for local communities.
- **Adopting strong laws to protect people and the planet**, to achieve the phaseout of fossil fuels, real zero greenhouse gas emissions, and zero pollution. The proper application of the polluter pays (and repairs) and precautionary principles will help to ensure accountability for the environmental crises and a stronger approach to public interest law-making.
- Learning from the approach adopted towards the tobacco industry, we need **new rules to protect decision-making from corporate interference**. A recent [WHO report](#) on health-harming products in the EU illustrated how "a small number of transnational corporations ... wield significant power over the political and legal contexts in which they operate, and obstruct public interest regulations which could impact their profit margins." It is vital that industry is no longer able to weaken and defeat legislation which aims to protect people and the planet.

We urge you to put this agenda at the centre of the EU programme for 2024-29 and beyond. We would be pleased to have the opportunity to discuss these issues with you in person.

Yours faithfully,

350.org

Academia Cidadã

Afrikagrupperna (Sweden)

AICED (Appui aux Initiatives Communaires de Conservation de l'Environnement et de Développement Durable (RDCongo))

AlgorithmWatch

Amigas de la Tierra - Friends of the Earth Spain

Anders HandelIn (Austria)

Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE)
Arnika
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development
Attac Austria
ATTAC Spain
BankTrack
BeeLife European Beekeeping Coordination
Biofuelwatch, Europe/USA
Broederlijk Delen
Căși sociale ACUM!/Social housing NOW!
Center for International Environmental Law
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
Climate Action Campaign at the Humboldt UU Fellowship
Climaxi
CNE CSC Belgian trade union in health social and services
Comite Schone Lucht | Clean Air Committee NL
Coordination gegen BAYER-Gefahren
Corporate Europe Observatory
DEMETER BE
Demeterforbundet Danmark
Deutsche Umwelthilfe
Diálogo 2000-Jubileo Sur Argentina
Earth Trek (Croatia)
Eco Hvar, Croatia
Ecologistas en Acción (Spain)
EDEN center Albania
Ekō
EnvMed - European Network for Environmental Medicine
Estonian Green Movement
Fair Resource Foundation
Fairwatch (Italy)
Fern
Food & Water Action Europe
foodwatch
Foreningen for Biodynamisk Jordbrug
Fridays for Future Romania
Frie Bønder – Levende Land
Friends of the Earth Europe
Friends of the Earth Finland / Maan ystävät ry
Frøsamlerne Danmark
Fundacja Strefa Zieleni, Poland
GAIA - Grupo de Acção e Intervenção Ambiental
Gallifrey Foundation, Switzerland
Générations Futures
GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria
Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power, and Stop Impunity
Global Witness

Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet (GASP)
Green Impact
Grøn Hverdag, Denmark
Hamraah Foundation
Health and Environment Justice Support (HEJSupport)
Herenboeren Nederland
Hogar sin Tóxicos (Spain)
Innovation pour le Développement et Protection de l'Environnement
Institute for Sustainable Development Foundation (Poland)
International Office, Clean Clothes Campaign
ISDE, International Society of Doctors for Environment (Italy)
La Grande Puissance de Dieu
Landsforeningen Praktisk Økologi - Danish Association for Practical Ecology
Leefmilieu
Les Amis de la Terre France (FoE France)
Les Amis de la Terre-Belgique asbl
LobbyControl
Momentum Institute - The Think Tank for the Many (Austria)
Muchi Children's Home
Nature et Progrès Belgique
Naturefriends Greece
NOAH - Friends of the Earth Denmark
Observatoire du principe pollueur-payeur
Ocean. Now!
OGM dangers
Organic Aquaculture - Denmark
Päästame Eesti Metsad (Save Estonia's Forests)
Parents For Future Global
Permakultur Danmark, Denmark
Pesticide Action Network Europe
Pesticide Action Network Germany
Plastic Change
Plastic Soup Foundation
Plataforma Transgenicos Fora
POLLINIS
Polska Zielona Sieć
PowerShift
Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland
Protect The Forest Sweden
ReCommon
Red de Acción sobre Plaguicidas y Alternativas en México (RAPAM) A.C.
SAFE Food Advocacy Europe
Sahita Institute, Indonesia
Schola Campesina Aps
Secrets Toxiques
Solidagro (Belgium)
SOMO - Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations
Stichting Zaadgoed

Stowarzyszenie Ekologiczne EKO-UNIA, Poland
SÜDWIND Institut (Germany)
The Lifescape Project
The Scarab Trust
Think Tank (Belgium)
Transnational Institute
TROCA - Plataforma por um Comércio Internacional Justo
UK Hazards Campaign
urgewald
Vitale Rassen (Belgium)
WomanHealth Philippines
Women Engage for a Common Future - WECF International
Xnet, Institute for Democratic Digitalisation (Spain)
Young Friends of the Treaty (YouFT)
Zelena akcija / FoE Croatia
ZERO - Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System
Zukunftskonvent Germany

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