



WWF

SUMMARY

EU

2018

WWF CALL FOR ACTION

A EUROPEAN SUSTAINABILITY PACT

FOR A SAFER, MORE COMPETITIVE
AND RESPONSIBLE EU

WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organisations, with over five million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

The European Policy Office contributes to the achievement of WWF's global mission by leading the WWF network to shape EU policies impacting on the European and global environment.

To find out more about WWF's work around the EU elections, please visit:

http://wwf.eu/what_we_do/eu_affairs/elections

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**A THRIVING FUTURE FOR EUROPE AND ITS
CITIZENS IS NOT POSSIBLE ON A DEPLETED
PLANET. RISING SEA LEVELS, EXTREME
WEATHER EVENTS, CONFLICTS OVER EVER
SCARCER NATURAL RESOURCES AND
HEALTH CONCERNS LINKED TO POLLUTION
ALL POSE CHALLENGES TO THE EU'S
POLITICAL AGENDA. ONLY INTEGRATED
SOLUTIONS WILL BE ABLE TO CREATE A
SAFER, MORE COMPETITIVE AND GLOBALLY
RELEVANT EUROPE. THE EU ELECTIONS
OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY TO FORMULATE A
COHERENT RESPONSE.**

EUROPE

IS AT A CROSSROADS

Four goals to be achieved as part of a European Sustainability Pact

- Goal 1** Improve European and global safety and wellbeing by combatting climate change and environmental degradation
- Goal 2** Increase the competitiveness and job potential of European industries by boosting investments in the sustainable blue and green sectors which will be at the heart of tomorrow's economy
- Goal 3** Strengthen Europe's international position and work towards its strategic independence by setting and implementing ambitious EU sustainable standards and taking responsibility for our footprint globally
- Goal 4** Improve EU governance in the European Parliament and Commission to support the sustainable transition to a safer, more competitive and responsible EU

The results of the upcoming European Union (EU) parliamentary elections and the response to those results from national and European political representatives are likely to affect how citizens look back at this moment a decade from now, in 2030.

With this call for action, WWF – with over 3.2 million supporters in Europe – wants to contribute to political representatives' considerations on what future to shape for the EU and its population. **Through our call to introduce a European Sustainability Pact we wish for candidates and future EU leaders to put people's wellbeing in a thriving environment at the centre of their thinking.** Such a political pact would consist of a set of goals and actions on climate change, nature protection and sustainable development to be taken in the next five years. These would bring more security, improved health and more jobs to Europeans and increase Europe's economic competitiveness, while at the same time preserving a strong and respected Europe globally, able to influence standards relating to globalisation. These actions and commitments on climate change, nature protection and sustainable development should be endorsed in the wake of the EU elections through declarations by the European Parliament, European Commission and European Council.

Large swathes of people in Europe are concerned about security and unemployment, but citizens are also worried about the increasing impact of climate change and environmental degradation – challenges that are closely linked to the future stability and security of our societies. Delivering the benefits that will be generated by tackling climate change and halting environmental degradation is a precondition for decision-makers to create a truly stable and more secure Europe, increase its influence on the global stage and promote long-term job creation and economic competitiveness for everyone.

To bring about Europe's sustainable transition, citizens need political leaders with vision and determination, able to break away from status quo thinking and business as usual policy responses. Failing that, the EU risks losing its relevance in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world battling with the threats posed by climate change, environmental degradation and nature loss.



GOAL 1

Improve European and global safety and wellbeing by combatting climate change and environmental degradation

Combatting climate change and environmental degradation are fundamental actions that need to be taken to improve European and global security and wellbeing.

The effects of climate change and nature loss can be felt all over the world. Europe is no exception. It can take obvious forms such as the recent droughts resulting in dramatic crop losses across Europe or the devastating fires that have struck Portugal, Greece and Sweden in the last two years. The impact on our personal health and security can also be more subtle and even more harmful. Coal emissions, for instance, produced by industries still benefitting from public funding, are responsible for over 20,000 premature deaths in Europe every year. There is also a growing use of toxic pesticides, partly to compensate for soil depletion, which is leading to mounting health issues within the farming community.

Elsewhere in the world, the impacts of climate change and nature loss are also affecting people's livelihoods, causing more and more conflicts over scarce resources. In this respect, climate change and environmental degradation are seen by security experts and the Pentagon as "threat-multipliers", exacerbating situations that are already fragile. They are also a proven push factor for internal and international migration – potentially leading to around 200 million climate change migrants globally by 2050. This volatile international context has immediate effects in Europe, fuelling tensions and lack of cohesion between EU member states.

THERE ARE
MORE THAN
430,000
PREMATURE DEATHS
EACH YEAR IN
EUROPE DUE TO
AIR POLLUTION
AND CHEMICAL
PRODUCTS

A healthy environment can help mitigate the many challenges that EU citizens and the world are facing today. A healthy planet is the bedrock of our socioeconomic wellbeing and a prerequisite to peace and security for the EU and the world. There is no enduring security or stability without sustainability.

In 2015, world leaders adopted the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change – the best tool available to tackle climate change and its damaging consequences. The current commitments remain insufficient, however, as they will lead to a warming of over 3°C by the end of the century. EU leaders and political representatives have not yet taken the appropriate actions to live up to their commitments. In order to respect the Paris Agreement, the EU is in need of a long-term strategy towards net zero emissions by 2040, with clear intermediate steps towards a fully renewable and energy efficient system. There will be a similar opportunity to make a strong global commitment towards halting and reversing the loss of nature in 2020. Following a series of international meetings hosted in the EU, world leaders will come together at the end of 2020 in Beijing to adopt a new framework – a global deal – for the protection of nature and people up to 2030.

The EU should take leadership in these global talks throughout 2020 as well as in the ensuing implementation. Strong EU action on both climate change and natural degradation would lead to an improvement in European and global security and wellbeing.

WWF calls on EU election candidates and political leaders to recognise that climate change and environmental degradation pose significant threats to our security and competitiveness and that increased actions must be taken as a matter of urgency to halt and reverse these trends. ■

NEXT STEPS

- Fully implement the Paris Agreement and limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, in particular by developing and implementing a legislative framework to achieve zero net emissions within the EU by 2040 and a just transition towards a fully renewable and efficient energy system
- Fully implement the existing EU legal environmental framework and adopt, in 2020, in the context of the UN Convention for Biological Diversity, a global deal for nature and people to halt and reverse the loss of nature throughout the world by 2030



GOAL 2

Increase the competitiveness and job potential of European industries by boosting investments in the sustainable blue and green sectors which will be at the heart of tomorrow's economy

Even though Europe has started to recover from the economic crisis, the EU's position in the world economy is suffering. Faster growing and emerging economies are competing against the EU, requiring smart and sustainable investment strategies in tomorrow's economic sectors if the EU is to maintain its global relevance.

Green economies are better able to withstand economic shocks. Between 2000 and 2015, the growth rate of green jobs was seven times higher than that for the rest of the economy. Over nine million Europeans work in the clean energy sector today, and this number is expected to double by 2030. Developing a more circular economy, could result in overall benefits of €1.8 trillion by 2030 (twice the benefits expected under the business as usual scenario) and could, for instance, help solve environmental challenges, such as the pollution generated by plastics.

In spite of this, the EU's reduced incentives and investments in the sustainable economy have led to slowed down job creation and weakened competitiveness in key sectors of tomorrow's economy, such as renewable energy and sustainable transport. In the meantime, other regions have stepped up and taken the lead away from the EU in areas such as the production of solar panels, with



China replacing the EU as the world's top producer, and European carmakers now investing seven times more in electric vehicle production in China than at home.

To retain a leading position, the EU must change its course now. It is by taking action internally that the EU will unlock its potential to become a world class sustainable economy. It will require the completion of the sustainable reform of the EU finance sector for companies and financial institutions to disclose risks related to climate change, nature loss and wider sustainability impacts. In line with the European Commission's Sustainable Finance Action Plan, the EU must also swiftly develop European standards for green bonds and labels, building on an EU sustainability taxonomy. This will ensure that private investments are not fuelling climate change and environmental degradation and are instead boosting sustainable economic development. This initiative, launched under the Juncker Commission, needs to be given more means and attention in order to succeed. The EU budget will also need to be coherent with this ambition by allocating at least 50% of its public investments towards the sustainable blue and green economies and ensuring the overall budget is in line with the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement.

The EU's role will be to lead the way and to ensure a coherent implementation of environmental legislation across EU member states. This is particularly important in the fisheries sector, where EU policies to ensure the long-term sustainability of our oceans are crucial, but could be improved both in their scope and implementation.

The agricultural sector could become the backbone of Europe's green economy, but for that it will need to undergo a significant overhaul. The current agricultural model is vulnerable to economic shocks and extreme weather events that are becoming more frequent due to climate change and natural degradation. Despite the fact that countries pump billions of euro annually into the sector, jobs continue to decline in number. Countries such as Germany were forced to provide an additional 340 million euro to cover the harvest losses due to the droughts in 2018 – showing the huge economic impact of the extreme weather events. The sector also generates enormous environmental costs. Outdated agricultural methods subsidised by the EU are jeopardising our natural resources and affecting our capacities to produce food in the future. The transition to more sustainable models will make

THE EU WILL
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LINE WITH THE
1.5°C
TARGET
OF THE PARIS
AGREEMENT





the sector more resilient, enhance Europe's food sovereignty and improve farmers' health. Such a transition would also be the smartest choice economically as studies show a steadily growing appetite among consumers for products made in the EU using sustainable food and agricultural methods. In other terms, we should invest in an agriculture that we are proud of, which drives more revenues for farmers, protects them from erratic changes to the marketplace and transforms their practices into sustainable and resilient ones.

WWF calls on the next generation of EU leaders and politicians to encourage and step up investments in sustainable sectors and to continue to improve environmental standards by passing and implementing the necessary legislation. Otherwise, Europe will quickly lose its global economic status in key sustainable blue and green sectors. ■



NEXT STEPS

- Make the EU a world class sustainable economy by completing the sustainable reform of the finance sector launched under the Juncker Commission in order to channel investments into the green economy, in particular by adopting legislation requiring companies and financial institutions to disclose climate change risks to financial consumers
- Adopt and implement an EU budget of which at least 50% is invested in the green and sustainable blue economies, in line with the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement, and of which the remainder of expenditure should not further exacerbate climate change and environmental degradation
- Adopt and implement an EU Common Agricultural Policy which supports farmers in the transition towards fully sustainable and competitive food and agricultural systems
- Deliver a sustainable blue economy by fully implementing European policies designed to manage the use of the seas and the protection of marine wildlife and habitats, as well as leading the UN in establishing a Global Ocean Treaty

GOAL 3

Strengthen Europe's international position and work towards its strategic independence by setting and implementing ambitious EU sustainable standards and taking responsibility for our footprint globally

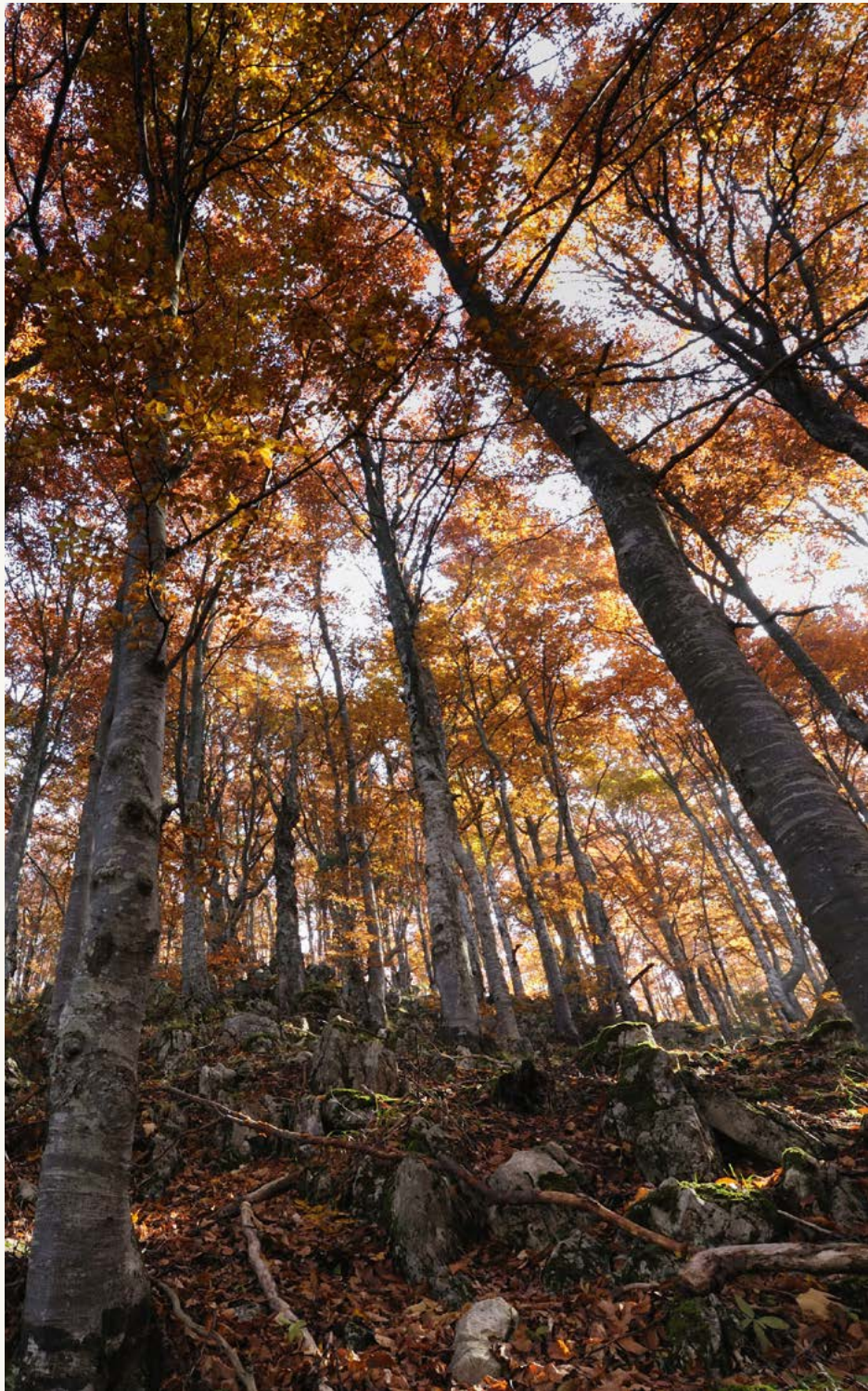
The EU is a major global player. Its global impact can be positive, for instance when the EU leads by example by exporting high environmental standards to partner countries – provided that its trade agreements do not weaken environmental standards. By being a global standard-setter, the EU's advantage is twofold. On the one hand it can influence the path of globalisation by setting up qualified access to its internal market and obliging non-EU companies to comply with its standards. On the other hand it increases its global influence by enabling its companies to benefit from a first mover advantage in new markets. The EU chemicals legislation framework (REACH) has, for instance, proven that non-EU countries are willing to adapt supply chains and even their own national standards in order to trade with Europe.

Unfortunately, our impact can also be negative. The EU's consumption habits are not sustainable and our current economic and agricultural models are insufficient. As a result, our global footprint is far from being exemplary. The EU is still a major contributor to global deforestation by importing products and commodities that drive large scale clearing of land. The EU is also heavily reliant on third countries for key resources such as energy provision, making us vulnerable to their capacity or willingness to provide us with this resource. For example, a third of the EU's fossil fuel imports originate from Russia, contributing to our commercial deficit and geopolitical weakness, while the EU could instead make better investments to boost its energy independence. The International Energy Agency estimates that policies consistent with limiting climate warming to 2°C could cut the EU's fossil fuel import bill by 46%, or €275 billion a year, by 2035.



THE EU IS
THE LARGEST
CONTRIBUTOR
TO GLOBAL
DEFORESTATION
BY IMPORTING
PRODUCTS AND
COMMODITIES
THAT DRIVE
**LARGE
SCALE**
CLEARING
OF LAND

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The status quo can therefore no longer be accepted. The EU needs to position itself as a global leader in promoting sustainable standards and needs to become less reliant on others. The starting point should be to take responsibility within the EU and to reverse our global impact on climate change and environmental degradation. As a first step to be credible in that position, action should be taken to stop imported deforestation.

On the global stage, the EU has been a crucial actor in the adoption of global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But the 17 goals to be reached by 2030 require appropriate actions. With no clear implementation plan and no means to monitor its implementation, the EU is not acting in line with the leadership position that it took when adopting the SDGs in 2015 – thus damaging our global credibility. The EU needs to take responsibility for its footprint, meaning that adequate instruments must be in place to ensure that EU actions in and outside the EU contribute towards halting and reversing climate change and nature deterioration.

WWF calls on future EU leaders to translate these international commitments into concrete actions and to take leadership in international fora to develop measures to reverse the effects of climate change and nature deterioration, in particular through imported deforestation. ■

NEXT STEPS

- **Adopt and implement an overarching EU strategy to demonstrate global leadership in translating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into all EU policies and hence develop ambitious sustainable standards in key economic and high impact sectors**
- **Invest in our strategic independence by increasing our resource efficiency and develop political measures to address the EU's impact beyond its borders, in particular through the development of an action plan on imported deforestation and forest degradation**

GOAL 4

Improve EU governance in the European Parliament and Commission to support the sustainable transition to a safer, more competitive and responsible EU

Climate change and environmental degradation have an impact on all the aspects of our daily lives. It is therefore logical that the solution to halting and reversing them must be streamlined across all policy areas and decision-making processes. At the EU level, the current governance systems in the European Parliament and Commission are not adapted to this new approach. Climate change and the loss of natural resources have often not been treated as a priority matter by the Juncker Commission and the European Parliament despite the clear economic and social benefits that combatting climate change and halting environmental degradation deliver.

To achieve long-lasting results in relation to the current security and economic challenges faced by the EU, the EU must ensure responsibility and accountability.

Responsibility will ensure coherent and high impact EU action on climate change and nature loss. The next European Commission needs a dedicated Vice-President whose mandate encompasses the global fight against climate change and environmental degradation



NEXT STEPS

- **Appoint a European Commission Vice-President for Climate Action and Natural Resources who is responsible for Europe's sustainable transition**
- **Respect EU law by guaranteeing fundamental rights and walking the talk on Rule of Law**
- **Evaluate and revise the European Parliament's working methods to boost sustainable blue and green economy developments and foster sustainable development**

and ensures that all actions and legislation put forward by the Commission are coherent with this priority. The European Parliament must also avoid thinking in silos and ensure that environmental concerns are taken into account in every policy area.

Accountability will make sure that all EU member states are in line with high environmental standards that they have committed to and that they ensure that these rules are respected in their national territory – this is the basic principle behind the rule of law. EU leaders must send a clear message that environmental crimes do not pay. In this context, the added value of civil society must be recognised and a clear halt must be called to restrictive laws and tactics limiting the operations of civil society organisations. Civil society organisations act in the public interest and are a valuable partner in providing subject matter expertise, based on first-hand experience, to policy-makers.

WWF calls on future EU leaders to take the necessary steps to ensure that these concerns are taken into account along the decision-making process and that they are effectively enforced once adopted. ■

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WWF IN EUROPE

100%
RECYCLED



27 countries

WWF is present in
27 countries

80%

Up to 80% of national
environmental legislation is
decided by the EU



+6M

WWF has over 6 million followers
on social media

3.2+ Million

WWF has over 3.2 million
supporters



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and
to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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