

TO: President Juncker, President Tusk, President Schulz, Prime Minister Rutte

RE: State of the European Union after Brexit: time for a new direction

Brussels, 27 June 2016

Dear President Juncker, President Schulz, President Tusk, Prime Minister Rutte,

Like many committed to the vision of a strong well-integrated Europe, we have been shocked and saddened by the fact that 52% of UK voters who turned out to vote in the recent referendum expressed the wish for their country to leave the European Union. This is a significant blow not just for the EU but more importantly for the values that it represents: openness, inclusiveness, tolerance, respect and commitment to sustainability.

In the coming days, weeks and months, a debate will take place on the most important question facing the EU: how do we live up to these values and ensure that the policies, structures and institutions that were created to uphold them can do so effectively in the face of fear, alienation and misinformation?

As ten of the leading environmental networks active at European level, with a collective membership of over 20 million citizens, of whom a significant number live in the UK, we will certainly need to become better in making the case for the values and benefits EU policies have brought for its citizens' health and wellbeing. This includes cleaner air, water and beaches, thriving wildlife, safer substances and green energy, to name but a few. These benefits should be communicated loud and clear and all the time, not only in the face of an imminent UK departure from the Union.

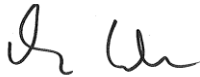
At the same time, the EU needs to now embark on an agenda of transformational change, one that puts the interests of people and planet first in everything that it does, guided by the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris climate deal. Such an inspirational and transformational agenda should be given shape through a change in political emphasis and direction, supported by improved accountability of the EU institutions. That the EU's current focus on less regulation has failed to turn "leavers" into "remainers" should not come as a surprise. It was never clear why there should be fewer rules, and for whom. The desire to deregulate originates from vested interests, exactly those entities that have gained most from the EU's internal market and many of whom never wanted a Brexit in the first place.

Now more than ever, it is crucial for the EU to show it is united, not paralysed, and remains willing and able to act for the benefit of its citizens and their natural environment. The EU remains uniquely placed to lead in tackling the global challenges of climate change, the depletion of natural resources, the collapse of ecosystems and disappearance of wildlife. It is capable of solving an environmental and

health crisis by adopting and enforcing ambitious policies that can save and improve the lives of millions, within Europe and beyond.

We welcome your willingness to engage in a new reflection on the future direction of Europe starting this week and stand ready to play our part in contributing to the discussion in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Wates

EEB Secretary General and current Chair of the Green 10

On behalf of Green10 Directors

Angelo Caserta, Regional Director – Birdlife Europe

Wendel Trio, Director – Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe

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