

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

RE: Open letter - Green 10 priorities for Bratislava Informal Summit

Brussels, 30th August 2016

Dear President Tusk, President Juncker, President Schulz and Prime Minister Fico,

In a few weeks EU-27 leaders will gather in Bratislava for an informal summit to discuss the way forward following the UK's vote to leave the EU. With this letter we would like to share with you the Green 10 priorities for this debate and the direction we believe the EU should now take.

In our previous letter reacting to the UK referendum vote, we had set out our view that **the EU needs to now embark on an agenda of transformational change, one that puts the health and 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.** In order to achieve this, we now need an overarching EU implementation strategy for the 2030 Agenda, based on the 17 goals, targets and indicators, and developed in an open and participatory process.

The EU is at a crossroads. It can either continue on the current path of deregulation and 'less Europe' – a path which has clearly failed to convince citizens both in the UK and across the Union – or it can embark on something new, answering to the needs and aspirations of European citizens. On this new path, instead of focussing on promoting globalisation, the EU would direct its efforts towards managing its impacts on our planet and ensuring that all its citizens can live a good life, well within the planetary boundaries.

Successive opinion polls have shown that the **environment consistently ranks high among the public's concerns and that there is broad support for more action on the environment at EU level.**¹ The UK referendum result should thus give added impetus for the EU to increase its efforts to address environmental challenges. Moving in the direction of 'less Europe' and returning powers to national governments as some have advocated, if applied in the area of environmental policy, could actually undermine one of the EU's recognised success stories.

Tackling the global challenges of climate change, the depletion of natural resources, the collapse of ecosystems and disappearance of wildlife and the protection of people's health is best done together, rather than in isolation. Policies to tackle these challenges must be guided by a long-term view of sustainability rather than serving short-term interests through the setting of cost-reduction targets or by making the elimination of trade barriers an overriding interest.

Secondly, the EU needs to remember the fundamental rights and the rule of law it was founded on. **Legislation to protect workers, citizens and the environment has drastically improved the standards of living in Europe,** and this 'safety net' needs to be strengthened, not weakened. Moreover, if the EU fails to act collectively on issues such as the environment through the adoption and enforcement of legislation,

¹ A [Eurobarometer report](#) published on 1 July 2016 showed that 67% of those canvassed want to see more action at EU level on the environment.

Member States will act individually leading to a patchwork of national rules and regulations suited neither for common market nor pan-European environmental challenges.

Thirdly, in a number of policy areas, important decisions are forthcoming which represent an **opportunity to demonstrate the political will to take on board the lessons learned from the UK referendum:**

- As regards a pending decision on whether or not to ratify the **CETA trade agreement** with Canada and whether this should apply provisionally or not, EU leaders need to show that they are listening to the record number of EU citizens who expressed their opposition to this. Similarly, the EU needs to **discontinue negotiations with the US on TTIP, unless an entirely different approach is taken.**
- The forthcoming review of the EU budget enables you to present a **new budget that truly reflects a political re-orientation towards sustainable development.** Central to such a new budget of results should be a **deep and rigorous overhaul of one of the EU's oldest and most controversial policies, the Common Agricultural Policy,** starting by submitting it to a Fitness Check.
- EU leaders further need to demonstrate a willingness to **increase ambitions when it comes to solving climate change through a new more ambitious set of greenhouse gas, renewable energy and energy saving targets for 2030,** underpinned by a solid, legally enforceable system of governance.

Finally as regards the future relationship with the UK, the EU must insist on the full respect for and participation in the EU's environmental acquis, both existing and future, as a condition for full access to the single market.

Yours sincerely,

Magda Stoczkiewicz
Director, Friends of the Earth Europe

On behalf of the Green 10 EU Directors:

Angelo Caserta, Regional Director- BirdLife Europe
Mark Fodor, Executive Director – CEE Bankwatch Network
Wendel Trio, Director – Climate Action Network Europe
Jeremy Wates, Secretary General – European Environmental Bureau
Magda Stoczkiewicz, Director – Friends of the Earth Europe
Jorgo Riss, Director – Greenpeace European Unit
Genon K. Jensen, Executive Director – Health & Environment Alliance
Andrea Lichtenecker, Executive Director- Naturefriends International
Jos Dings, Director - European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E)
Geneviève Pons-Deladrière, Director - WWF European Policy Office



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