

PROTECT **OUR FUTURE**

Greens/EFA Recovery and Resilience Plan





More than ever, people in Europe
and everywhere understand that
with solidarity and cooperation we can
overcome the COVID-19 crisis.

Together, we can make another European
and global future, one that is more socially,
economically and environmentally resilient.

The question to all of us is:

what world do we want to return to?

**Towards a socially,
economically and
environmentally
resilient society**



More ambition, solidarity and cooperation are the key to building a new socially, economically and environmentally resilient model for the EU

The COVID-19 crisis, first recognised by the WHO on 31/12/2019, less than 3 months later became a global pandemic that has wrought unprecedented havoc on almost every nation on earth.

All over Europe thousands of families are confronted with tragic losses and fear for their health and that of their loved ones. Millions face the prospect of losing their livelihood and grave economic consequences. In many parts of Europe schools remain shut and the majority of the population is confined to their homes.

When the pandemic reached the European Union (EU) in February, **Governments and EU institutions alike were completely unprepared** for the devastating effect on health systems, food systems, society, the workplace and the wider economy. Only the outstanding courage and effort of nurses, doctors, firefighters and so many others saved our health systems from collapse.

In the initial phase **solidarity between EU Member States was regrettably lacking** when Italy rapidly saw its health system overwhelmed and was forced to shut down a large part of its economy and all of its education system and most Italians were confined to their homes.

Furthermore, even though there have since been bilateral cooperation initiatives to share information and the healthcare burden, despite the scale and EU-wide nature of the economic impact, **European leaders were unable to decisively agree on a fair way to share the economic burden.**

Also **regrettably lacking was coordination at EU-level** of the economic and social shutdowns intended to slow the spread of the virus. **Emergency powers** that curtail freedoms have been also been adopted without coordination or proportionality checks. Some appear necessary and proportionate, others such as those in Hungary, undermine the very values on which the EU is based.

The EU and its Member States will **urgently need to agree on a coordinated and responsible strategy for gradually loosening the public health measures designed to control the spread of the virus** and a **coordinated EU recovery and resilience-building strategy.**

The very **credibility of the EU will be irrevocably damaged unless solidarity and coordination are the basis for the massive effort** required to recover from the social and economic damage resulting from the crisis and ensure resilience for the future.

This reconstruction must not only **ensure that lost livelihoods and damaged infrastructure are replaced** but that the **EU's social, economic and environmental sustainability is guaranteed.**

This means a **combined investment and socio-economic reform** program reinforcing the **robustness of health and other public services, ensuring fairness, solidarity and stability in the economic and monetary union and, above all, doing whatever it takes to avoid the environmental catastrophe** that is the biggest threat of all to our collective wellbeing.

These difficult few weeks have given all of us new insights into the strengths and weaknesses of our societies. We have learnt a lot about what keeps us going, but also what we have to change.

More than ever, we Europeans see **the importance of strong cooperation and solidarity** to face collective economic, social and environmental threats.

More than ever we Europeans understand the **immeasurable value of well-funded and well-run public services and safety nets that underpin stable and inclusive societies** and economies that truly work for all people.

More than ever, we Europeans understand the **essential importance of food sovereignty**. In that respect, it is crucial that the Common Agricultural Policy (35% of the EU budget) be fundamentally transformed. Instead of being driven by productivism and global markets it must become a powerful driver for the resilience of our societies, delivering a positive impact for health, climate, biodiversity and jobs

More than ever we Europeans have seen the **crucial role that digitalisation plays in our society**: it has enabled many to keep working, socialising, accessing vital services and entertainment despite the lockdown and brought home the importance of **closing the digital divide** and **ensuring the respect of privacy and rights** in the digital world.

More than ever we Europeans understand that the religion of **economic efficiency, that delivers cheap goods and disregards planetary boundaries, leads to structural vulnerability that results in socially and economically expensive crises**.

The crisis response must **recognise and address the roots of this lack of resilience**:

- Decades of focus on **austerity and keeping public budget expenditures low, including after the 2008 financial crisis**, have cut deeply into public sectors that are now regarded crucial for our society.
- The export-driven food strategy adopted by the European Union puts some of its citizens at risk of not having access to food, while the deterioration of nature as well as pesticide use worsen the quality of life of many.
- The effects on health are not properly considered in all policies and the growing privatization of our health systems have been detrimental to ensuring access to health care for all citizens. The lack of investments from governments

into public health systems have put citizens at risk and weaken our abilities to face crises.

- The dogma that the **role of markets is mainly to ensure ever cheaper production**, has led to **over stretched and vulnerable supply chains** and made the EU **dependent on countries like India and China for crucial medicines** and medical equipment, and has created monopolies in the pharmaceutical industry determining the price and ownership of potential vaccines.

- The same big companies that have been focusing on short-term profits instead of decently paying employees and building up resilience are now asking to be rescued with public money. It is clear that they must at least be required to address their shortcomings in return.

- The overexploitation of nature with destruction of habitat, killing biodiversity and unsustainable uses of natural resources – is a **direct cause of the transfer of viruses** from wild animals to humans. This is just one aspect of the danger of treating the planet as an infinite flexible resource. **The crisis has underlined the need for global action to respect the planetary boundaries that define the safe space for humans within nature.**

It would be a **tragic failure of leadership and vision not to seize the moment to act decisively and**

collectively to build the greener, resilient, fairer, gender equal, more stable and democratic EU that we need

It would be **abject surrender to invest scarce resources in returning to the “business as usual”** that has proved so fragile or put aside or cancel any of the EU’s past achievements or existing ambitions.

Let us come together, now, to harness the incredible collective wealth of material and intellectual resources of the people in Europe to **turn the Green Deal, the Pillar of Social Rights and Sustainable Development goals, the Economic and Monetary Union, the Single Market, the Digital Strategy and a common vision for the Future of Europe into the most ambitious social, economic and environmental transformation the World has ever seen.**

REORGANISING OUR HEALTH SYSTEMS TO PUT SAFETY OF PATIENTS AND WORKERS FIRST

First and foremost, this crisis is a health crisis. In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, it is clearer than ever that European cooperation is profoundly important in facing cross-border challenges such as epidemics. It is therefore essential to enhance disaster preparedness at the European level. To do so, we need to reinforce the role of the EU in that area. First, by focusing on prevention, increasing the resources of different dedicated EU agencies, starting with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and

Control. Indeed, independent high-level expert groups we can rely on in times of difficult decision-making are a necessity. Knowledge is also key in the effective management of a crisis. We saw how important it was to gather information on stocks of medicines, availability of Intensive Care beds and medical devices. That is why we need to have databases that aggregate all the information needed and start stockpiling to be better prepared. Experts should also define disaster response plans, organise regular stress tests and organise a European Health force in all EU hospitals, specifically trained to face different types of crisis, partly paid by the EU, but working in hospitals as part of the medical staff. This Health force should be put together as soon as possible to ensure a strong network of trained health workers throughout the EU, which could be activated for emergency response in crisis regions at short notice. It would be an important step towards coordinated action and ensuring the same level of protection for all EU citizens.

The regrettable situation created by the lack of stock of necessary material and medicines in certain member states shed light on the quasi absence of EU production of some of them (masks, tests, or pain-killers in particular) placing the EU at risk of shortages of these essential medical products in times of crises. Relying on imports from only a few companies in third countries is not only problematic in environmental and health terms, but also a breach of sovereignty and security. But the crisis also raised many questions about the availability and

affordability of the future vaccines and treatments due to our current system of protection of intellectual property. To solve this situation, the EU needs to support and invest in the diversification and the re-localisation of medical devices and pharmaceutical productions, in a spirit of cooperation, not competition. The EU also needs to create an EU public laboratory in charge of producing a minimum of active substances to avoid relying entirely on private companies when it comes to citizen's health safety. Treatments and vaccines should be available and affordable for all, which will necessitate an increase in public funding and a change in the R&D model for pharmaceuticals based on open science, transparency of R&D costs but also the waving of any restrictions on scientific research and compulsory licensing of patent rights on pharmaceutical products.

A RECOVERY PLAN THAT WORKS FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

Trillions of euros of public money have been spent since the beginning of the crisis to ensure our public health systems could cope with the scale of the emergency. It was essential to ensure that as many lives as possible could be saved, to keep the economy afloat and avoid the massive unemployment that would otherwise spread as a result of the necessary confinement. Supporting European households in these difficult times, in particular those most exposed and vulnerable, is crucial. Greens all over Europe have been very supportive of

those emergency measures. But now that we slowly turn from emergency response measures to the long-term recovery of our societies, we must be very careful not to repeat the same mistakes made in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. People and the planet - not big companies and their shareholders - should be at the core of this Recovery Plan. We cannot allow big companies that have been focusing on short-term profits instead of taking care of their employees and building resilience in their business models to be rescued with public money without any condition. We must also ensure that the recovery does not damage environmental and climate efforts, as we saw in 2010 with the rise of EU CO2 emissions.

A European common framework is needed to be applied to national recovery schemes, ensuring public money all over Europe is targeted to projects revitalising local economies, creating high quality jobs for the future, and ensuring the necessary transition to a climate-neutral, environmentally sustainable, zero-pollution and fully circular economy. Small and medium enterprises are at the core of this new economy.

In particular:

- All big companies, including banks, insurances and financial actors, receiving public financial support should be required to disclose publicly how they intend to align their economic activities to the objective of limiting global warming under 1.5°C. This must take the form of science-based and company-wide emission reduction

targets and a clear and binding plan to become climate-neutral by 2050 at the latest, prioritising direct emissions reduction and energy efficiency. Such disclosure should follow at least the 2019 Guidelines of the European Commission on reporting climate-related information. In addition, all measures adopted as part of the Recovery Package should clearly exclude direct or indirect support to the nuclear, coal and other fossil fuel industries. A binding European regulatory framework must be put in place to ensure big companies, banks, insurances and other financial actors reduce their ecological footprint and that their activities don't lead to deforestation and other ecosystem degradations.

- Recovery programs are meant to avoid lay-offs as much as possible, commit to and implement equal pay between women and men for work of equal value, adopt just transition plans to ensure the training and relevant retraining of workers towards a green transition and avoid further flexibilization and precariousness of jobs.

- All companies, especially big businesses and multinationals, should not be allowed to pay out dividends, bonuses or to buy back shares for at least the next 2 years and, ideally, as long as the economy has not substantially recovered from the damage resulting from the COVID-19 crisis. Moreover, the time has come to fundamentally reform

the economic model by promoting the notion of a just economy that genuinely serves the people and not the other way around. CEOs' salaries should be capped, and any public support or bailout should be strictly conditioned to demonstrable contributions to the public good. Bail-out should also be excluded for companies avoiding paying tax by fiscal dumping or having subsidiaries without real economic activity in tax havens (which should include at least the "blacklist" and the "greylist" of non-cooperative jurisdictions but also Member States flagged in the European Semester country reports). Bail-out should also be accompanied with a sort of anti-abuse clause so that if a company receiving public funds is later identified as not complying with current corporate rules, such public funds should be reimbursed.

- When European funds are distributed to Member States, the latter must be fully transparent about how they spend the funds and regularly report this information back to the European Commission. While it is necessary that the funds reach those most in need as quickly as possible, paying out unprecedented amounts of money in a very short time also increased the risk of misuse and fraud. We must therefore guarantee that the use of funds can be comprehensively and effectively investigated, and if applicable, their misuse be sanctioned.

Once a year, as part of the European Semester, the European Commission should publicly report on the use of public financial support as part of the Recovery Package and the extent to which such conditionality is respected.

TOWARDS A SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENT SOCIETY

After the health crisis and recovering from the immediate lockdown of our economy, we will see a long-term economic recession, where our European economy will face huge challenges of downfall in demand and high numbers of unemployed. This will require a massive investment plan to bring Europe back on its feet. This investment plan must prepare the European Union for a new socially and environmentally just economy as a part of a society that is resilient to any future challenge. There is no way back to business as usual. The European Union should lead the way to a fair society of the global commons.



ECONOMY

For an economy that works for all

A MASSIVE SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT PLAN

The COVID-19 outbreak has impacted our - already fragile - European economies as never before in peacetime. Governments and public entities, including the European Union, have been called upon to save the economy, whatever it takes, from the worst downturn in living memory and will play a crucial role in relaunching our economies after the outbreak. We have to acknowledge that the capacity to invest of EU members differs widely. We must tackle regional imbalances also within member states, and enhance the ability of the poorest regions to recover and to protect themselves against future shocks.

For this reason, we need an unprecedented and **massive sustainable investment plan**, mobilising as much as 5 trillion euros over the next 12 years which will pave the way to a long-term, socially and environmentally resilient, job-rich economic recovery that is inclusive and gender responsive.

Besides the active use of the ECB firepower, whose robust contributions so far is welcomed, this massive sustainable investment plan, will mobilise all fiscal (with the EU budget as key instrument but also national, regional and local budgets), and financial (mainly the EIB) tools we have in order to finance, in the short term, a **stimulus package with the Green Deal at its core to recover from the economic downturn and, in the longer run, investment and regulatory reform to transform our economies and make them truly resilient while** showing solidarity with third countries and aligned with the care economy. Certain economic sectors, like tourism, are gravely affected by the outbreak, and support to the impacted regions must limit the social impact of the crisis and at the same time set the respective sectors on track for a more sustainable future.

Considering the disproportionate economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women, all EU investment decisions must undergo a gender impact assessment. In order to ensure gender equality, detailed gender budgeting must underpin all investment decisions.

FINANCING THIS MASSIVE INVESTMENT PLAN

The cost of the massive sustainable investment plan should be borne jointly by all EU members according to their economic strength and, in the private economy, those who benefitted from the pre-crisis unfair economic model, particularly those who benefited from tax evasion, tax avoidance or corruption should bear far more of the cost of recovery than those who contributed their fair share. Consequently, **the financing of the massive investment plan** will be crucial in order to ensure solidarity among EU citizens, among the member states but also with third countries.

This plan must be financed by a mix of Eurobonds (to the tune of at least 1 trillion euros) and new EU revenues coming from new environmental taxes (such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, pesticides, plastic and the Kerosene Tax) or contributions from the multinationals, particularly from the digital sector, and the financial sector (such as a Financial Transaction Tax).

TOWARDS A NEW MACROECONOMIC, FISCAL & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Financing a massive investment plan will not be sufficient to overcome this crisis and prevent the next. The massive investment plan should not be yet another form of indiscriminate “corporate welfare” used to rescue companies, businesses and economic

sectors, including the banking sector with business models that are environmentally, socially or simply economically unsustainable.

Preserving the very same macro-economic, fiscal and regulatory framework, subsidizing the very same harmful economic sectors or perpetuating the very same way of producing, consuming, transporting or trading that have made our economies lacking in resilience, would only lead to the same kinds of disaster in the future. If *“insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”* we have to change our economic model.

We must move **towards a new macro-economic, fiscal and regulatory framework** which will ensure a robust and resilient economic system fitting within the boundaries of our planet and ensuring inclusiveness and non-discrimination, within and outside the EU by reducing economic, social and territorial inequalities. Furthermore, resilient public services, particularly healthcare systems and the care sector, which have proven their added value in preventing the worsening of the crisis and which have limited financial buffers, will need to be more appropriately funded. The care economy ought to be a pillar of the post-crisis economy and value created in this sector must be accounted for in the calculation of GDP.

Investing in the circular economy and in Research, Development and Innovation will be crucial to move towards a more climate-resilient economy and could be the first

step towards a coherent EU-wide industrial policy. Moreover SMEs - including start-ups - are severely hit by the crisis and will require financial support in order to avoid massive and unprecedented layoffs. Re-localisation, in certain sectors, such as food, health and pharmaceutical productions, should be supported in order to be less dependent from global supply chains. However, if financial support should be generously granted to keep companies afloat, especially in the most hard hit sectors, profit making with the financial support should not be allowed and it should be mainly used to push for a more environmentally and socially sustainable production.

A person wearing a brown, textured sweater is seen from the back, holding a sign. The sign features a colorful drawing of a sun with rays in orange, yellow, and red, and the word 'SMILE' written in purple. Another sign with a blue drawing of a creature and the word 'He' is visible below it. A green circle is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'SOCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT'.

**SOCIAL AND
EMPLOYMENT**

For a European Union that cares

The scale of social damage resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak is unprecedented. We need universal social security systems in the European Union as a human right and to serve as stabilizers in case of future crises: this means *protecting everyone* and making sure people have enough to eat and live a healthy life, which is in the interest of our society as a whole. To step up and ensure inclusiveness and non-discrimination after the crisis, we need a real social Union.

CREATE QUALITY SUSTAINABLE JOBS

The social impacts of the crisis will be felt long after the end of the sanitary crisis. The European Union should boost decent universal social support schemes, unemployment and other social benefits to all people, including lowest-paid workers, freelancers, self-employed and young workers. Job creation must be at the core of recovery and to prevent the arising of more precarious jobs in the future. Legislative action should be presented to ban zero-hour contracts, end the practice of unpaid post-graduate

internships or ensure worker status for non-standard workers, such as platform workers.

We need to ensure that everyone in the EU receives a poverty-proof minimum income (taking into account the gender dimension) and we need a concrete action plan to end in-work poverty, including EU-wide living wages as still too many workers work hard and don't earn enough income for them and their families to live a decent and healthy life. The European Union should create quality jobs with the ability to acquire the skills we all need to ensure a social, gender-equal and inclusive just transition. Member States are also invited to seriously explore the option of basic universal income schemes as a social buffer for future crises.

The post-crisis recovery plan should ensure it addresses a harsh reality: women remain poorer, because of lower wages, reduced pensions or other diminished forms of income. As shown by the crisis, most of the essential jobs and informal care work keeping our economy afloat during the lockdown were performed by women but they are still paid less than men for the same jobs

and their contribution remains largely undervalued. The European Commission cannot postpone any action on this matter as work of equal value deserves equal pay.

PUT SOCIAL, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND WELL-BEING AT THE HEART OF OUR SOCIETY

The COVID-19 crisis has clearly demonstrated one thing: we need much more public investment into key services that are vital to our society and guarantee the fulfilment of our human rights: health, education, culture, housing, environmental justice to name just a few, irrespective of residence or migration status. Asylum seekers will be among the most negatively impacted persons by this unprecedented crisis. The European Union should provide a new solidarity mechanism so that all Member States equally share the dignified reception of these people, already living in a vulnerable situation.

We need a new “Care Deal for Europe”, in order to put the notion of care back at the centre of our social response to the crisis. Care, social and education services should be available to all people living in Europe. For this, the massive public investment plan must improve formal care work and recognise informal care (e.g. via care credits), a European framework on housing as there is a tremendous under-investment in housing (which would also help tackle homelessness and create jobs), a revision of our work-life balance rules, substantial investments in promoting mental health in health and social services and

measures to ensure gender equality, a child-friendly society and protect persons in a vulnerable situation, such as people with disabilities, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, refugees, prisoners and minorities.

The European Union should invest in its future and our youth: the COVID-19 crisis will make it even harder for young professionals to enter the job-market because of reduced employment. That is why the EU needs to boost funding and deliver on a binding Youth Guarantee across the EU to prevent long-term youth unemployment. European education systems need to be improved and the EU should present a European Child Guarantee so that by 2030 no child or youngster in the EU is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Climate change education should be the centre of a paradigm shift in which the whole of society takes part, with a special focus on children and youth, who will lead the change in future generations.

COMBAT GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

One of the dramatic consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak is the increased reported number of gender-based and intra-family violence across Europe. With millions of Europeans in lockdown, current support mechanisms for women and children, victim of domestic violence are hindered. We need increased funding to support these victims and for the EU to ratify the Istanbul Convention and the Commission to urgently make a legislative proposal to combat gender-based violence.

A woman in a red dress stands on a sandy beach, looking out at the ocean. The sky is clear and blue. A large green circle is overlaid on the image, containing the word "ENVIRONMENT" in white, bold, uppercase letters.

ENVIRONMENT

Strengthening our society within the planetary boundaries

The current crisis shines an unforgiving light on how the fulfilment of our most basic needs relies now on fragile, unsustainable systems. This crisis also finds its very origin in deforestation and protected animal traffic and was worsened by poor quality environment (notably air pollution). We must start to implement the changes which will allow us to mitigate and to go through the next crisis, within the limits of our ecosystems.

THE GREEN DEAL: OUR BASIS FOR THE FUTURE

The current crisis revealed once again the interdependence between human health, the well-being of our societies and of the natural systems on which they depend. For Europeans to live well within the limits of the planet, our modes of production and consumption need a radical change. While reducing our impact on wildlife and biodiversity could help us prevent the emergence of a new zoonotic disease like Covid-19, we need to ensure that all sectors of the economy fully contribute to achieving a climate-neutral, environmentally sustainable,

zero-pollution and fully circular economy by 2040. This is the only way to face the existential threat posed by climate change and the massive loss of biodiversity. **The European Green Deal remains more than ever the basis for our future development model.** It should even be reinforced to ensure all investment efforts do no harm to the climate nor to the environment and even act as a win-win out of the crisis:

- The Union should step up its climate ambition by enshrining into the Climate Law the objective of reducing its economy-wide emissions by -65% by 2030 and of reaching climate-neutrality by 2040 at the latest. **The Recovery Package should kick-start the transformation of our economy and ensure all sectors are put on a path towards climate-neutrality.**
- **Stepping up EU action to protect and restore domestic and global biodiversity** can act as a win-win for avoiding the spread of new zoonotic diseases like Covid-19 while addressing the unprecedented biodiversity crisis we are facing. The Commission should introduce legally

binding targets of protecting at least 30% of Europe's land and seas and of restoring at least 30% of Europe's ecosystems by 2030, and strongly support the adoption of such equivalent targets at the global level. Current EU nature and biodiversity laws should be complemented within a year by a Nature Restoration Regulation to ensure such targets are enshrined into law. At least €150bn should be mobilised over the next 10 years for the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) should be tasked to publish a thorough review of the global scientific knowledge on the impacts of biodiversity loss and the broader effects of human activity on the natural world on the emergence of pandemics such as COVID-19. Finally, as the third destination of illegal wildlife traffic as well as an exporter, the EU must lead the fight against environmental criminality.

- The EU should unilaterally take the lead by adopting more legislation on mandatory due diligence, as already done in specific areas such as certain conflict minerals and timber, in order to enable the tracing of supply chains to the origins of the raw materials and to include the due diligence obligation with regard to environmental, social and human rights on companies at each step of the supply chain. Such legislation would also be a very pertinent tool to impose mandatory due diligence obligations on both upstream and downstream operators in forest-risk commodity supply

chains and therefore to help the fight against deforestation and the protection of the biodiversity.

- **Stepping up the EU's fight against environmental pollution,** in particular air pollution, Recovery funds should be invested in clean technologies for heavily polluting sectors, such as agriculture, chemicals and transport, to ensure the industries recover along a future-proof and sustainable path towards zero pollution. **A zero-pollution action plan for air, water and soil, and a chemicals strategy for sustainability** are needed more than ever. They should aim at preventing any form of pollution and reducing it to levels that are no longer harmful to human health and the environment so as to live well, within the planet's ecological limits. The chemicals strategy for sustainability needs to close the regulatory gaps in EU chemicals legislation, achieving rapid substitution of substances of very high concern and other hazardous chemicals, including endocrine disruptors, very persistent chemicals, neurotoxicants and immunotoxicants, as well as tackling the combination effects of chemicals, nano-forms of substances and exposure to hazardous chemicals from products. In particular, pesticides, which are applied to more than 30 % of European landscape, should be addressed by implementing the proposals of the PEST committee's final report into legislation.

- The Commission should speed up the adoption of harmonized criteria for the definition of economic activities that should be phased out as they significantly harm climate and the environment. **This “brown taxonomy” should act as a compass to avoid public and private spending being injected in and locked into the old fossil-dependent, overproducing and throwaway economy.**

INVESTING IN AND PROTECTING THE LOCAL PRODUCTION OF FOOD

One of the big shocks of this crisis is the realisation that the access to some of the EU citizens’ basic needs, and in particular food and health, is much more fragile than many thought. Whilst food is still on EU shelves, prices have been very unstable. The lack of farm workers will massively impact the production of fruits and vegetables, and disturbance in the trade of inputs (fertilisers, pesticides, seeds and animal feed) is affecting production deeply, and might even lead to the collapse of certain sectors. During this crisis, difficulties in live animal transport (within the EU and to/from third countries) have drawn further attention to the need to reduce and re-localise this production, given the animal welfare and food security implications. European food sovereignty is far from achieved. To solve this situation, the EU needs to support and invest in the diversification and the re-localisation of productions.

- This means to be able to prioritize internal and regional markets

over exports, preferring shorter supply chains and avoiding trade agreements that are endangering our local basic production. Relying on imports from third countries for these is not only problematic at an environmental level, it can compromise our food security and sovereignty, and is often to the detriment of both parties, as our export-based model floods developing markets with cheap food. An agro-ecological model has the potential to provide healthy and environmentally friendly food to all European.

- This diversification and re-localisation needs to be done within the limits of the EU ecosystem, which means we also need to support the more sustainable and robust options (for example by ensuring 30% of our farmland is organic by 2030) and decrease certain productions to the benefit of others (for example setting targets to reduce meat consumption, whilst reorganising the meat sector through a plant protein plan and higher animal welfare standards), as well as strengthening the conditions farmers need to fulfil, to be eligible for public support.

- Re-localisation requires that we decrease input dependency in the food sector, notably by supporting a -50% pesticide use target in 2025 (-80% by 2030 and phasing out pesticide use by 2035) and a -50% synthetic fertilisers use target in 2030 in the Farm to Fork Strategy, a strictly implemented Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive and

strengthening the future CAP. To enable shorter supply chains to thrive, we need to maintain good quality green jobs in rural areas. It is all the more vital in this crisis to equalize payments among farmers in different member states, to prevent the vanishing of farms in some regions of European Union.

- Public procurement should also play its role in the development of local food systems, by giving priority to sustainable regional and internal markets.
- The resilience of our food system relies on having a multitude of small farmers and small fishers towards which EU support should be directed. We should also make sure the economic recovery in the agricultural and fisheries sector is not done at the expense of environmental or social protection. The necessary shift towards organic farming, as well as sustainable forestry, can also provide employment opportunities.
- A major tool to achieve these goals is a strong shift in the future Common Agricultural Policy, which is accounting for more than 35% of the European budget.
- Finally, transparency should be ensured concerning the distribution of CAP and FEAMP funds, in order to guarantee the cessation of harmful subsidies and that small fishermen and farmers are the principal beneficiaries of the EU budget and Covid-investment plan.

RESTART THE ECONOMY THROUGH BOOSTING RENEWABLE ENERGY, BUILDINGS RENOVATION, CLEAN TRANSPORTS AND DECARBONISATION

Instead of refurbishing a system that has shown its weakness, the EU should seize this occasion to revitalize the economy post-COVID-19 through legally binding targets and targeted investments allowing our society to be better prepared against future crises - new pandemics, the already ongoing climate crisis or the consequences of the ecosystem collapse. Sectors that combine a high local and quality-job creation potential, the potential to revitalize our territories while reducing bills for households and reducing our collective ecological footprint should be prioritized:

- **Launching the Renovation Wave:**

An ambitious and holistic building renovation strategy targeted to the community level, accompanied by an inclusive and gender-balanced skills strategy, will stimulate local economies, while supporting societal cohesion and healthier living conditions for all. A renovation wave that incorporates the circular economy and a life cycle approach on an industrial scale would contribute to achieving societal and environmental goals. An increased renovation rate must be coupled with minimum energy performance standards and the NZEBs (Nearly zero energy building) objective. Renovations must be undertaken in a holistic and inclusive manner (estimated impact: >€75 billion/year

of public incentives necessary to ensure an energy efficient building stock by 2050; up to 2 million local jobs).

- **Unlocking the job creation potential of renewables in Europe,**

in particular by boosting the demand for small-scale photovoltaic panels. Bring forward a pan-European Solar rooftop programme, as part of the upcoming Renovation Wave, including mandatory solar installations in public buildings in Member States. We need upcoming recovery programs such as the EIB Coronavirus Crisis Response to provide grants, loans, tax incentives for SMEs and commercial and industrial buildings to invest into solar energy sourcing (solar rooftops or PPAs).

- **Rethinking public spaces to promote sustainable mobility:**

We have seen many places in Europe expand or add cycling lanes during the COVID-19 lockdown in order to promote mobility that is better suited to social distancing rules: walking and cycling. Public authorities should be actively encouraged to retain or extend these measures which will undoubtedly promote this kind of travel, thereby reducing emissions, keeping people fit, and - if need be - allow for social distancing.

- **Ensuring a sustainable modal shift:** the Recovery Plan should be an opportunity to invest in much-needed public transport and to ensure a true modal shift, reducing air pollution and contributing to

climate action. It means more trams, more regular and zero-emission buses and true intermodality in our cities; an EU action plan and large scale financial support for the upgrading, extension and maintenance of railways, investments in trains, night-trains, cross-border rail connections and other rail transport related innovation. There should be EU coordination to ensure short-haul flights are replaced by sustainable alternatives. We cannot endlessly expand our road network - this will only induce demand - or replace combustion engine cars with electric vehicles. In moving traffic away from our roads, more freight must move by rail, inland waterways and sea (e.g. sustainable short-sea shipping).

- Building the foundations of a **European zero-emissions mobility industry**, which is able to meet the increasing demand for alternatives to combustion engines and charging infrastructure both for cars, vans, buses and trucks, but also boost supply for the rail sector. This will be accompanied with reskilling programmes, providing new career opportunities to workers leaving the fossil fuel-based transport sector.

FOSSIL-FREE POLITICS

The immediate response to the crisis has shown that, too often, conservative stakeholders still see “the environment” as an external, supplementary issue, that can be ignored and set aside when “serious” things happen, thus entirely ignoring the systemic problems which contributed to the crisis at hand.

On the contrary, it is time to use the European Green Deal and its related strategies as a basis, a template, for the reconstruction to come. These strategies, with precise targets and linked regulatory reviews are needed now, not when the crisis is over, and most member states and stakeholders have already started making their

own disparate plans of recovery. In particular, the low price of oil should be taken as an opportunity to end any fossil fuel subsidies, including gas, whether direct (through infrastructure of state aid) or indirect (through tax exemptions). Any attack on current or upcoming EU environmental standards or targets should be seriously condemned. Strict rules on the interaction between the fossil fuel industry and policymakers must be put in place, as they already exist for tobacco companies. EU institutions and Member States should interact with the fossil fuel industry only when and to the extent strictly necessary to enable them to effectively regulate the fossil fuel industry and its activity.



INTERNATIONAL

Fostering solidarity, protecting human rights and strengthening multilateralism

This is a global crisis and as such, it needs a global response. All measures against this pandemic will fail if they are not pursued at international level. To this effect, the EU needs to live up to its responsibility and play a leading role in the context of growing instability, competing global value systems and a shifting international disorder - trends that were accentuated but not created by the Covid-19 crisis. This is all the more pressing with the US and China having shown in this crisis a lack of will and of ability to drive efforts towards a shared, effective, just and sustainable answer to global challenges. The EU must not shy away from the threefold task of fostering international solidarity, of protecting human rights and of being the international actor which pushes forward multilateral solutions, thus standing up for the free and democratic values on which our Union has been founded and, thereby, protect our shared values. It is time that Europe takes the lead

in establishing a status for the global commons and require a new Global and European Pact for the environment.

To protect and promote freedom, solidarity and human rights, the EU must treat freedom of the media, freedom of speech, protection of human rights defenders and whistle-blowers, and digital rights as particularly high priorities. These core freedoms need to be respected at home and promoted abroad, and the EU must actively oppose the global autocratic wave. The EU should demand full transparency with regard to the COVID-19 crisis management in all countries. It should insist on an inclusive approach, bringing on board all governments and including all social stakeholders, in particular women, LGBTI* and minorities in the common efforts of the global community. The EU should support the establishment of a legally binding multilateral redress mechanism for the victims of

human rights violations based on the UNGP. Moreover, it should emphasize multilateral partnerships for a Green New Deal oriented transition strategy in overcoming the present crisis. The EU must stand tall in the universal fight against racism and xenophobia. Moreover, millions of people in some of the world's poorest countries are facing devastating health, social and economic crises as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU should take strong leadership to support humanitarian aid, medical support and debt relief, including complete cancellation of debt obligations held by all impoverished countries, without which many countries that need international help could not avoid terrible national catastrophes.

It is important for the EU to strictly monitor and screen foreign direct investment in order to avoid that strategic assets and in particular sensitive infrastructure come under the control of foreign governments, some of which are actively promoting autocratic policies. The EU should also urgently implement the international procurement instrument and insist on human rights proofing of European companies' supply chains. The EU must act on the risk of feeding into militarisation strategies of third countries through technology transfer where these countries pursue strong civilian-military fusion policies. The EU must push-back against illegal subsidies that distort international competition.

The COVID-19 outbreak has also demonstrated the lack of cooperation at the international level and certain

multilateral fora, such as the WHO, are at stake. The EU should remain firm and demand that, while globalisation must be rethought, multilateralism and cooperation remain the ways to deal with global problems at the international level. In parallel, EU trade policy must be completely reviewed.

The overarching goal of a Green trade policy is to ensure that trade achieves the maximum human well-being and resilience, for the minimum use of energy and resources. The distance between production and consumption should be as short as reasonably possible, ensuring an appropriate level of access to the products needed for a satisfying life. The future trade system must combine a reshoring of strategic productions like food, medical products and pharmaceutical, a strong focus on circular economy, and resilient and sustainable supply chains.

DIGITAL

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Reclaiming the digital revolution

The digital transition has fundamentally changed our way of living, our way of communicating and our way of working. We see how it can bring people closer together, increase knowledge, allow for better conditions of living, as much as we see the possible negative consequences through corporate capture of data, the deconstruction of social protection or the destruction of our environment or health. Digital technologies are a tool not an end goal. We need to take ownership of the frame surrounding digital technologies and steer it towards high sustainability standards, including strong democratic and technologic safeguards, and accompanied by cost and knowledge support measures that leave no one behind.

The COVID-19 crisis shows that the digital revolution is an important part of increasing our societies crisis resilience. We should therefore invest in digitalization of essential services and increase governments, legislators (also in the European Parliament) and public institutions' ability to deliver their services during crises.

The digital transformation also represents an important job creation potential through supporting a more pluralistic and diverse technology sector and by coordinating efforts and investment at EU level to close the connectivity gap.

Reclaiming the digital revolution allows us to move towards a fairer, sustainable, more accessible and more transparent economic model supporting businesses and people while respecting democratic values and limiting its environmental impact. We should ensure that digitalisation remains an opportunity for all, helping us to prevent further crisis while empowering everyone.



DEMOCRACY



No quarantine for democracy

In the last few weeks, our democracies have been put under further pressure, our freedoms and civil liberties have been reduced in order to tackle this crisis. Mass surveillance has been developed and media freedom has been reduced to name a few. The risk is that those exceptional and temporary measures will never be fully lifted, becoming, de facto, normal and permanent laws. Counter-powers, fundamental in liberal democracies, including independent juridical systems, individual rights, parliamentary scrutiny, media freedom, media pluralism and fully functioning independent controls of public spending have been reduced, sometimes shut down. To ensure the respect of the rule of law in Member States, we should fully support the work of already existing independent institutions. At the same time, the EU should also establish and put conditions to the distribution of EU funds. With the release of these much-needed new emergency funds, it is crucial to strengthen transparency, accountability and good governance through control mechanisms to avoid corruption and the misuse of EU and national public funds. The COVID-19 outbreak should not be used as a new opportunity to reduce our fundamental freedoms or to diminish regional competences and recentralise states. There should be **no quarantine for Democracy!** It is time to strengthen our democracies and civil rights by “going back to the normal” but also by adopting

new legislation protecting minorities and fundamental rights. Democracy is about the duty of the majority to protect the rights of the minorities. It is time for us to get back on track and resume our journey towards a more democratic society.

This crisis has shaken the trust of many citizens and given rise to populism and euro critics. All over the EU, Euroscepticism has risen with the onset of the current crisis. It is the immediate result of a feeling of being left alone. We need – now more than ever – to include, the local and regional authorities, the trade-unions and the civil society in the policy-making process. Moreover, a debate on the future of the EU is urgently needed. We need to critically evaluate the EU’s reaction to this crisis and translate the desire of its people for solidarity, a more participative and lively democracy and “more Europe” into concrete political processes. The Conference on the Future of the EU is the ideal forum for this debate. The Conference needs to start as the first opportunity and has to come forward with clear proposals, including by engaging directly with citizens, to profoundly reform the European Union and making it more effective, united, democratic, sovereign and resilient. Citizens must be fully involved in all recovery measures discussed and adopted within the EU. To allow for such a citizen driven process we must not waste any of the remaining time. and start preparing now.



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