

## Greener UK manifesto for the European parliamentary elections

May 2019

We are facing an ecological and climate emergency, with wildlife populations collapsing, ecosystems degrading and the planet heating up at an alarming rate. The huge public support for tackling these issues is evident in the actions of striking schoolchildren and protestors on the streets, as well as consistent opinion polling and the 8-million-strong membership of our combined organisations.

While the UK remains a member of the EU, our MEPs will continue to have a critical role to play in shaping environmental policy. An estimated 80 per cent of environmental law in each of the UK's four countries stems from the EU, including policies designed to protect wildlife and to deliver 55 per cent of the emissions reductions required in the UK by 2030.

If the UK is to participate in the 2019 European parliamentary elections, Greener UK urges the new cohort of MEPs to direct their influence and legislative capacities towards achieving the following benchmarks and, in particular, promoting the key policies set out below.

### Benchmarks

1. Greater ambition and higher standards, commensurate with the scale of the environmental crisis, with proper resourcing and no potential for backsliding.
2. Robust implementation and enforcement of environmental law, fulfilling people's rights to environmental information, public participation, access to justice and substantive remedies.
3. Effective international co-operation on the environment, including energy and climate change.
4. Environmental protection and restoration integrated into all aspects of decision-making, including trade, finance, and foreign policy, minimising our global environmental footprint.

### Policies

#### Climate

Through the Paris Climate Agreement, the EU has agreed to aim to limit average global temperature rise to 1.5°C. In order to fulfil this commitment, the EU should:

- Set a science-based target for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, and significantly increase the 2030 targets for emission reductions, renewable energy and energy savings.
- Design policy and commit budget to promote carbon sequestration through processes such as peatland restoration and tree planting.

- Stop investing public money in emissions-intensive activities and infrastructure such as airports, and invest in a sustainable economy to reduce the financial risk posed by climate change.

### **Nature**

The EU contains some of the most nature-depleted areas on the planet, with the UK among the worst, according to the State of Nature report. To aid nature's recovery, the EU should:

- Ensure better implementation and robust enforcement of existing nature laws, including on water, habitats and species. For example, measures to prevent illegal fishing and to meet the agreed 2020 target of ending overfishing must be put in place immediately.
- Reform the Common Agricultural Policy so that more public funding is directed at measures to achieve environmental recovery, such as habitat creation, soil restoration, landscape enhancement and improving water quality.
- Fully resource transnational programmes such as LIFE and Natura 2000 which drive, amongst other things, wildlife conservation.
- Use its influence on the international stage to ensure stronger global targets for biodiversity at the summit in China in 2020.

### **Resources and waste**

The plastics crisis highlights the need for a new approach to not only waste, but also how we use resources. To do this, the EU should:

- Take a targeted approach to resource efficiency. Guide the most underperforming sectors to do more with fewer resources, including construction, vehicle manufacturing, food and drink, electronics and textiles. Broaden the highly successful Eco-design Directive so it covers a wider range of products and for their entire lifecycles.
- Develop a dedicated strategy to secure critical raw materials: introduce new recycling standards to unlock investment in recycling infrastructure, and reward manufacturers that use recovered content.
- Better inspect waste exports to prevent illegal waste dumps in vulnerable developing countries.
- Phase out the exposure of people and the environment to the most hazardous chemicals, accelerating substitution with safer alternatives. Hazardous chemicals are still used in everyday products such as plastics and furniture, while toxic pesticides continue to be sprayed on fields and contaminate our food.

### **Air quality**

Air pollution causes vast economic and social damage, including more than 400,000 early deaths every year in the EU, approximately 30,000 of which occur in the UK. The EU must:

- Ensure the full enforcement of air quality laws, resisting attempts to weaken them by member state governments.

- Introduce new rules to tackle the main sources of pollution, from the transport, energy, heating, industrial and agricultural sectors.
- Update the EU's air quality standards to align them with those recommended by the World Health Organization.

### The UK-EU relationship

Whatever the future relationship between the UK, its constituent nations, and the EU, it is vital to maintain close environmental co-operation and high environmental standards. Whether in climate diplomacy, networks for nature conservation or holding each other accountable for transboundary air and plastic pollution, there is a compelling environmental logic to working together across borders.

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## GREENER UK

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