

## **Executive Summary**

Europe today confronts three overlapping crises.

The first is an economic crisis, with rising levels of poverty, insecurity, and homelessness across the continent. The second is a climate and environmental crisis, with severe consequences for Europe's front-line communities and even more perilous ones on the horizon. And the third is a crisis of democracy. Across the continent, people are disconnected from the locus of political decision-making not only in Brussels, but also in the communities where they reside.

These crises are products of Europe's political decisions, and they are closely bound together. The promotion of extractive growth has driven environmental breakdown, and the devotion to budget austerity — over and above the democratic needs expressed in communities across Europe — has constrained our capacity to respond to it.

A radically new approach is necessary to reverse this destructive trend — and to deliver environmental justice in Europe and around the world.

We call this approach the Green New Deal for Europe, and the following report is a comprehensive policy package charting a course through Europe's just transition.

The Green New Deal for Europe comprises three distinct institutions, summarized in the sections that follow.

- The Green Public Works (GPW) is an historic investment programme to kickstart Europe's just transition.
- The Environmental Union (EnU) is a package of legislation to align EU policy with the scientific consensus, enshrining the principles of sustainability and solidarity in European law.
- And the Environmental Justice Commission (EJC) an independent body to research, monitor, and advise EU policymakers on how to advance the cause of environmental justice.

But it is not enough to propose new policies and wait around for European leaders to heed their wisdom.

That is why this *Blueprint* also sets out the pathways to a Green New Deal for Europe, showing how citizens, communities, and grassroots organisations can mobilize to make this vision a reality.

### **Green Public Works**

The GPW is the investment programme to deliver Europe's transformation. It links economic aims with a vision of environmental justice: decarbonising Europe's economy, reversing biodiversity loss and guaranteeing decent jobs across the continent.

The GPW is financed entirely through green bonds issued by the European Investment Bank (EIB). These instruments allow the EIB to raise significant amounts of money without breaking Europe's fiscal rules. Backed by the European Central Bank, the bonds are a safe investment for Europe's ailing savers and pension funds, while directing idle funds to parts of the continent suffering from unemployment, poverty and climate and environmental

breakdown.

The governance of the GPW aims to empower communities and facilitate links between them. Investment decisions are devolved to sub-European authorities, where citizens actively participate in their direction. Meanwhile, a Green Solidarity Network creates structures for horizontal cooperation among Europe's cities, regions and rural communities — enabling them to share best practices from the green transition, as well as expanding administrative capacities.

The investments of the GPW aim to reorient the European economy away from private wealth accumulation and toward environmental sustainability. Integrated housing, utilities and mobility strategies will ensure massive reductions in energy demand while transforming Europe's neighbourhoods. Europe's 38 million vacant homes will be mobilised to eliminate homelessness and housing insecurity. A massive retrofitting programme will ensure that Europe's homes are insulated and protected from extreme temperatures — improving community resilience and ending energy poverty. A pan-European Mobility Cohesion Fund will ensure that every European community has access to agile, clean, inexpensive transport options.

But the GPW is more than an investment programme. It is also a promise to reinvigorate democracy by empowering workers and their communities. The GPW will invest in worker-owned cooperatives, which traditionally suffer from a lack of access to private finance, and reorient Europe's industrial practices for sustainability, democracy and justice.

GPW funding will be allocated to private firms that advance Europe's economic, social and environmental goals. Firms that reorient manufacturing towards recycling and repair, extend product life-cycles and shorten the working week will be given funding to support the transition. As will firms that put workers on boards and shift a portion of their profits towards a fund that pays workers a dividend and generates additional resources for the just transition.

Firms that excel at meeting the Green New Deal for Europe's high standards of sustainability, democracy and social justice will be given a Europe Award, tied to further transition funding.

Finally, the GPW will reinvigorate Europe's rural communities. Overwhelmingly, European subsidies flow to multinational agribusiness, with devastating social and environmental outcomes — both in Europe and abroad. The GPW will redirect these funds in support of regenerative practices across farming, fishing and forestry, ensuring that Europe's rural communities become the engine of our environmental recovery.

## **Environmental Union**

The EnU delivers on the Green New Deal for Europe's promise of 'systems change.' It offers a robust and comprehensive regulatory package to realign European policy with the scientific consensus on climate and environmental breakdown, and transform Europe into a global leader on the green transition.

The EnU comprises three broad areas, legislating for (i) emergency, (ii) sustainability, and (iii) solidarity.

The EnU begins from the premise that European policy makers remain in denial about the crisis at hand. It therefore calls for a formal declaration of a climate and environmental

emergency, using the declaration to set new targets that will force a review of all existing and subsequent European legislation.

The EnU legislates for sustainability by reigning in environmentally destructive practices within Europe and across the supply chains that link European entities to production processes beyond its borders. The EnU will introduce new amendments to Europe's prudential rules to penalize fossil fuel investments, fast-track the progress of the Technical Working Group on sustainable finance, and strengthen regulatory oversight of multinational banks operating in the Global South.

As part of its 'Legislating for Sustainability' package, the EnU also calls for a radical overhaul of EU energy policy. It discards the regulatory framework of the 'internal energy market' to allow for the democratic ownership and control of energy infrastructure. It phases out all fossil fuel subsidies, both direct and indirect. And it adopts a new fee-and-dividend system, ensuring that all emissions sectors are appropriately taxed, with the proceeds flowing to everyday Europeans.

Third, the EnU legislates for solidarity. For decades, the EU has promoted deregulation and resource extraction under the auspices of 'competitiveness.' The EnU replaces the principle of competition with that of solidarity, putting the interests of workers, communities, and the environment first.

Legislating for solidarity requires a radical shift in Europe's agricultural policy, which currently subsidizes industrial farms to flood global markets. The EnU, instead, adopts an EU Common Food Policy, a framework that realigns the various sectoral policies affecting food systems, puts an end to conflicting policy objectives and their hidden costs, and puts agricultural trade in the service of sustainable development.

International trade is central to the 'Legislating for Solidarity' agenda. The EnU aims to rewire Europe's trade relationships to support, rather than undermine, solidarity. This includes terminating Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanisms, integrating sustainability standard into WTO frameworks, facilitating technology transfers, and supporting a global green transition in the process.

The principle of solidarity applies equally to Europe's development policies, which often fund fossil fuel projects under the banner of international aid. The EnU Green Development Regulation that recalibrates the EU's international development priorities and boosts its commitment to multilateral funding mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund.

Finally, the EnU enshrines respect for the natural world in law, introducing penalties for polluters and formally recognising 'ecocide' as a punishable offense. The introduction of these new rules by the EU could serve as a model for the global recognition of ecocide as a crime against humanity.

## **Environmental Justice Commission**

The Environmental Justice Commission (EJC) is the first international body tasked with ensuring that the green transition is also a just one.

The structure of the EJC aims to ensure legitimacy, democracy, and authority. It includes (i) Chairpersons elected by each EU member state, (ii) a Commission with diverse representation from inside and outside Europe, (iii) a Sub-Commission that executes the research priorities of the Commission, and (iv) Citizen Panels that put public participation at

the core of the EJC's activities.

The EJC has a broad mandate to set a new international standard for research and reporting on environmental injustices, but is limited to an advisory role, assisting institutions like the European Commission and the United Nations. It is tasked with gathering data on the consequences of climate change, developing new indicators to evaluate them, monitoring the implementation of Europe's climate agenda, and advising the EU and other international institutions on future policy development.

The work of the EJC is structured along three dimensions of environmental justice: (i) International justice, (ii) Intersectional justice, and (iii) Intergenerational justice.

The crisis of climate change is global, but its impact is not evenly distributed. Poorer countries today are paying the highest price, while bearing the least responsibility. The International Justice wing of the EJC aims to assess the relationship between EU policy and uneven environmental destruction, to monitor the extent to which EU entities perpetuate this legacy of international injustice, and to provide a platform for front-line communities to participate in the development of new regulatory frameworks.

The EJC will develop and apply its metrics of international justice across several key areas. These include migration, where the EJC will develop the first comprehensive database on environmental migration and advise EU authorities on formal recognition of climate refugees and their rights to asylum. And they include transnational corporations, where the EJC will also help advise EU institutions on the viability of the UN Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights, and whether similar legislation can be introduced at the European level.

Climate change is deepening inequality not only between countries, but within them. As the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes, "people who are socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally, or otherwise marginalised are especially vulnerable to climate change and also to some adaptation and mitigation responses." The EJC's Intersectional Justice wing aims to redress these inequalities.

The work on Intersectional Justice also applies across several different areas, including Health, Employment, Education, and Mobility. In each, the EJC aims to identify barriers to equal distribution, recognition, and participation, and advise EU authorities on how best to eliminate them, ensuring that all those who live in Europe are included in the green transition.

The consequences of environment changes are durable, creating inequalities that can last for generations. The EJC's will address these intergenerational consequences in both directions, confronting the colonial crimes of the past and paving the way for future generations to enjoy a healthy planet. As UN General Assembly President María Espinosa has said, "Climate justice is intergenerational justice."

The EJC will explore mechanisms of accountability for Europe's historic role in resource extraction in the Global South. In particular, the EJC expanding the EU's existing set of tools for compensating countries for past wrongs, including through climate reparations that distribute funds and resources to front-line communities affected by centuries of colonial rule and the legacies of extraction and exploitation it left behind.

Finally, the EJC will examine how Europe can do justice to future generations that will inherit this planet. In particular, the EJC will evaluate Europe's economic and environmental

policies and their potential impacts on future generations. The EJC will consider an explicit legal protection for future generations, which entitles them to make claims on existing environmental policy. And it will propose changes to the discount rate that is used to inform investment decisions, adjusting down to zero discrimination against future generations.