



Brussels, 29 September 2023

**Subject:** Urgent Appeal for Climate, Nature and Social Priorities in the Granada Declaration

Dear President Michel, President Metsola and President von der Leyen,

We write to you with a sense of great urgency and deep concern on behalf of our five organisations, collectively representing over 45 million Europeans.

On 5-6 October, EU Leaders will be gathering in Granada, Spain, to start off the process to define the Union's general political directions and priorities for the years to come. Central to this process is the adoption of a declaration at their informal Summit.

Less than a week removed from the declaration's adoption, it has come to our attention that the current draft text falls woefully short in recognising the pressing threats posed by the runaway climate crisis, the alarming loss of ecosystems and biodiversity, and pollution. Astonishingly, these vital challenges do not even feature among the five priorities considered by EU Leaders and, at best, receive only passing mention. Equally disconcerting is the lack of attention to other crucial issues, such as democracy, the rule of law, and social justice, from the current discourse.

As architects of the EU's current set of priorities, you will no doubt agree that the European Green Deal has served as an important compass over the past few years. While it is still far removed from its initial promise, the prioritisation of a 'climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe'<sup>1</sup> represented a remarkable shift in policy making and we must now follow its course: working towards a healthy net-zero emissions economy that works for its people, restores nature, strives towards zero pollution and ensures citizens' well-being.

The forthcoming discussion of the European Council's Strategic Agenda presents a crucial opportunity. We implore you to advocate for the inclusion of the following priorities in the Granada Declaration, which are essential to unlocking the societal and industrial benefits of a well-executed green transition:

- Radically **increase public climate, environment and social investments**, while aligning all public and private investments with the objectives of the green transition and ensure big polluters are fully held accountable.
- **Accelerate the implementation of the European Green Deal and address the ambition gaps on both nature and climate as well as pollution** by further establishing robust legally binding targets and new ambitious protection standards based on the latest

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<sup>1</sup> As formulated in the European Council's [strategic agenda 2019-2024](#), adopted on 20 June 2019

science available. Only with continued efforts can Europe safeguard our health, nature, safety and economy and create crucial links between those.

- **Strengthen EU governance, democracy and the effective participation of civil society.**  
The role of citizens at national and EU levels needs to be strengthened, equal access to decision-makers as well as justice across Europe needs to be ensured.

Backtracking on Europe's commitment to a green, fair, and socially just transition would play into the hands of those seeking to destabilise the EU and undermine its core values. It would jeopardise Europe's competitiveness in the global race for sustainability and prolong reliance on authoritarian regimes.

The choices made now will determine our ability to achieve a fair and socially just transition for all Europeans. They will also dictate the extent to which we can harness the myriad benefits of sustainability, including energy security; a burgeoning cleantech industry based on 'Made in Europe' green products; an environmentally-friendly and resilient supply chain for sectors that are key to reaching net zero emissions; and improved public health and wellbeing through flourishing ecosystems that underpin clean water, air, and nutritious food.

We urge you to raise your voices and work with EU Leaders to aspire to a higher standard by including a clear commitment in the Granada Declaration to truly tackle the climate and environment crises and avoid these from undermining our futures.

Yours sincerely,

Ariel Brunner, Director, BirdLife Europe  
Chiara Martinelli, Director, CAN Europe  
Patrick ten Brink, Secretary-General, European Environmental Bureau  
William Todts, Director, Transport & Environment  
Ester Asin, Director, WWF European Policy Office