

# CLIMATE! ACTION CALL

## European stakeholders call for immediate action in face of climate emergency

Brussels, 7 May 2019

**In an unprecedented [Climate Action Call](#) published today, a broad coalition is urging European leaders to take decisive action to respond to the climate emergency. Hundreds of European cities, regions, businesses, youth and faith groups and civil society organisations working on climate, human rights, litigation, mobilization, sports and health call upon leaders to profoundly alter the way we run our societies and economies to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C.**

The Climate Action Call comes prior to both the EU Heads of State and Government debate on the Future of Europe at the Sibiu summit on 9 May, and the European elections between 23 and 26 May. Climate change is expected to be a central issue in both events, having recently gained prominence in the form of mass citizens' protests demanding political action.

Signatories of the Climate Action Call demand that current and future EU leaders respond to public mobilization by publicly committing to make climate action a priority for Europe during both the Future of Europe and elections debates. The call spells out five steps for the new European Parliament and Commission, as well as all EU Member State governments:

1. Commit to accelerate actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reach net zero emissions as soon as possible.
2. Plan the end of the use of fossil fuels and provide strong support to energy efficiency, renewable energy and emission cuts outside the energy sector.
3. Safeguard a just and fair transition and ensure that the EU increases its support to developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
4. Increase efforts to roll out the circular economy and increase resource efficiency.
5. Recognise biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration as a crucial component of climate action.

The signatories include some of Europe's largest networks of cities and regions (e.g. C40, Energy Cities, Climate Alliance, Fedarene, CPMR), most influential business groups (e.g. Corporate Leaders Group, Haga Initiative, Climate Leadership Council), the largest European NGO coalition on climate and energy (Climate Action Network Europe), and members of an international movement of striking school students (Youth for Climate, Fridays for Future) [1].

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Signatories of the Climate Action Call made the following statements:

Non-governmental organisations:

**Wendel Trio, Director of Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, said:**

"We are launching a wake-up call for the climate to all current and future European politicians. Now is the time for EU decision makers to take a stand and commit to decisive action to confront the climate emergency. Our Climate Action Call gives them guidance for how to profoundly alter the way we run our societies and economies to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C."

**Marc-Olivier Herman, EU Economic Justice Policy Lead, Oxfam EU Advocacy Office said:**

"The world's poorest communities are paying the highest price for Europe's inadequate response to the climate crisis. Candidates for office at EU and national level must commit to ensure Europe's climate policies are ambitious, fair and sustainable. This means cutting emissions at home and providing sufficient funding to developing countries for low-carbon development and to adapt to climate change. Most importantly, this means fixing harmful EU policies, such as the bloc's rules on bioenergy that promote the burning of food and forests while pushing people off their land, all in the name of fighting climate change."

**Neil Makaroff, European Policy Officer, Réseau Action Climat France, said:**

"The unprecedented mobilisation of European citizens is a strong call for putting solidarity and climate action at the heart of Europe's mission. EU politicians should not only talk about climate during the European Election campaign, but should also act after the 26th May. They will be responsible for truly engaging the EU and its 500 million citizens in the ecological transition, unlocking millions of jobs and protecting the quality of our lives and our environment. We, NGOs, businesses and local authorities, will make sure they will put in place all the measures for a socially fair transition, supporting the most vulnerable people in our society and delivering on the Paris Agreement's promises during the next five years."

**Kelsey Perlman, Forest and Climate Campaigner, Fern, said:**

"We can no longer avoid climate breakdown by only reducing emissions to zero - we need to also remove emissions already in the atmosphere. The only safe way to do this is to let natural ecosystems recover, but instead we are increasing logging of European forests. It's time for politicians to put policies in place that will restore forests for communities, wildlife and the climate."

**Steven Tebbe, Managing Director, CDP Europe, said:**

"Europe's transition to a low carbon economy is underway and we are seeing signs of leadership from certain companies and investors. But all actors must move faster. Climate science says that the pace of change must urgently increase, so policymakers need to set bolder targets faster, create an enabling environment for widespread action, and map a clear direction of travel. This means

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improving transparency of climate risks in the market and ensuring investors have access to high-quality, comparable data. EU policymakers must move to ensure that a minimum level of reliable corporate disclosures are available for all companies, to allow risks to be better priced in and for these bolder EU targets to be met.”

**Nick Nuttall, Strategic Communications Director of the Earth Day Network and Deputy Spokesperson, said:**

“The Call to Action is a clear request to the leaders and the Parliament to put the European Union fairly and squarely on the right side of history. It is also a call to citizens to ensure this happens by getting out between May 23 and 26 and backing [#VoteEarth](#) candidates—ones determined to pursue strong climate and environmental policies. In doing so, the European Elections in 2019 can trigger a wave of positive change not only here but in the more than 100 national and federal elections taking place worldwide between now and the end of 2020”.

**Danielle Hirsch, Director of Both ENDS, the Netherlands, said:**

“Climate change and its impacts are real, both in Europe and globally. As Europe, we have the responsibility as a major climate polluter as well as the power, money and knowledge to stop climate change from happening. Meanwhile, and despite continuous statement by our political leadership about the need to combat climate change, no concrete changes are made in any of the key policy fields. This has to change. As of today, European member states should start divesting from fossil fuel industries and use public finance to stimulate sustainable cities, transport and food system. We shouldn’t waste more words. What is needed is action.”

**Businesses:**

**Dr Martin Porter, Executive Chair, Cambridge University Institute for Sustainability Leadership Brussels, said:**

“It is vital EU leaders put climate change at the top of their agenda for Sibiu and beyond. The next five years will be crucial in establishing the investment, infrastructure and innovations needed for deep decarbonisation while securing Europe’s competitive edge in the emerging global clean economy. Poll after poll confirms European citizens now expect clear action and leadership on this from Europe.

“Business also recognises the urgency of the climate crisis, the increasing risks it poses, and that the costs of doing too little are greater than those needed to achieve net zero. The opportunities for Europe from such a transformation are substantial in terms of jobs, competitiveness, consumer benefit and citizen’s welfare.

“Businesses from all across the EU economy are standing up to make it plain they know the only resilient business models are ones that adapt and deliver sustainable prosperity consistent with net zero emissions by mid-century. They can and will commit to play their part, and are calling on the EU

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to raise ambitions for its 2030 target and deliver climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest. We need to step up now.”

**Benedetta Friso Bellemo, Director of Sales, Joule Assets Europe, said:**

"At Joule Assets Europe, we believe that sustainable energy is pivotal to meeting our 2030 climate and energy targets, which is becoming more and more urgent. We fight every day for a greener future by facilitating investment in sustainable energy assets and supporting the growth of small and medium energy service companies. We are proud to be part of the incredible group of stakeholders combating climate change, and to bring our sectoral expertise to a broader Climate Action Call."

[Local and regional authorities:](#)

**Thomas Brose, Executive Director, Climate Alliance, said:**

“This is a key moment. Cities across Europe are reaching towards zero carbon and setting 100% renewable energy goals, thus contributing to climate justice the world over. It is time for current and future EU policymakers to help turn these local goals into a European reality by placing a cross-cutting priority on climate action.”

**Tine Heyse, deputy mayor of the city of Ghent, Co- Chair of Climate Alliance, said:**

“With the European elections coming up, I would like to urge the future European Parliament, Commission and all EU governments to act. Without your action, a carbon free society is impossible. What you need to do is clear: phase out fossil fuels. They are old fashioned, dirty and don't fit in the carbon free society. We as local communities want a 100% renewable society. Going zero carbon will not be easy but it comes with benefits. We get greener cities, clean air, locally produced energy and better housing.”

**Cees Loggen, Regional Minister, Province of Noord-Holland and CPMR Vice-President in charge of Climate and Energy said:**

“We, as regional politicians, must carry a positive message on fighting climate change. We need enthusiasm and hope, and we need to show that tackling climate change also means opportunities. Fighting climate change is also about economic growth and job creation. Europe needs to invest in new technologies, develop innovations, and take the lead in the global competition. We need the European Union to strengthen its ambitions in terms of climate action, and to work in synergy with the territories.”

**Extract from FEDARENE Manifesto:**

“The new representatives of the European Parliament and European Commission have the chance to make 2020-2030 be remembered in history as a decade of European revival. Their ambition can set the European Union on the right track for the economic and social transformations needed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.”

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Youth:

**Petra Buru, Fridays for Future Hungary said:**

“Soon, European citizens will choose who will represent them in the European Parliament and who will shape the EU's answer to the climate crisis for the next five years. On 24 May - during the elections-, we will be on the streets to make you feel the urgency of climate action. To make you understand the words of climate science.

Next generation of decision makers in the European Parliament, the Commission and all Heads of Government must understand what is at stake for future generations - for us - and urgently commit to accelerate actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reach net zero emissions as soon as possible.”

**Bernd Hirschberger, European co-president of FIMCAP, the International Federation of Catholic Parochial Youth Movements, said:**

“The young people in Europe are deeply concerned about climate change and appalled by the lack of decisive and immediate action taken to encounter the climate crisis despite the urgent warnings of the scientific community. This is a clear wake-up call! As Greta Thunberg described: Our house is on fire. As young people we will continue to raise our voices and can only hope that the decision-makers in Europe hear our calls and finally send the fire-fighters to combat the fire that has started to destroy our house. Seeing the entire creation threatened, as young Christians we can do no other but remain loud and call for immediate and decisive climate action.”

**CliMates' statement:**

"As a youth organization, CliMates is composed of members not only interested in the topic of environment and climate change, but most of all concerned about our future and the world we are going to live in. The next 11 years will be crucial to limit global warming to 1.5°C, and avoid devastating consequences on our planet and society.

This is why we need to undertake pivotal actions to limit global warming. In the context of the European elections, we would like to remind the European Union to take on its responsibility to lead the fight against climate change, within the Union and abroad. The new representatives of the European Parliament will need to fulfill their responsibility to develop a conducive framework that enables member states to implement more ambitious NDCs. This framework should include regulations that encourage ecological lifestyles, foster the expansion of sustainable transport networks, rural development, agricultural policies and investments, and moreover, hold big polluters accountable.”

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## Faith groups:

### **Bishop Jean-Claude Hollerich, Archbishop of Luxembourg, said:**

“I would like to ask the future EU Parliament, the Commission and the Member States for urgent action against climate action. We need urgent action for our families, for our kids, for the future of people on this Earth.

I especially would like to ask them to ensure that the zero emissions transition is just, orderly and benefits the poorest members of society by integrating strong social measures and safeguarding human rights.”

### **Josianne Gauthier, Secretary General of CIDSE said:**

“We are already living beyond our planetary boundaries. We must act urgently to transform our current production and consumption patterns and make space for sustainable lifestyles and behaviors. These changes need to be reflected in policy and Europe needs to take leadership and responsibility as this is a matter of global, environmental, social, and intergenerational justice. As faith actors and development organizations, we are already witnessing the global, social and human dimensions of this climate crisis.”

### **Floris Faber, Director, ACT Alliance EU, said:**

“Business-as-usual is not an option. The new cohort of EU policy-makers must act to drastically scale-up efforts to reduce EU emission contributions to the changing climate. New and returning, EU policymakers have a role to play in facilitating the creation of resilient communities, where the most vulnerable are able to adapt to life-threatening climatic impacts.

As climate finance forms the backbone of this effort, the EU must increase its climate finance contributions to the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, including support for adaptation and loss and damage to developing countries.

It is still possible for the EU to contribute to a world that prioritises clean air, sustainable livelihoods, jobs and economic growth. But the EU must ACT now.”

## Scientists:

### **Prof. Jean - Pascal van Ypersele, Former IPCC Vice-chair, said:**

“The European elections is a very important moment for Europe and for the future of our fight against climate change. Important decisions need to be made to put Europe on track for net zero emissions as soon as possible and to protect citizens and the future of next generation in the entire world.”

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## Sports community:

### **Eva Maria Brem, Austrian alpine ski racer -2015 Winter Olympics gold medal winner said:**

“As winter athletes, we see the worsening consequences of climate change in our daily lives. Winters are getting shorter. The amount of time that snow is on the ground and the snow cover is reducing.

This is not only a danger for the winter sports. This is also risking the lives of millions of people who rely on this snow cover for drinking water.

The clock is ticking for all of us. Next generation of European decision makers must take the right decisions to ensure a better future for all Europeans.”

## Impacted communities:

### **Alfredo Sendim, Portuguese farmer and a plaintiff of the People’s Climate Case, said:**

“I am a farmer in Portugal since more than 30 years and today I feel the impacts of climate change in my daily life. On behalf of all families and youth impacted by climate change, I call upon the new European Parliament, the Commission to commit to increase the 2030 target and reduce the emissions to net zero well before 2050.”

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## Notes:

[1] The Climate Action Call with a full list of signatories, and short, quality videos with statements of stakeholders supporting the Climate Action Call are available on the website:

<http://climateactioncall.caneurope.org/>