

A European Union that Advances **A FAIR AND JUST TRANSITION**

The European Alliance for a Just Transition's
Vision for the EU Cycle 2024-2029 and Beyond



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The [European Alliance for a Just Transition](#) brings together around **50 European stakeholders** working for a sustainable future, including social, climate and environmental civil society organisations, workers' representatives, think tanks and political parties, groups and foundations. The group shares a common objective for a **fair and just green transition**: to transform our economies and societies in ways that respect planetary boundaries and improve the well-being, living standards and working conditions of all people.

In its [2021 Joint Declaration](#), the Alliance urged the European Union to **strengthen and better integrate its social, climate and environmental policy agendas**. In recent years, the EU has taken significant steps to advance the green transition, notably through the European Green Deal, and has addressed its social impacts through guidance, monitoring and financing instruments such as the [Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition](#), [Commission Recommendations](#),¹ the [Just Transition Mechanism](#) and the forthcoming [Social Climate Fund](#).

However, we live in a time of deepening and accelerating **climate, environmental and social crises**. The summer of 2024 was [the hottest on record](#), both in Europe and globally. In addition to the devastating human and material losses, the EU's economy is projected to lose more than [€50 billion per year](#) to extreme weather and climate events. Simultaneously, geopolitical tensions and traditional economic policies have driven up the cost of living, exacerbating already high socio-economic inequalities and fuelling polarisation. In 2023, [more than 20 % of the EU population](#) was at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

A fair and just green transition is essential to effectively address these multifaceted and interconnected global crises. In this document, the Alliance presents its vision for a **European Union that prioritises and advances a fair and just transition throughout the 2024-2029 political cycle and beyond**.

Our vision is of a Union that:

1. Ensures the green transition leads to prosperity for all, with a strong focus on reducing socio-economic inequalities.

2. Advances ambitious and forward-looking climate, environmental and social agendas in a coordinated, coherent and mutually reinforcing manner.

3. Applies and promotes proactive decision-making for a fair and just transition and makes substantial investments to support it.

4. Puts social, climate and environmental objectives at the heart of all its internal and external actions and investments to foster a truly sustainable society.

¹ [Commission Recommendation of 14 October 2020 on energy poverty](#) and [Commission Recommendation of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty](#).

1 An EU that ensures the green transition leads to prosperity for all, with a strong focus on reducing socio-economic inequalities.



The EU and its Member States should:

- a. Ensure that the **costs and benefits of the green transition are distributed fairly** among individuals, households, communities, regions and countries through carefully designed policies and investments. In particular, people in vulnerable situations, marginalised communities, those living in poverty, at risk of social exclusion or facing intersecting forms of discrimination² should **receive targeted support** through specific policies and investments aimed at shielding them from additional costs and ensuring they can fully benefit from the transition.
- b. Ensure robust **support for workers and trade unions** throughout the transition to carbon neutrality, including as coal, gas and oil are phased out, and to a fully circular economy. This includes upskilling initiatives, re-employment support, unemployment benefits, and related measures to enable smooth transitions from one job to another or to retain workers. Transitions should be rooted in **meaningful and effective social dialogue**, with the democratic involvement of trade unions, collective bargaining and worker participation. Economic and industrial strategies should prevent displacement of workers from their communities, ensure decent work, safeguard workers' rights and promote inclusiveness and gender equality.
- c. Make the **welfare system** the foundation of a fair and resilient society by **strengthening social protection systems and public services**, including social services. This includes supporting quality education through a culture of lifelong learning and ensuring access to quality housing, childcare and healthcare. These measures are crucial to ensure the well-being of all people affected by the increasing disruptions caused by the climate and environmental crises and to address the specific issues of those affected by the green transition, in particular marginalised communities and workers.
- d. Ensure that the rights and needs of all, especially marginalised communities, are addressed through **structured, meaningful and effective civil dialogue**. Alongside social dialogue, this should be central to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies, policies and funds at all levels, upheld by open, inclusive and transparent processes. The EU should also harness the potential of innovative forms of **civic participation** to enrich democratic contributions to policy-making and limit the disproportionate influence of corporate lobbies and their vested interests on decision-making processes.

² Including people who are discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, gender, disability, age and other grounds - they are the most vulnerable to environmental and climate-related hazards, even though they contribute the least to the climate and environmental crises.

2. An EU that advances ambitious and forward-looking climate, environmental and social agendas in a coordinated, coherent and mutually reinforcing manner.

The EU and its Member States should:

- a. Intensify efforts to **achieve climate and environmental goals**,³ including by adopting science-based 2040 climate targets supported by robust sectoral transition pathways, prioritising key **environmental imperatives** like enhancing biodiversity, restoring nature and protecting habitats, and establishing clear **climate adaptation** targets and measures to bolster the resilience of people, the environment and infrastructure against the impacts of climate change.
- b. Drive social progress by fully **implementing and strengthening the European Pillar of Social Rights**, making it binding, climate-proofed and future-ready. To ensure the fulfilment of social rights, all policies should be based on systematic and comprehensive assessments of both projected and actual social, distributional, health and employment impacts of action and inaction, with particular attention to the **impacts on marginalised groups** and the use of gender-disaggregated data.
- c. Foster an economy that ensures **the well-being of all individuals while operating within planetary boundaries**. This includes developing resource reduction targets, pursuing and supporting economic models like the **social economy** and adhering to the higher steps of the **circular economy's** waste hierarchy: reduce, reuse, repair, and recycle.
- d. **Better align climate, environmental, economic and social policies to ensure consistency**.⁴ This involves adopting a **whole-of-government approach** to improve coordination across policy areas within EU institutions,⁵ while maintaining transparency and accountability in decision-making. Additionally, it entails establishing or strengthening structured synergies and platforms for **dialogue among various levels of governance** – such as regions, cities, national governments and the EU – and with relevant stakeholders.



³ Such as the Paris Agreement, the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁴ For example, setting ambitious climate targets should be accompanied by fiscal rules that enable essential climate-focused investments; energy policies must be designed to mitigate the impact on low-income groups while upholding the principles and objectives of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

⁵ For example, through the joint development, monitoring and evaluation of policies, funds and other measures across the EU institutions and within departments of the same institution.

3. An EU that applies and promotes proactive decision-making for a fair and just transition and makes substantial investments to support it.

The EU and its Member States should:

- a. Develop a more **ambitious and long-term EU vision and way forward** for a fair and just transition. This vision should ensure that the changes in the world of work and the wider socio-economic impacts of the green transition are **proactively anticipated and managed in a socially just way**. It should address the root **causes of inequalities** in access to quality, affordable, carbon-neutral and environmentally friendly housing, energy, mobility, etc. and provide accessible, affordable and sustainable alternatives to polluting behaviours and practices.
- b. Ground this vision for a fair and just transition in clear, science-based objectives, priorities and timelines, building on existing instruments and initiatives. To systematically implement and monitor its vision, the EU should establish **a robust framework that incorporates both soft and binding measures** aimed at advancing a fair and just transition. These measures should integrate environmental and social dimensions from the outset and address them in a complementary and cohesive manner.



- c. **Invest massively** in fair and just transition, recognising that the social and financial costs of delaying or avoiding action are far greater. New resources should be mobilised to support the transition, ensuring there are **no trade-offs between social and environmental goals**, which must be pursued in synergy. An ambitious EU budget and a progressive taxation agenda are essential to enable **targeted investments that create opportunities** for workers, households, regions and communities throughout the transition.

- d. Ensure a strong **territorial, place-based approach in EU plans and funding** for a fair and just transition, and empower community-based initiatives and local solutions, as this is where transitions become a reality. The EU should **foster tailored, context-specific planning** at national, regional and local levels, as well as in the private sector. Fair and just transition considerations should also be integrated into other planning and policy processes at national and regional levels.⁶

Special emphasis should be placed on strengthening administrative capacity at local and national levels to manage a fair and just transition.⁷

⁶ For example, in climate and energy planning by ensuring better alignment of National Energy and Climate Plans, Long-Term Strategies, Territorial Just Transition Plans and Social Climate Plans; also in sectoral planning for industry, transport, agriculture, etc.

⁷ Including spatial planning, environmental impact assessments and inclusive participatory processes.

4. An EU that puts social, climate and environmental objectives at the heart of all its internal and external actions and investments to foster a truly sustainable society.

The EU and its Member States should:

- a. Ensure that future reforms related to industrial policy, enlargement, the Single Market, peace and defence, and all other internal and external actions are consistent with **advancing progress towards the EU's goals of climate neutrality and socio-economic well-being for all**. Public investment in climate and environmental protection, essential public services and green industrial policy should be increased, not cut in order to finance other priorities.
- b. Ensure that the **European Semester** consistently promotes progressive taxation, robust social protection systems and the 'polluter pays' principle, and encourages Member States to **eliminate fossil fuel and other environmentally harmful subsidies**. The EU should integrate more comprehensive eco-social and broader well-being indicators into the Semester and ensure that country-specific reform and investment recommendations **equally support economic, environmental and social dimensions**.
- c. Apply harmonised **environmental and social conditionalities to companies** receiving all forms of public finance⁸ and rigorously monitor compliance. Social, gender and environmental considerations should be mainstreamed into funding programmes and the principles of **'do no significant harm' and 'polluter pays' should be strictly enforced**.
- d. Play an ambitious and constructive role in global climate action and in **delivering climate justice**, given Europe's climate responsibilities as a major historical emitter. The EU should enhance efforts to promote fair and just transitions beyond its borders through **equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with partner countries and multilateral action**. This includes recognising its responsibilities towards third and partner countries concerning externalities,⁹ avoiding any negative spill-over effects of EU policies, improving access to quality, affordable and long-term finance and respecting the regulatory space these countries need for their fair and just transitions.



⁸ From state aid to public procurement, EU funds or national subsidies.

⁹ Such as exported greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation and biodiversity loss, and violations of international labour standards, including forced labour, unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, etc.

LIST OF SIGNATORIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

- AK Europa
- ATD Fourth World
- CEE Bankwatch Network
- Circle Economy
- Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe
- Democratic Society (DemSoc)
- EESC Workers' Group
- European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)
- European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)
- European Disability Forum (EDF)
- European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
- European Green Party (EGP)
- European Left
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
- European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE)
- European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)
- European Women's Lobby (EWL)
- Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG)
- Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)
- Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE)
- Generation Climate Europe
- Green Economy Coalition
- Green European Foundation (GEF)
- Greens/EFA Group
- ICLEI Europe
- International Union of Tenants (IUT)
- Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLPL)
- Party of European Socialists (PES)
- PES Women
- Pour la Solidarité
- Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)
- Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)
- Reuse and Recycling European Union Social Enterprises (RREUSE)
- SDG Watch Europe
- Social Platform
- SOLIDAR
- transform! europe
- Wetlands International Europe
- WWF
- Young European Socialists (YES)
- Youth and Environment Europe (YEE)
- Zero Waste Europe

The European Alliance for a Just Transition **calls on the EU and its Member States** to ensure that this vision becomes a reality and serves as an inspiration to others, leading to **a sustainable future within planetary boundaries.**



Endorsement of this statement is an expression of support for its contents and does not imply any political affiliation between the organisations listed above.