

President of the European Commission
Jean-Claude Juncker
European Commission
200, rue de la Loi
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 17 September 2014

Open letter on the role of sustainability in the new Commission

Dear Mr President,
Dear Jean-Claude Juncker,

We welcome your approach to make a fresh start for jobs and growth in Europe. In this context, sound growth is impossible without integrating sustainability. The recent Eurobarometer from September 8th 2014 leaves no doubt about citizens' expectations on protecting the environment, with 95% stating that it is in their personal interest and that more action would be needed.

Recent years have shown the scientific evidence and consensus about climate change and its impact on environment, economies and societies. The new UN report "Better Growth, Better Climate" concludes that action on climate change and investment in sustainable development can actually *improve* growth. Therefore we consider that sustainable development ought to be the cornerstone and guiding principle behind future EU policy. Investing in sustainable technology can drive innovation, create jobs, improve company profits and push EU to become a market leader while safeguarding the environment.

It is therefore regrettable that the concepts of "sustainable growth" or "green growth" are not reflected in most of the mission letters of the Vice Presidents or Commissioners. We would thus urge you to:

- Re-assess the mission letters under the prerequisite of sustainability and good management of natural resources and biodiversity, incorporating the economic value of resilient societies and healthy, well-functioning ecosystems in all relevant portfolios
- Make sustainability much more prominent in the portfolios of the Vice President and assigning one Vice President for sustainable development
- Include the 7th Environmental Action Programme and the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which are crucial for the environmental portfolio

EU citizens cannot afford growth at the expense of the environment and health. They expect the EU to take the lead in transforming its economy to make it truly sustainable.

Yours sincerely,

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