

Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Brussels, 22 December 2023

Dear President von der Leyen,

Re: Environmental Priorities under the Belgian Presidency of the European Union

It gives me great pleasure to send you a copy of the European Environmental Bureau's **Memorandum to the incoming Belgian Presidency of the European Union**, setting out our hopes and asks on the environment-related outcomes of the Presidency via **Ten Green Tests**. Prepared in cooperation with Seas at Risk, the Memorandum addresses not only topics dealt with in the Environment Council, but also those dealt with by other Council configurations, where relating to or affecting the environment.

The Belgian Presidency takes place at a moment of utmost relevance – being the last Council Presidency within this Commission and Parliament mandate, with particular responsibility for “finishing”, to the extent possible, negotiations on the remaining European Green Deal files (EGD) and reflecting on what is needed after this EGD. Also influencing the agenda for the way forward will be the European Parliament elections.

Over the last year, attacks on the EU's green agenda have been increasing in intensity and frequency and are evidence of a growing political strategy aimed at paralysing the pace of environmental legislative progress. Belgium, in its Presidency role, has an important responsibility to stand firm and resist short term political power interests and this deregulatory push to drop, delay or degrade environmental and social protections. We look to Belgium to steer the remaining files of the EGD and create a progressive vision for the EU for the next five years and beyond.

Advancing with ambition on the files under the Belgian Council Presidency can help promote needed transformative change to address the triple crisis of climate, biodiversity and pollution, while at the same time ensure a just transition that takes the social dimension into account and leaves no-one behind, and seize the opportunities regulation presents for innovation, resource and energy savings, and resilience. We therefore welcome the Belgian presidency priorities on the just transition, on climate adaptation and resilience and on circular economy.

The Memorandum has been prepared on behalf of the EEB's 180 member organizations, spread across 40 European countries and including many European networks, together representing more than 30 million environmentally concerned citizens. We hope that in the coming months this document will serve as a useful point of reference not only for the Belgian Presidency but more widely throughout the Member States and within the EU institutions.

The success of the Belgian Council Presidency depends upon a collective effort by all parties to the decision-making process. In this context, we urge you to support the Belgian Government in giving environmental issues the priority they deserve during its Presidency. We look forward to supporting the Presidency to achieve the needed ambitions.

Yours sincerely,



Cc: College of Commissioners

European Environmental Bureau