

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

Brussels, 30 June 2022

Dear President von der Leyen,

Re: Environmental Priorities under the Czech 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 Czech Presidency of the European Union, setting out our hopes and aspirations with respect to the environment-related outcomes of the Presidency. Prepared in cooperation with Seas at Risk, the Memorandum addresses not only topics dealt with under the auspices of the Environment Council but also those dealt with by other Council configurations where these concern matters relating to or affecting the environment.

The Czech Republic takes over the EU Presidency at a critical moment. The Russian war in Ukraine is a reprehensible world-changing attack on a European people, a reminder of the importance of the EU as a peace project and the value of solidarity. It also demonstrates how the EU's reliance on fossil-fuels feeds Putin's war and has complicated the EU's political response. Czech leadership is essential and welcome in these times of war and turmoil given the Czech Republic's understanding of what is at risk for the EU if a coordinated, coherent, compassionate and climate-proof response is not embraced. Czech leadership is required to promote significant progress in tackling the energy pricing crisis, in ensuring the social dimension is fully taken into account when addressing the climate crisis, in advancing and strengthening the EU's Fit for 55 package and in the REPowerEU package.

The Czech Presidency also has the opportunity to advance in addressing the biodiversity crisis through a strong Council position on the Nature Restoration Law, leading the EU at the CBD COP in Montreal and on the legislative proposal on pesticides. The Presidency should further seize opportunities on the circular economy; advance on air pollution, industrial emissions and chemicals; encourage adherence to the rule of law and governance in the EU; and promote global diplomacy on the European Green Deal (EGD).

The Memorandum has been prepared on behalf of a large constituency: the EEB's 180 member organizations, spread across more than 35 European countries and including a growing number of European networks, themselves have a combined individual membership of more than 30 million environmentally concerned citizens. We hope that in the coming months this document will serve as a

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useful point of reference not only for the Czech Presidency but more widely throughout the Member States and within the EU institutions.

The success of an EU Presidency depends upon a collective effort by all parties to the decision-making processes. In this context, we urge you to support the Czech Government in giving environmental issues the priority they deserve during its Presidency.

We would of course welcome any reflections that you may have regarding the issues addressed in the Memorandum.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that today will be my last day as EEB Secretary General. After 11 years in the post, I will be entering retirement and my colleague [REDACTED] [REDACTED] will be the new Secretary General from tomorrow, 1 July. I am truly sorry that we did not get to meet during your time as Commission President. Given that we are possibly your strongest and best ally in promoting the European Green Deal, I do hope that you will find the time to meet with my successor. In any case, I wish you all the best in your efforts to position the EU at the forefront of the transition to a sustainable future where people and nature thrive together.

Yours sincerely,



Secretary General

Cc: College of Commissioners
Kurt Vandenberghe, Member of the Von der Leyen Cabinet