

The Green New Deal for Europe

Europe today confronts twin crises — both of them of its own making.

The first crisis is economic. Inequality in Europe is at an all-time high: the top 10 percent of households own half of the continent's wealth, while the bottom 40 control just three percent. This is not a story of all boats rising at once. The share of workers living in poverty is on the rise. In 2016, 118 million Europeans, nearly one out of four, were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with rates of homelessness increasing across the continent. Even in 'prosperous' countries like Germany, relative poverty has been steadily rising for the last two decades.

This is a crisis by design. The policy of austerity, which severely constrains the public sector's spending capacity, has been built into European treaties and reinforced in subsequent agreements. This policy has starved Europe of investment in welfare services, worker training, and public infrastructure. Again, even in Germany — just like in France, Spain and Italy — net public investment has recently fallen to below zero.

The second is a crisis of climate, ecology, and environment. As Bill McKibben notes in the foreword to this report, we are already experiencing a mass extinction: the soil is degrading, the earth is heating, the ice is melting, the oceans are acidifying, and species after species is disappearing from the planet, while increasing amounts of greenhouse gases are pumped into our air. Large parts of the planet could become uninhabitable within our lifetimes if we do not change our ways, and change them fast.

This crisis, too, is a product of our political decisions. Centuries of subsidized pollution — and reckless neglect of the scientific evidence — have wrought havoc not only in Europe, but around the world. In all, 75 percent of the terrestrial environment has been "severely altered" by human actions, ushering in a new geological era marked by humanity's imprint on our lived environment.

These crises are bound together. The attachment to the failed, growth-oriented economic policies of the past has prevented Europe's governments from taking necessary action to redress the climate crisis. The result is commonly known as Black Zero: a fanatic pursuit of 'balanced budgets' has precluded government action on scientific evidence — even as historic heatwaves blanket Europe, disastrous wildfires tear through its towns and cities, and severe droughts strain its harvests.

Inequality is also linked to the changing climate in a more direct way. The richest 10 percent of people are responsible for 49 percent of all lifestyle consumption emissions — a measure of what we emit in our daily lives. Their average carbon footprints are 60 times higher than those of the poorest 10 percent. At the same time, just 100 companies are responsible for 71 percent of all global emissions.

A movement is growing to secure a better future. In large parts of Europe, voters consider the climate and environmental crises their top priority. Increasingly, activists and voters are recognising the interconnectedness of economic policies, social inequalities and environmental breakdown. And for the first time, Europe's political establishment appears to be listening. In her opening speech to European Parliament, Ursula von der Leyen vowed to deliver a "green deal" during her tenure as president of the European Commission.

Our challenge today, then, is no longer to persuade Europe's politicians that the climate and environmental crises exist. It is to help shape their solutions — and to ensure that they address inequality, reject austerity, and ditch the logic of extraction that has guided us to this critical juncture.

This report is the first attempt to present a clear, pragmatic, and comprehensive policy package for the Green New Deal for Europe.

The package is composed of three major initiatives. The first is the Green Public Works: an investment programme to kickstart Europe's equitable green transition. The second is an

Environmental Union: a regulatory and legal framework to ensure that the European economy transitions quickly and fairly, without transferring carbon costs onto front-line communities. The third and final is an Environmental Justice Commission: an independent body to research and investigate new standards of 'environmental justice' across Europe and among the multinationals operating outside its borders.

Source:

A BLUEPRINT FOR EUROPE'S JUST TRANSITION. (2019). Récupéré sur the Green New Deal for Europe: <https://report.gndforeurope.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GNDE-A-Blueprint-for-Europes-Just-Transition.pdf>

OUR VISION

THE GREEN NEW DEAL FOR EUROPE ENVISIONS A FAIRER, GREENER AND MORE JUST CONTINENT, WHICH STANDS TOGETHER TO CONFRONT OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CLIMATE CRISES.

Our proposal would transform European economies through investments in modern, emissions-free transport infrastructure, renewable energies and the technologies of the future.

We believe that any transformative agenda needs to be achievable, so the Green New Deal for Europe is designed to be implemented starting tomorrow - without raising taxes on any European worker. At the heart of our programme is the European Jobs Guarantee: a promise that anyone living in Europe can find a good, well-paying job.

Since private banks have failed to invest in our future, the Green New Deal for Europe will be funded entirely through green investment bonds issued by Europe's public investment banks. Financiers are hungry for safe assets, and state-backed debt provides that. The funds will be channelled to where they are needed most: small businesses, local communities and massive continent-wide infrastructure projects to make sure that everyone has the green services and utilities they need.

But we can only build a democratic Europe if we give power back to the people. So we propose investing the funds through a democratic public works agency, which will involve regional and municipal authorities, and whose decisions will be supported by citizens' assemblies.

The proposal is by no means radical. For nearly a decade, many European central banks have carried out programmes of quantitative easing, injecting money into the banking system in the hope that it would be reinvested in the real economy. But low investor confidence resulting from years of austerity has meant that much of this money was never invested where it was needed most. The Green New Deal for Europe proposes to redirect our resources to Europe's green transition.

We know that we cannot solve the climate crisis on our own. The Green New Deal for Europe is the first step towards connecting mainland Europe with similar initiatives in the United States and United Kingdom and creating the structures to support green investment on a global scale.

Source :

OUR VISION. (s.d.). Récupéré sur the Green New Deal for Europe: <https://www.gndforeurope.com/our-vision>