

Warsaw / Sofia / Prague / Bucharest / Bratislava / Budapest, 5 October 2020

Mateusz Morawiecki  
Prime Minister of Poland  
Al. Ujazdowskie 1/3  
00-583 Warsaw

Dear Prime Minister,

With this appeal we would like to turn to you ahead of the European Council on 15-16 October that will be decisive for European climate ambition and the Green Recovery of our economies.

Especially due to a common history of the last decades, countries of Central and Eastern Europe face similar economic and environmental development challenges, such as the heritage of post-Socialist-era heavy industry collapse as well as the need for significant investments<sup>1</sup> to enable the structural transformations that are necessary to implement ambitious climate action in line with the Paris Agreement. Even if our countries currently respond differently to the COVID-19 crisis and to the European Green Deal initiative, the core interest of our societies is very similar. Over the past six months of the pandemic, hundreds of thousands of citizens, experts, academics, civil society actors and artists etc. have called for economic and social renewal along common human and European values, including climate awareness at national and European levels<sup>2</sup>. With this appeal, we would like to reinforce these earlier initiatives and highlight the need to ensure that all spending under the EU budget, and the EU Cohesion Policy and Just Transition Fund in particular, needs to be climate-proof and boost the transition towards climate neutrality, in the interest of Central European societies and economies.

The next decade will be crucial for taking necessary action to avoid even worse climate change impacts in the near future, as climate change impacts are already hitting our region the hardest in Europe. Taking into account other ecological challenges (biodiversity loss, water shortages) the need to develop comprehensive strategies on how to take care of people and the environment is more crucial and urgent than ever. Only by increasing climate action now, we may avoid the most severe extreme weather impacts such as substantial decline of crop yields, increased water distress, heat wave frequency and severity, expected to cause EU welfare losses of 175 billion EUR per year<sup>3</sup>. We are alarmingly off track with the Paris Agreement goal to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C, and are heading towards a world that is 3-4 degrees Celsius hotter than pre-industrial levels by the end of this century with current unsustainable policies. It is therefore crucial for the EU to fully act on its commitment under the Paris Agreement.

We cannot exit from the current economic crisis by deepening other existing ones. We need reforms and smart policy that can effectively address the multiple economic, health and climate crises at the same time. The Central European region cannot lag behind anymore in this process, and there is growing support for much more ambitious climate action and a more sustainable economic model in our countries - Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

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<sup>1</sup> Eg. more than 50% of public investment in Hungary came from Cohesion Policy funds:  
<https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/Other/-of-cohesion-policy-funding-in-public-investment-p/7bw6-2dw3>

<sup>2</sup> See: Annex 1

<sup>3</sup> JRC (2020). Climate change impacts and adaptation in Europe (PESETA IV).  
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/peseta-iv>

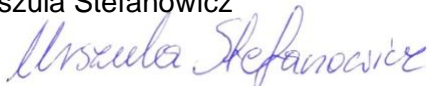
Now, just before the European Council on 15-16 October that shall address enhancing the EU 2030 climate target, with Member States currently drafting their national Recovery and Resilience Plans as well as their EU funds spending plans, it is a pivotal moment for ambitious climate action both at European and national levels. This is why we, as representatives of the Central European civil society, businesses, cities and local and regional initiatives, and academia are calling on you to engage in a just and fair green economic recovery that would:

- Ensure that EU climate action is in line with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement by supporting the increase of the EU climate target to at least 65% emission reductions, compared to 1990 levels;
- Make the European Green Deal, the EU budget and Member States' recovery and climate strategies ambitious and coherent by ensuring that EU taxpayers' money and investments are driving climate action as much as possible;
- Enhance social justice while combating the climate and other ecological crises we are facing;
- Be based on a deep re-thinking of our current economic model to make it compatible with climate protection and social justice, instead of quick fixes;
- Create quality, stable and healthy jobs and push for innovations to serve us and future generations, and build prospects for a sustainable future;
- Include public support for policies and projects that combine climate action with improving air, water and soil quality, public services such as health care and education;
- Develop energy efficiency measures and support for renewable energy sources, sustainable transportation and mobility, and focus on agriculture and food;
- Place European values, democracy and solidarity in its core; improve participation and transparency in designing overarching policies and particular solutions.

Comprehensive green recovery strategies and particular solutions are already there, developed and supported by various stakeholders and civil society. Recovery packages and financial stimulus measures that are being prepared by the European Union and Member States provide a unique opportunity to focus on the social and economic co-benefits of ambitious climate action, also for the Central European region.

Yours Sincerely,

Urszula Stefanowicz



Polish Ecological Club Mazovian Branch

Climate Coalition

On behalf of over 180 organisations from Bulgaria, Czech Rep., Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia (see: Annex 2).

The appeal will be forwarded for notice to:

- Minister responsible for climate issues
- Minister responsible for development issues

- Minister responsible for infrastructure issues
- Frans Timmermans, First Executive Vice-President of the European Commission
- Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission
- David Maria Sassoli, President of the European Parliament
- Charles Michel, President of the European Council
- Angela Merkel, on behalf of the German EU Council presidency

The same letter is also being sent to the Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, Romanian Prime Minister Ludovic Orban, Slovak Prime Minister Igor Matovič and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

## **Annex 1**

Selected green recovery initiatives:

### A. Europe

- “Recovering Better” briefing, E3G: <https://www.e3g.org/publications/briefing-summary-recovering-better-a-green-equitable-and-resilient-recovery/>
- “New Deal for Nature and People”, WWF: <https://explore.panda.org/newdeal>
- Joint statement of the Members of the European Council: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/43076/26-vc-euco-statement-en.pdf>
- Green 10 Letter: <https://green10.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/G10-letter-to-VDL-MFF-2021-27-and-EU-recovery-fund-May20.pdf>, <http://www.foeeurope.org/Green10-million-people-green-healthy-just-recovery>

### B. Bulgaria

- Open letter by "Coalition for Green Restart", led by Greenpeace Bulgaria, WWF Bulgaria, [MOVE.BG](https://move.bg) and the Institute of Circular Economics: <https://move.bg/green-restart-article-eng>

### C. Czech Republic

- Czech Climate Coalition’s statement: <https://klimatickakoalice.cz/pro-media/aktuality/stanovisko-klimaticke-koalice-a-zeleneho-kruhu-k-vychodiskum-z-koronavirove-pandemie>

### D. Hungary

- “A life-affirming society and economy” petition, Friends of the Earth Hungary: <https://mtvsz.hu/a-life-affirming-society-and-economy-petition>

### E. Poland

- “Time for Restart”: <https://www.czasnarestart.pl/#time-for-restart>
- Polish Climate Coalition’s statement: <http://www.koalicjaklimatyczna.org/stanowisko-koalicji-klimatycznej-w-sprawie-odpowiedzi-na-nakladajace-sie-kryzysy-klimatyczny-zdrowotny-i-gospodarczy>

### F. Romania

- “Tomorrow is decided today”: <https://mainesedecideazi.ro>

### G. Slovakia

- Green Restart Initiative: <https://zelenyrestart.sk/>
- Online campaign and petition "Clima needs you": <https://www.klimatapotrebuje.sk/>