

## European Parliament Election Manifesto 23 - 26 May 2019

### Summary

- Our world faces an unprecedented ecological crisis: scientists from across the globe are ringing the alarm when it comes to the reality of climate breakdown and unparalleled loss of nature which will compromise jobs and livelihoods.
- When it comes to our environment, Scotland, the UK, other EU Member States and the world as a whole face the same challenges, from climate change to the proliferation of invasive species to air pollution and the overconsumption of raw materials. Joint ambition and cooperation are therefore critical.
- As highlighted by the IPBES Global Assessment<sup>1</sup>, one of the key levers we must use to bring out the necessary change for our environment is strengthening our laws and ensuring their implementation.
- A critically important decade lies ahead where action is needed to develop a new Global Deal for Nature and ensure a clear trajectory for meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2030.
- Scotland's environment is our greatest national asset and of global importance. Scotland is home to a third of Europe's breeding seabirds, our waters make up a staggering 13 per cent of all European seas while one of Europe's largest expanses of blanket bog peatlands is found in Caithness and Sutherland.
- Given the scale of the challenge which our planet is facing, regardless of Scotland's constitutional future, we cannot afford to unpick existing environmental standards. We need to build on environmental laws to ensure that our nature is protected now and in the future.

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 35 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

Members of the European Parliament will help co-develop EU policy at a critical juncture where accelerated action is needed to transition to a sustainable economy where we live in harmony with our environment. Scottish MEPs must support ambitious action to protect and enhance our environment whether it is contributing to the development and achievement of ambitious EU policies for the environment or spearheading actions by progressive domestic policies.

**This briefing sets out Scottish Environment LINK's manifesto ahead of the 2019 European Parliament elections. We call on Scottish MEP candidates to:**

### 1. SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

The EU is committed to sustainable development and has long discussed the need for alternative metrics to GDP. In Scotland, the National Performance Framework seeks to highlight how a successful nation needs to look beyond purely economic indicators. It states that 'sustainable economic growth [should not be] achieved at the expense of our social interests or those of the environment. As such, our economy is ecologically accountable as well as socially responsible'<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipbes.net/news/ipbes-global-assessment-summary-policymakers-pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/economy>

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Scottish MEPs should support the transition to a more sustainable economy which works in harmony with our natural environment.

## 2. ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS ARE IMPLEMENTED

The EU has developed many laws and policies to safeguard our environment, from climate change and biodiversity loss to air quality and water pollution. While EU laws provide for ambitious standards, it is critically important that environmental laws are upheld. Scottish MEPs should support efforts to ensure environmental protections are adhered to at the EU and domestic levels.

As highlighted by the IPBES Global Assessment, one of the key levers we have to bring out the necessary change is by strengthening our laws and their implementation. Only when strong laws are enforced can provisions for environmental protection deliver for our natural environment.

## 3. SUPPORT AMBITIOUS CLIMATE ACTION TO LIMIT TEMPERATURE CHANGE TO 1.5°C DEGREES

Strong EU action is needed to ensure a just transition to a net zero economy. This can be achieved by supporting strong greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets but also deploying nature-based solutions. A healthier and more resilient natural environment can not only sequester carbon, but it can also better defend itself from the impacts of climate change.

Scotland can lead the way given its commitment to achieving net zero by 2045 and its potential for rolling out nature-based solutions whether this is through peatland restoration or enhancing blue carbon. The EU should also set a net-zero deadline date, following Scotland's lead. Such a target would help Scotland meet its net-zero target, irrespective of Scotland's relationship with the EU.

## 4. PROTECT OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

With 1 million species at risk of extinction, the rate of biodiversity loss will impact our way of life. We need strengthen existing protections for nature. These need to deliver:

- a) A strong network of well-managed protected areas to safeguard what are nature's most precious places
- b) Clear action for enhancing our natural assets and support social and economic prosperity of its rural and urban communities.

EU policies on agriculture and fisheries need to be aligned with those goals both in term of policy development and implementation. The current CAP review is an opportunity to deliver change. Recent [Eurobarometer evidence](#) indicates that 55% of respondents in the UK believe that intensive farming and forestry and well as overfishing are contributing to biodiversity loss – this is an increase of ten percentage points since the question was last asked in 2015.

Ahead of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2020, Scotland needs to work with partners to secure an ambitious Global Deal for Nature. This means developing a strong national position as well as helping drive the one being set with EU partners.

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This document is supported by the following Scottish Environment LINK members:

- **RSPB Scotland**
- **Woodland Trust Scotland**
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- **WWF Scotland**

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