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## **Green Law Group Only Cautiously Optimistic over Pledges of the European Green Deal**

### *Will environmental justice be delivered eventually?*

Justice & Environment (J&E), the leading green law group for the civil society in the EU, is cautiously optimistic over the proposed “European Green Deal” due to its weak language on environmental justice.

Ursula von der Leyen, the new President of the European Commission, published her political manifesto called “A Union that strives for more - My agenda for Europe” earlier this year, where she promised to develop “A European Green Deal”. “Since this moment, a great deal of hope was attached to this initiative, and people expected the Commission to take a new direction towards sustainable development”, said Csaba Kiss, the Coordinator of J&E.

The actual text of the “European Green Deal” was published on Wednesday, however, J&E is only cautiously optimistic over what it can bring in guaranteeing environmental justice to the public.

Firstly, you have to wait until page 23 in a document that has only 24 pages to read anything about justice. And when you get to the actual pledges of the incoming Commission, it says that:

*“The Commission will **consider** revising the Aarhus Regulation to improve access to administrative and judicial review at EU level for citizens and NGOs who have concerns about the legality of decisions with effects on the environment. The Commission will also **take action** to improve their access to justice before national courts in all Member States.”*

J&E is confident that the aims are good, but at the same time, the language is weak and concrete details are missing. “Environmental justice has been neglected by the EU legislator, both on the EU and the Member State levels, for very long. Words like “consider” can only wake up moderate hopes in those who want to see the rights of the public to information, participation and justice enforced in the Union”, Kiss stated.

J&E believes that no major environmental goals will be attainable without laying emphasis on the rights of the people, and on ensuring that those rights are enforced, even via legal procedures. “We are confident that access to justice should be a

cornerstone of the “European Green Deal” and we hope that it will get appropriate attention in its implementation”, Kiss concluded.

**Notes to editors:**

1. The link to von der Leyen’s A Union that strives for more - My agenda for Europe:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf)
2. The link to the European Green Deal:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/communication-european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/communication-european-green-deal_en)

*Justice and Environment (J&E) is an association of public interest environmental law organizations. The objective of J&E is to contribute to a better status of environment and human health in Europe where J&E is active through the use of law (European and national environmental laws) and the improvement of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters by legal means. To learn more visit <http://justiceandenvironment.org/>*

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