


FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN  
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES  
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE  
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



# UNited for climate JUSTICE

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**DECLARATION WITH GUIDING  
PROPOSALS FOR  
PROGRESSIVE CLIMATE ACTION**



## ABOUT FEPS

FEPS is the European progressive political foundation and a platform for ideas and dialogue that establishes an intellectual crossroads between social democracy and the European project. Its main purpose is to nourish fresh thinking through research, dialogue, interactive public events and its publications. FEPS works in close collaboration with progressive and social democratic organisations, and in particular national foundations and think tanks across Europe and the world.

## PARTNERS



This declaration and policy paper are the result of the reflection process from the discussions held in the framework of the FEPS United for Climate Justice steering committee meetings. The input towards which derives from everyone who has taken part. The guiding proposals included in this paper have generated a significant level of consensus among group members, however not all members or their respective organisations may agree with all of them. Nevertheless they are considered important drivers to trigger the necessary ambition increase.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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United for Climate Justice

Declaration with guiding proposals and policy paper, August 2019



*Declaration with guiding proposals  
in consultation with*

## **FEPS United for Climate Justice Steering Committee**

Presented ahead of the UN Climate Action Summit New York 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019  
and FEPS side-event in New York on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 in the framework of





# FEPS DECLARATION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

## Who we are

The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and its partners wish to propose guiding principles in the United for Climate Justice Declaration. Under the chairpersonship of Teresa Ribera, Minister for the Ecological Transition in Spain, we convened a steering committee of concerned stakeholders from across the world encompassing policy experts, academics, political, civil society and business representatives to build these guiding principles and to propose specific action-oriented recommendations. FEPS and its partners hope that these recommendations can facilitate rapid decarbonisation and at the same time enhance global economic equality.

## What we want

Climate justice is significant for us because it stands for an agenda that links the struggle for a prosperous, safe future for all with a fight against inequalities and exclusion. We want to ensure political commitment to safeguard our planet and livelihoods while ensuring a sustainable transition guided by the principle of fairness with social justice. Our vision for the future is of a flourishing carbon neutral society where production and consumption are organised with a high-level of solidarity and responsibility. We also want to achieve equality between and amongst peoples and countries, and ensure that all generations have a better standard of living. Therefore we urge governments to build on the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, to realise the commitment they entail and use them as the guiding basis for our societies. Such an achievement shall result in a better society and world to live in.



To this end fossil fuels need to be phased out. We want to see an end to short-term decision-making that is locking countries into unsustainable practices for the long-term. They prove to be expensive, inefficient and undercut development in sustainable infrastructure. The result of these goes against meeting international, already-agreed climate objectives, is leaving stranded assets and continuous environmental degradation.

**Our message is especially meaningful** now due to the momentum, created by citizens themselves taking to the streets across the world, to demand a change and serious action in the face of climate change. We are calling for a re-think in how we address the challenge of the climate emergency. Actions to reclaim the environment, economic well-being and social mobility are compatible. Crucially by,

- binding the deep link between social progress, environmental protection and economic sustainability;
- bringing about a significant change in the way social and economic progress is understood and measured; and
- considering the values of climate justice and empowering our societies in order to safeguard the environment.

We are asking politicians and policy-makers gathered at the UN Climate Action Summit and those in all the world's capitals to live up to the expectations and to ensure a world that allows us to respect nature and live in harmony with the environment that surrounds us and leave a proud legacy for the next generations to build on.



## **Why we want it**

Now is the turning point. We have been living in a climate emergency for a while. Addressing this issue is now firmly on the public agenda. We support the incredible amount of people who have taken to the streets in recent months and we share the public frustration that not enough is being done to respect the Paris agreement and the 1.5°C target, achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 or recognise the latest IPCC report. We share too the anxiety that shifts in political terms mean weakening of the commitment to fulfil promises, while in the shadow of that, climate deniers growing in strength again. This is a turning point in human history, where coordinated and ambitious action is the only way to cross to a world that is able, not only to survive, but also to thrive in the future.

The difference we want to make with our proposals is to set out the strong need for clear collective action and systemic change to which we – coming from diverse communities, united by a common goal – are ready to contribute the best way we can.

Yet while we are ready to take our responsibility, immediate action needs to come from political action and political will. The financial and necessary tools from governments and powerful economic actors as means to achieving this are available. Politicians need to put forward a new way of thinking and a new strategy to introduce new tools and ways of measuring progress. They have to provide guidance for civic dialogue and resources to make the changes possible.



At the same time transnational corporations need to align their investment decisions with the 1.5 degree goal, shift their employment practices to one based on greater societal equity, and alter their development plans to support the transition to a sustainable future.

### **What we expect**

Driven by this motivation a long-term reflection process was undertaken, which led to drafting this declaration and now we bring its main points to address the UN Climate Action Summit in New York this September 2019. By means of this to raise the voices of the communities we represent, we are asking global decision-makers to commit to **Climate Justice** and our five guiding proposals outlined here below. To this aim, we fully welcome the motto of the summit that this is **“A race we can win!”**



# FIVE GUIDING PROPOSALS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

## 1. Include Just Transition plans in the process of preparing NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions)

Parties to the Paris agreement should commit to adhering to this which will help serve towards part of fostering **New Global Social-Ecological Contract**. Together this will ensure the equally fair (pre) and redistribution of wealth and strengthening welfare policies whilst phasing out fossil fuels and moving to a decarbonised society.

## 2. Climate-proof global investment, finance and trade

As part of systemic change in this area for **stimulating a planet and people - centred approach to climate investment**, governments at all levels should take a range of proposed measures including ensuring tax justice, committing to climate and social-friendly procurement standards, incentivising sustainable modes of transport and introducing an internationally agreed levy on airline fuels. As well as requiring countries and businesses to commit to carbon disclosure and facilitating direct support for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to invest in green and social initiatives.

## 3. Engage young people in decision-making through green youth councils

As part of guaranteeing **the harnessing of civic participation and responding with effective governance**, these can be established by governments at all levels as well as implementing impact assessment testing for future-proofing policies and introducing a guardian for future generations.





#### 4. **Establish an international framework for sustainability and environmental rights**

As part of **reinforcing and advancing a rights-based approach to climate action**, governments should establish an internationally operative and respected framework that includes recognition also for environmental defenders, climate-displaced persons, the right to a healthy environment and procedural rights.

#### 5. **Require a more adequate target of nature-based solutions in NDCs.**

As part of **recognising the intrinsic value of nature** governments should commit to establishing more adequate targets which embrace nature-based solutions, the most cost-effective way both in terms of mitigation and adaptation. At the same time guaranteeing autonomy of indigenous people and traditional communities regarding the control of their territories would also serve towards better valuing nature.

*For further details please see the policy paper that corresponds to this declaration.*



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