

The road to 2030: How the EU can support a thriving planet



Photo: Sydelle Willow Smith

Summary of recommendations

1. Maintain, implement, and enforce the Green Deal *acquis*

- > Implement timely key EU legislation, including: the EU Deforestation Regulation, the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive.
- > Deliver on announced initiatives and open legislative files, including: The Hazardous Pesticides export ban and the Green Claims Directive.

2. Build the European Green Deal 2.0

- > Double down on green ambitions: Expand existing legislation and introduce new legislative initiatives for areas where action has been missing or delayed.
- > Generate positive impacts worldwide and ensure negative ones are mitigated through support and partnerships.

3. Adopt a post-2027 budget that leverages global sustainability

- > Increase funding for the new EU international cooperation instrument.
- > Increase climate and biodiversity spending targets in the post-2027 international cooperation instrument.
- > Improve access to EU funding for civil society in partner countries.

THE GREEN DEAL AS A BUILDING BLOCK OF THE 2030 AGENDA

The [Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023](#) flagged that countries need to seriously increase their ambition to achieve the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets. The [IPCC](#) has warned that without strengthened cross-sectoral policies, the world is likely to surpass the critical 1.5°C tipping point by 2035. To limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, emissions should already be decreasing, and need to almost be halved by 2030.

Despite the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework—which outlined 23 targets to be achieved by 2030—most improvements on biodiversity have been modest. Deforestation and forest degradation—mainly linked to agricultural and timber production—remain major global threats.

The European Green Deal is a groundbreaking strategic framework. It has led to the introduction of major directives and regulations on all dimensions of sustainability. However, the development of this legislation has been piecemeal and hasn't always been able to effectively address inter-sectional issues—such as the crossover between environmental and human rights. A consistent, holistic approach is necessary to streamline the EU's approach to sustainability, ensuring cohesion across all action and policy areas.

The EU has also not managed to share the Green Deal objectives with all partner countries, nor developed strong partnerships for this purpose. Even as many voices are pushing back against key Green Deal policies such as the EU Deforestation Regulation and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, the Rainforest Alliance calls on EU decision makers to stand firm on the Green Deal, and to build on it to further steer the global sustainability agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DECISION-MAKERS FOR THE 2024–2029 EU TERM

1. Maintain, implement, and enforce the Green Deal *acquis*

Legislation adopted in the framework of the Green Deal should be maintained and implemented at the approved dates. Recent backlash on EU environmental legislation must not lead to dismantling and postponing crucial regulations and directives. They may require substantial efforts from economic operators but will deliver positive results for people and the planet inside and outside the EU.

Implement timely key EU legislation which aims to improve global sustainability

During the EU's 2019–2024 political term, major pieces of legislation with the potential to correct decades of inaction were adopted, setting out to address major sustainability issues, and even the playing field. However, to realise their objectives, they need to be properly implemented on time, which is a heavy lift considering the opposition they triggered.

The EU Deforestation regulation (EUDR) epitomises this: This regulation is the result of massive popular support—as demonstrated by the [2020 public consultation](#) and its 1,194,757 respondents—but requires companies to adapt to new, unseen before, requirements by December 2024, requiring a complete overhaul of key agricultural supply chains. Deforestation remains a major global threat and is a root cause of climate change and human rights violations. It is urgent for the EU to take action to enable effective implementation of the EUDR, in spite of numerous calls for its postponement. Voluntary commitments to tackle deforestation failed to turn the tide; we need a strong signal from the world's biggest trade bloc that reckless deforestation is not acceptable.

The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive are also cornerstones for sustainability on the EU market and beyond. They have the potential to drastically change the way companies do business. A recent [Social Benchmark](#) assessed the world's 2,000 most influential companies and found that a shocking 80 percent of them fail on human rights due diligence. It is clear that legal directives like the CSDDD are the only way to move the needle.

The European Commission must deliver on all the needed secondary legislation, guidance, and systems as scheduled, to ensure their implementation as decided by co-legislators, and make sure the EU remains a credible sustainability leader worldwide.

Deliver on announced initiatives and open legislative files

Key legislative initiatives that were announced in communications (such as the 2019 Communication on the European Green Deal)—or even proposed—by the European Commission could not be finalised before the end of the 2019–2024 term. Moving forward, it is crucial to deliver on these promises and to build on all the work undertaken until now. In particular, the Rainforest Alliance calls for:

- **The development of an export ban of hazardous pesticides which are already banned in the EU.** On 14 October 2020, in the [Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability](#), the European Commission committed that the EU would “lead by example, and, in line with international commitments, ensure that hazardous chemicals banned in the European Union are not produced for export,” and to develop a legislative proposal by 2023. The EU cannot continue to allow the export of pesticides that are considered unsafe for use within the EU itself. It is a double standard where people and nature in low- and middle-income countries suffer from the negative impacts of hazardous pesticides. The Commission must release the related impact assessment and work on a legislative proposal as soon as possible.
- **The swift adoption of the Green Claims Directive.** The Green Claims Directive complements the Empowering Consumers Directive, which is already in force and will apply as of 27 September 2026. It is an essential directive, which aims at putting an end to weak and misleading environmental claims and labels—currently, [40 percent of claims have no supporting evidence and half of all green labels offer weak or non-existent verification](#). EU decision makers should ensure the Green Claims Directive is adopted without delay. This is necessary to complete the EU legal framework on sustainability claims and ensure legal certainty for traders and environmental labelling schemes. It is urgent to enable consumers to make informed decisions on sustainability and to verify that their choices are linked to actual sustainability impacts.

2. Build the European Green Deal 2.0

Double down on ambition

The Rainforest Alliance calls on EU decision makers to build on the vision of the Green Deal to meet global sustainability objectives; we only have a few years left before hitting several critical environmental tipping points. The Green Deal principles and objectives are still valid but require increased ambition across all sectors to materialise. This means expanding the scope of existing legislation and introducing new legislative initiatives for areas where action has been missing or delayed. The European Commission should take stock of the Green Deal and assess where further action is needed to demonstrate that the EU can consistently raise the bar on sustainability.

Generate positive impacts worldwide

The new 2024–2029 EU term should also be an opportunity to further develop the global dimension of the Green Deal. While included in the European Green Deal, it has lacked a consistent and streamlined approach. Several pieces of legislation that were adopted during the 2019–2024 term have impacts in EU partner countries—the EUDR and the CSDDD, for example—which were often neglected, including in the related impact assessments. To ensure no one is “left behind”, as stated in the Green Deal communication, and to deliver on all the Sustainability Development Objectives, the EU should consider the impact of EU policies outside of the EU, and ensure negative ones are mitigated with measures of support and partnerships. In this regard, the Vision for Agriculture and Food announced by Ursula von der Leyen should be a building block to work on global systems.

3. Adopt a post-2027 budget that leverages global sustainability

The EU is the largest donor of Official Development Assistance and a major player in international agreements. Despite the 30 percent spending target for climate action in the current Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument–Global Europe and its contribution to the overall biodiversity spending target of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), there’s a growing disparity between the instrument’s global ambitions and the available resources. Therefore, when developing the next MFF and the new EU international cooperation instrument, it is crucial the EU and its Member States work on new and additional funding from innovative sources at sufficient scale to meet their international commitments. EU decision makers should also increase the climate and biodiversity spending targets in the post-2027 International Cooperation instrument, with a focus on supporting climate adaptation, nature-based solutions, and co-benefits for human rights and livelihoods.

Access to EU funding should be facilitated for the civil society in partner countries, through transparent funding models that allow civil society organizations to access or manage EU programs.



About the Rainforest Alliance

The [Rainforest Alliance](#) is a global non-governmental organisation working in the field of sustainability at the intersection of agriculture, forests and business. Our aim is to make responsible business the new normal so that people and nature can thrive together. Our alliance spans 70 countries and includes farmers and forest communities, companies, governments, civil society, and millions of individuals. Together we work to protect forests, improve the livelihoods of farmers and forest communities, promote their human rights, and help them mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis. Our [certification standard](#) has been implemented in key sectors since 2020, including [cocoa](#), [coffee](#), [tea](#), [bananas](#), nuts, fruits & vegetables and spices, complemented with other approaches such as [sustainable landscapes](#) and advocacy.

For more information, check our [2023 Annual report](#)



The Rainforest Alliance is creating a more sustainable world by using social and market forces to protect nature and improve the lives of farmers and forest communities.

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