

## EU elections 'great opportunity' to ensure next legislature follows 'green agenda'

Written by Martin Banks on 13 May 2019 in News  
News

A key architect of the Paris Agreement on climate change says the upcoming European elections are a "great opportunity" to ensure that the next EU legislature "follows a green agenda."



*Photo credit: Press Association*

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Speaking to this website, Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation (ECF), said she hopes that tackling climate change and greenhouse gas emissions will be one of the top priorities for mainstream parties contesting the elections.

At the same time, Tubiana, formerly France's chief climate change ambassador, admitted she was "worried" that so-called populist and nationalist parties may make significant gains at the elections.

This was a particular concern, she said, because such groupings had traditionally relegated the importance of tackling climate issues.

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While the Greens, she conceded, are not expected to make any noticeable gains in the elections, she was still hopeful that a coalition of mainstream parties can be forged to champion the environmental agenda.

Tubiana, a key French negotiator in the talks that paved the way for the ground-breaking Paris climate deal, said she was also “encouraged” by the young protestors who have taken to the streets in Europe to protest at the perceived lack of action on climate action.

She said, “This is a movement, not a political party, and they have attracted some criticism but they are proving effective.”

Tubiana, who was speaking at an informal press briefing at the Brussels office of ECF, also said she was “pretty gloomy” at the outcome of a summit of EU leaders in Romania last week.

“The [Sibiu] summit was a chance to clarify climate policy and set out a more ambitious agenda. The failure to do this is worrying” **Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation**

The leaders met in the Romanian town of Sibiu and agreed on ten points regarding the future of Europe, but climate change featured only tenth as a priority.

Tubiana said, “The summit was a chance to clarify climate policy and set out a more ambitious agenda. The failure to do this is worrying.”

She added that a recent EU-wide poll showed that in 11 Member States, climate change was ranked in the top three priorities for the EU to address in the next legislature.

Further reaction to the outcome of the summit came from Greens/EFA co-leader Ska Keller who said, “The seriousness of the threat of climate change still clearly hasn’t registered for the European leaders in Sibiu.”

“Climate change featured merely as an afterthought, demonstrating that the urgent pleas from the younger generation have fallen on deaf ears. They pledge to be responsible global leaders, but are instead showing a complete dereliction of duty with regard to the future of our planet.”

“We extend our full solidarity to the students of #FridaysForFuture to make climate a priority and set

binding targets for Europe to meet the climate crisis," she added.

Party colleague Dutch MEP Bas Eickhout agreed, saying, "The scientific community have been categoric: there can be no future without climate action."

"This [Sibiu summit] declaration is not fit for purpose and an insult to the young people who are calling on political leaders to take concrete climate action. It misses a golden opportunity to get serious about setting binding targets for Europe to be carbon neutral before 2050."

"The clock is ticking but the young and old marching for climate today give us hope that eventually the message will start to get through."

Green campaigners said the summit conclusions represent a "reprehensible weakening from EU statements" ahead of the summit, in which sustainability was more explicit.

They said the summit's formal declaration, however, "does not mention sustainable Europe, biodiversity collapse and relegates climate change to an afterthought."

Friends of the Earth Europe said the post-summit press conference statements did not mention sustainability but repeated 'unity' seven times.

Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that "there was no urgent decision to take".

Jagoda Munic, Director of Friends of the Earth Europe, said: "European leaders have failed to even mention climate action and sustainability in their concluding statements about the future of Europe - suggesting they are not prioritising citizens' concerns or reality."

"The display of European unity is a good thing in the face of clarion voices of division, but it must be the precursor to bold, urgent and transformational change for the benefit of all people and our planet."

### **About the author**

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