



4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
**EUROPE'S TRANSFORMATION:
WHERE PEOPLE MATTER**

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14-15 NOVEMBER 2018 AUSTRIA CENTER VIENNA

Call to Action: Getting Europe on track with SDGs

International Growth in Transition Conference 2018 calls for action on climate protection and greater sustainability

Vienna, 15 November 2018: Ten concrete proposals form the Call to Action presented to Frans Zimmermann, the First Vice-President of the European Commission by Hans Bruyninckx, the Director of the European Environment Agency, at the end of the fourth international Growth in Transition Conference in Vienna. Sustainability Minister Elisabeth Köstinger emphasised the importance of global transition towards sustainable society in the framework of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Call to Action was formulated by the Conference participants and calls for the European Commission together with the EU Member States to focus on key themes such as decarbonisation, the circular economy, sustainable management of natural resources, halting climate change, and digitalization.

Sustainability Minister Elisabeth Köstinger: "We are not waiting for the future, we are creating it. Economic growth and climate protection are not contradictory. The SDGs are our roadmap for transformation towards greater sustainability. They need to be more strongly embedded within European politics and the politics of nation states and we will work towards this goal. Austria wants to be among the top five states to play a leading role in implementing the SDGs; quite simply, because we owe it to ourselves and to future generations."

The Call to Action makes further recommendations to promote the development of eco-innovations and a sustainable financial sector. In addition, a stronger focus must be placed on sustainability research and increasing public awareness of sustainability issues, not least through more intensive cooperation with the media.

Frans Timmermans, the First Vice-President of the European Commission, welcomed the Call to Action at the Conference: "If everyone was to live as Europeans, we would need almost three planets. It is clear, that the great challenge of our time is how to change the way we produce, consume, work and live. No one can afford to be a freerider anymore because we're all in this together. Europe has the skills, the ingenuity and the courage to lead the way. And that is exactly what we should do together, now."

Hans Bruyninckx, Director of the European Environment Agency called for unity: "There is an urgent need for action, we have to speed up and must not believe that we are already doing everything possible. We need to think beyond 2030 - we need different, strong policies and fundamental transitions in our economic systems. And above all, we should work together with the young people."



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The Call to Action also proposes the expansion of the “Growth in Transition” initiative at European level and calls for the involvement of all citizens in the development of a sustainable future for the European Union.

President of the National Assembly Wolfgang Sobotka noted at the start of the Conference that a holistic approach is crucial for the transformation towards greater sustainability: “Sustainability policy is not limited to environmental and climate policy, it involves all areas of policy and life. We need to appeal to people, explain interdependencies, and gain their understanding. This works most efficiently when we involve as many citizens as possible, particularly at the level of local communities.”

About the Growth in Transition Conference

Experts from the social and environmental sectors, from politics and the economy, came together at the **Growth in Transition** Conference “**Europe’s Transformation: Where People Matter**” on 14 and 15 November 2018 at the Austria Center in Vienna to discuss how economic growth can be achieved while simultaneously protecting the climate. The Conference was organised by the Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism for Austria and the Austrian Environment Agency in the context of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and supported by the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens together with a further 30 partner organisations. It makes a key contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate protection. The Conference was funded by Horizon 2020, the EU Programme for Research and Innovation.

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