

MIND THE GAP // CLOSE THE GAP



The Perspective from Environmental Civil Society Organisations
on the New European Bauhaus.

June 2021

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WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION?

An Environmental Civil Society Organisation is an organisational structure whose members serve Environmental and general interests through a democratic process, and which plays the role of mediator between public authorities, businesses, and citizens.

This means that Environmental CSO are diverse in their shapes and sizes, but all share a common goal within a wider mission to promote a sustainable development for all and where 'the Environment' is within its main scope of activities.

They can include grassroots organisations, non-governmental organisations, social partners, among many others.

*Adapted from EUR-Lex definition of '[Civil Society Organisation](#)', applying it to the Environmental field.

PREAMBLE

We are currently facing what are perhaps the biggest challenges ever encountered by our society: climate change and biodiversity destruction. These two go hand in hand, and it is up to each one of us to be part of the solution.

The role of Environmental Civil Society Organisations (Environmental CSO) in this process is, we believe, crucial. Our work in close proximity to local communities places us in a unique and privileged position to foster a much needed systemic change.

We also believe that only together, as a society, across all levels and fields, we can accomplish change. But not all are yet on board, and the movement initiated by the European Green Deal towards a truly sustainable society risks breaking apart, if we fail to recognise and act upon this gap.

PREAMBLE

It is therefore with great hope that we witness the emergence of the New European Bauhaus program, as an opportunity to re-invent and re-imagine our future. This is our message to support the build-up of a new program where creativity and dialogue are crucial to its success.

This message is the result of a group of Environmental Civil Society Organisations that met to debate their needs, concerns, motivations and aspirations in relation to the New European Bauhaus. It is the result of our on-the-ground experiences and collective discussions.

Let us now and together recognise the distance of many European Union citizens to this green movement and engage each one in this transition. Let us together mind this gap and close this gap.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

PART I – ON PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THRIVING WITHIN THE LIMITS OF NATURE

1. Recognise and inscribe the importance of change towards a sustainable model that operates within the natural boundaries of our planet, addressing issues such as biodiversity, climate change, energy consumption, health, mobility, accessibility and well being.
2. Recognise and inscribe the need for boosting a circular economy at all levels of our society, and acknowledge the importance of context and local community-specific circular models.
3. Recognise and inscribe the need to re-think the current unsustainable consumption patterns of our society as to adjust them within the planet boundaries.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

PART I – ON PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THRIVING WITHIN THE LIMITS OF NATURE

4. Recognise and inscribe the essential role played by the built environment in its broader understanding and how we should work towards their redesign, adaptability, reversibility, decarbonisation, and energy consumption reduction.
5. Recognise and inscribe the need to develop banks of materials to be easily reused, collecting them from existing human-made sources, instead of further depleting our natural system.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

PART II - ON THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS FRAMEWORK

6. Recognise and inscribe that change needs to be systemic and therefore multidisciplinary and multisectoral across all levels and priorities of the New European Bauhaus.

7. Recognise and inscribe that systemic change requires engaging with each and every citizen and local communities, through dialogue, empathy and cooperation.

8. Recognise and inscribe the Sustainable Development Goals as a structure within the New European Bauhaus to guide us towards concrete and on-the-ground systemic impact.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

PART III - ON THE ROLE, POTENTIAL AND NEEDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

9. Recognise and inscribe Environmental CSO across the EU, as key dialogue brokers and mediators with communities, authorities, businesses and policy-makers.

10. Recognise and inscribe the potential of Environmental CSO to promote systemic change and acknowledge the importance of our own re-invention.

11. Recognise and inscribe the need to promote cooperation across diverse sectors and how Environmental CSO can become relevant connectors in these processes.

12. Recognise and inscribe how Environmental CSO and Creatives of diverse fields should cooperate to support the building-up and feeding of a new narrative of change.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

PART III - ON THE ROLE, POTENTIAL AND NEEDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (cont.)

13. Recognise and inscribe how Environmental CSO can become local beacons and drivers for state of the art solutions for the built environment, energy consumption, citizen engagement, sustainable materials, waste management, among many others.

14. Recognise and inscribe how many Environmental CSO still need to be engaged and learn about the New European Bauhaus if they are to take part in this change.

15. Recognise and inscribe the fragility of many Environmental CSO and how the proper instruments to strengthen and capacitate them need to be put in place.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

PART IV - ON THE GEOMETRY OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

16. Recognise and inscribe how many Environmental CSO are not yet immersed in networking processes leading up to their involvement in funding possibilities.

17. Recognise and inscribe how many Environmental CSO do not have the capacity to lead major funding initiatives for implementing on-the-ground change.

18. Recognise and inscribe the importance of providing different funding models, from direct to third-party funding, available to all organisations, including Environmental CSO.

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