

[Crossroads Europe Project](#) - Policy recommendations formulated during the event:

*Climate change: the role of Europe and the territories*

The initiative was organised by the Union of European Federalists and the Italian section of the Movimento Federalista Europeo on 25, 29 and 30 January 2021.

The following recommendations stem from the 5 thematic sessions that took place over the 3 days.

**1st session:** *Climate change: desertification and the migration issue* - 25 January 2021

The Mediterranean basin is recognised as one of the areas mostly affected by global warming and is particularly exposed to the phenomenon of desertification.

The immediate consequences include the compromise of the potential of food production, the increase in the incidence of droughts and famines, the onset of socio-economic instability and the increase in migration flows.

These are the challenges that the European Union must face up to, together with the challenges of managing migratory flows within its territory in a unified manner. This requires a coherent and comprehensive strategy.

*1. Problem assessment:*

- decline in agricultural production, which accounts for a large share of the GDP of developing countries, mainly as a result of dwindling water resources;
- increase in poverty and social problems, which have caused an initial phenomenon of migration;
- several areas in Europe are vulnerable and at risk of desertification (Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania);
- European strategies, action plans and spending programmes that are relevant to combating desertification, but not specifically targeted at it;
- individual national initiatives of European countries and developing countries, which are not coordinated with each other and have different objectives.

*2. Policy recommendations:*

The European Union should

- endow the European institutions with sovereignty over these matters;
- develop a common European foreign policy capable of taking effective political initiatives;
- mobilise public resources and implement control systems to monitor how the funds allocated to developing countries are spent;



- promote diplomatic discussions with the major global powers (China, USA, India, Brazil....) to support economic and technological development that takes environmental protection into account as a reference value.



**2°- 3° session: Environment, climate and health at the time of Covid-19 and Emilia-Romagna: New pact for work and climate - 29 January 2021**

Air pollution is strongly linked to climate change, there is a strong connection between climate and health. During the pandemic there was a general reduction in emissions, linked to a reduction in energy consumption in various sectors. Economic recovery must be based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Implementing an ecological transition capable of combating inequalities and reducing distances between people, communities and territorial areas, mending fractures exacerbated by the current crisis.

*1. Problem assessment:*

- air pollution is a stress factor and has an effect on human health, particularly respiratory diseases;
- 50% of energy processes are affected by the pandemic;
- how and how much has the pandemic made us more aware?
- the effects of pollution and climate change primarily affect the most vulnerable and will increase social and economic inequalities in the short term;
- the need for new and emerging skills and training compared to the past.

*2. Policy recommendations:*

The European Union should

- equip the European institutions with expertise on health policy in order to implement effective coordination between territories and decision-makers;
- promote and disseminate knowledge on the issue of climate change among the general public in order to bring about the necessary cultural transformation (lifestyles, sustainable consumption, etc.);
- promote a real ecological transition starting from the change of all processes in our community;
- activate an economic lever, not only using public funds, for example by introducing a carbon tax;
- promote coordination initiatives between the various levels of government, addressing the issue of environmental policies, bearing in mind the strong link with other issues, health, quality of life, economy, work, social cohesion, the fragility of the territories.

**4th - 5th session:** *Sustainable Cities and Communities and the Green Deal: The EU response to climate change - 30 January 2021*

In order to achieve the ambitious goals set by the European Commission for the low-carbon transition, territories and local authorities must implement strong, radical and effective urban policies aimed at more efficient public services and better environmental sustainability.

The Green Deal is an ambitious and complex plan presented by the European Commission to transform the European Union into the first carbon neutral continent by 2050.

*1. Problem assessment:*

- governance process involving cities, regions but also civil society actors, communities, monitoring above all how investments are implemented;
- the need for a radical change that must take place above all in the regions and municipalities, which must organise themselves to meet the major challenges and be consistent with international objectives;
- the weakness of individual states to provide effective responses, the lack of reaction and the need to equip Europe with more efficient instruments;
- the Green Deal must be seen as the key pillar of European economic recovery.

*2. Policy recommendations:*

The European Union should

- promote and disseminate sustainable mobility in the territories (e.g. the "15-minute city" project), also promoting the spread of energy communities, capable of triggering a virtuous circle of environmental, social and economic advantages and benefits, thus concretely favouring energy transition;
- structuring the tax system differently between the various levels of government in order to increase the European resources earmarked to support investments aimed at ecological transition, such as the "carbon pricing" tool;
- extending the "Emissions Trading System" mechanism to all energy processes (mobility, residential consumption, etc.) by increasing the value of the quota and thus increasing its revenue;
- promote international standards to align all European economic actors.