

Dear Minister/ [NAME OF MINISTER],

I am aware that you are representing [COUNTRY] and its citizens in the ongoing negotiations regarding the European Union's proposed revised directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law.

As we are sure you are aware, on the 29th of March this year, following a historic unanimous Legal Affairs Committee vote, the European Parliament announced its support for the inclusion of a stand alone crime that punishes the gravest environmental crimes in the revised directive.

Recognition of such a stand-alone offence in the context of the revised directive will strongly reinforce existing environmental laws, show both leadership and compassion, establish a moral as well as legal "red line" and create an essential steer for industry leaders and policy-makers.

By recognizing the gravest environmental crimes as a stand-alone offence, the EU could take a leading role for the recognition of such crimes at the international level.

It is important to acknowledge that, historically, the establishment of such new crimes has come into being in response to situations of sufficient seriousness, extending proscribed behaviour and criminal sanctions into new areas. The international crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity were born of just such circumstances in the 1940s in the face of atrocities that were witnessed and condemned with horror by the international community.

Today we face a similar urgency with respect to destruction of the natural living world upon which we, as a species along with many millions of others, completely depend. With a stand alone crime that aims to prevent and punish the most severe environmental harms, the evil intent may not be that defined under genocide, but the consequences are at least as damaging and dangerous, not only to a people but to human civilisation as we know it.

If you remain at all sceptical as to the level of civil society concern on this issue, you would do well to take note of the 616,000 people who have signed the WeMoveEU/Avaaz petition¹ calling for the European Union to recognise a stand alone crime that punishes the gravest environmental harms.

¹ <https://www.wemove.eu/stopeccocide>

We urge you to seize this historic opportunity and advocate for the inclusion of a crime that punishes the gravest harms to the environment, as defined in the European Parliament's recommended text (Article 3, paragraph 1a (new))².

As negotiations conclude in the next few days, you will have an opportunity to directly influence a decision that will have immense consequences, affecting not only yourself and your loved ones, but countless people, species and ecosystems for many, many generations to come.

We strongly urge you to consider this legacy deeply, and advocate for the inclusion of a stand alone crime that punishes the gravest environmental harms in the revised directive.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0087_EN.pdf