

Subject: **Request for Meeting on 17 March Ahead of the European Council Summit**

Dear President Ursula von der Leyen,

We are writing to you as the initiators of the attached *Antwerp Counter-Declaration: Standing up for rules that protect democracy, people, and planet*, launched on 10 February ahead of the informal European Council meeting at Alden Biesen.

In light of the upcoming European Council Summit, we would respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you on **17 March in Brussels**, ahead of the announcement of the “One Europe, One Market Roadmap and Action Plan”.

We noted that, prior to the informal European summit at Alden Biesen, you met with industry leaders to exchange views on competitiveness and regulatory priorities. In a similar spirit, we would greatly welcome the opportunity for a direct exchange with you. As representatives of civil society organisations, trade unions, environmental and public interest groups, we represent the interests of millions of people across Europe — workers, communities, consumers, and future generations — rather than those of industries.

Our Declaration (attached), signed by more than 270 organisations, outlines our shared concerns regarding the current deregulation agenda and the unprecedented speed at which key environmental, social, digital, and labour protections are being dismantled. Furthermore, the European Union’s democratic deficit appears to be deepening rather than diminishing, as the Commission continues to open new policy areas that afford privileged access to industry lobby groups. We believe it is essential to ensure that the voices of those directly affected by these policy choices are heard at the highest political level.

We would value the opportunity to:

- Present the key messages of our pro-protections declaration;
- Discuss our concerns regarding the rollback of democratic safeguards and better regulation standards;
- Exchange views on how Europe can reinforce — rather than weaken — environmental integrity, social justice, and democratic accountability.

We remain fully committed to constructive dialogue and to contributing to an evidence-based and inclusive policymaking process that serves the public interest.

We sincerely hope that you will be prepared to grant us a meeting on 17 March and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Kim Claes
Friends of the Earth Europe

On behalf of the initiators of the Open Letter

Attachment: Open Letter – *Antwerp Counter-Declaration: Standing up for rules that protect democracy, people, and planet*