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Prime Minister Xavier Bettel  
2, place de Clairefontaine  
L-1341 Luxembourg  
Luxembourg

Luxembourg, le 26 avril 2021

To the head of the Luxembourgish government,

Dear Prime Minister Xavier Bettel,

As the Luxembourgish youth, we are committed to defending climate justice and ensuring a viable future. The government has proven over the last decades that climate action is not their priority. Climate change continues to be humanity's greatest threat, and the need for imminent action is needed. Therefore, we demand that the Luxembourgish state pleads guilty to the charges brought against them by the six Portuguese youths before the European Court of Human Rights.

In November 2020, six young Portuguese filed a case against 33 countries for taking insufficient measures against the climate crisis and thus violating fundamental human rights. The applicants are claiming that the defendant government, including Luxembourg, has failed to comply with its positive obligations to protect the right to life (Article 2), the right to private and family life (Article 8), and the right to non-discrimination (Article 14) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The science is clear: European governments are still not doing enough to combat the climate crisis and environmental destruction.

We know that the government can act quickly, effectively and thereby save lives. Just over a year ago, Luxembourg took drastic measures to tackle a crisis of global significance. A science-based approach was implemented to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. The government acted urgently to save lives. We could see first-hand the vulnerability in communities when their health, food security, and the freedom to work were threatened. For months, we have witnessed death, disease and distress to proportions unseen in decades.

Unfortunately, more crises are on the horizon, most notably the climate crisis. However, the government has failed to give climate protection the same priority as the Covid-19 sanitary crisis. Faced with the consequences of the crisis, the government has been hesitant to take drastic steps within the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) to launch a meaningful green deal for Luxembourg, the ambition is lacking, and it shows a clear missed opportunity. We urge the

Luxembourgish government to fight the climate emergency with the same eagerness as it did with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Climate change, which is nothing short of an existential threat to humanity, has the potential to wreck destruction on a scale unprecedented in human history. Over 350 organisations representing over 40 million health workers across the world announced in May 2020 that a truly healthy recovery from the Covid-19 crisis requires taking steps to prevent the climate crisis.<sup>[1]</sup> European governments are planning on investing billions to stimulate our economies; however, they must use these funds to permanently end Europe's dependence on fossil fuels.

Historically economic recoveries have led to a sharp increase in emissions. This is the wrong approach. We must learn from our past mistakes, and we must return healthier, stronger and more resilient against future crises. Now is the time to change our ways and get the ball rolling. This means we need to do everything possible to stop the climate catastrophe. We demand a Green Recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. Nothing less grants us a viable future.

European governments are required to adopt emissions cuts that are collectively consistent with the 1.5°C target in the Paris Agreement. According to the Climate Action Tracker (CAT), the EU as a whole takes insufficient action to limit warming to 2°C, let alone keeping it below the crucial 1.5°C.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to its NECP, Luxembourg has a target by 2030 to: 1) reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55%; 2) raise energy efficiency by 40-45% and; 3) increase its portion of renewable energy consumption to 25%.<sup>3</sup> Despite these challenging targets, Luxembourg's contribution to fight against the climate crisis remains insufficient. The Luxembourgish government has so far not presented a concrete plan to realistically achieve these targets. As one of Europe's fossil fuel havens, Luxembourg is continuing to subsidise fossil fuels. Within its borders is the world's second largest investment fund sector, which is not kept accountable for its climate-damaging investments. These are blatant acts of climate destruction, both negligent and deliberate, that are in clear contrast to the Paris Agreement. All of this makes the Luxembourgish State a culprit in working against our interests, our right to life, privacy and non-discrimination.

As a member of the EU, Luxembourg needs to push for carbon neutrality and stay below 1.5°C. Unfortunately, the government's policies have yet again proven the opposite. Two-thirds of Luxembourg's greenhouse gas emissions originate from the sale of fuels. As one of the richest countries in the world, Luxembourg's share of renewable energy production falls to the very end compared to its EU counterparts.<sup>[4]</sup> Luxembourg must drastically reduce its fossil fuel consumption and thereby finally end this dependency.

We need to divest from fossil fuels to have a liveable future. By ratifying the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, Luxembourg adopted a public commitment to prevent dangerous interference with the climate system and to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. To achieve this, Luxembourg must align all financial flows with the climate goals and implement clear sustainable and green investment guidelines.<sup>[5]</sup> However, this has not happened and worse the financial investments into fossil fuels

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<sup>1</sup>A #HealthyRecovery. 26 May 2020.

<sup>2</sup>Climate Action Tracker; EU. 22 Sept. 2020.

<sup>3</sup>Luxembourg Government; *Plan National Intégré En Matière d'Énergie et de Climat Du Luxembourg Pour La Période 2021-2030*. 2021, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup>Eurostat; *Shedding Light on Energy on the EU: What Is the Share of Renewable Energy in the EU?*. 2017.

<sup>5</sup>The Coalition Parties: DP, LSAP and Déi Gréng; *Accord de Coalition 2018-2023*. 3 Dec. 2018, p. 108.

have only risen.<sup>6</sup> The government also failed to establish a solid base to divest public money from fossil fuels as part of the NECP.

Currently, the financial sector is omitted from following our collective climate goals and is not obliged to reduce its carbon footprint. Although investments produce more greenhouse gas emissions than all private and commercial activities in Luxembourg combined.<sup>[7]</sup> In 2019, the 100 largest investment funds were responsible for financing 39 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions around the world. This is four times more than the national emissions of Luxembourg.<sup>[8]</sup> However, it is directly linked to Luxembourgish policy.

The State is directly funding our demise. Luxembourg's sovereign pension fund (Fonds de Compensation, FDC) continues to invest in Carbon Majors like Shell, Total, BP, Chevron, Equinor, Fortum, Gazprom and other fossil fuel corporations, that are linked to 71% of industrial greenhouse gas emissions since 1988.<sup>[9]</sup> This goes against the Paris Agreement and the divesting of public money from fossil fuels. The companies in the investment portfolios of the 100 funds will have exhausted their carbon budget by 2027, meaning the amount of emissions available to them in a <2°C scenario until 2050 will instead be expended within the next seven years.<sup>[10]</sup> This shows how unrealistic the government policies are. We cannot spare another decade. We must act now!

Promoting green finance would not be sufficient to save the planet; it is too slow and insignificant. If the government actually wants to protect the climate on a global scale, it will have to address the fossil fuel investments of its finance sector.<sup>[11]</sup> There is no future where Luxembourg can be carbon neutral and still allow investments in high emissions sectors.

As a member of the Council of Europe and contracting party of the European Convention of Human Rights, Luxembourg has an obligation to protect our fundamental rights. When looking at the aforementioned facts, it is hard to declare yourself innocent. The state must accept its responsibility, claim its fault and do better. For decades, the scientific community has been alerting governments to take climate change seriously. For decades, environmental organisations have demanded change and an end to global heating. For decades, governments around the world have signed agreements, established goals, and done nothing. Emissions keep rising, temperatures keep rising, and the sea levels keep rising. Even in Luxembourg, we have felt the consequences of the climate crisis. This past summer we were in a pandemic but also in a heatwave. Two events inflicting pain and distress on our community. If our government cared about us, the People, it would be more ambitious and take effective and urgent steps to reduce the effects of this upcoming crisis. Our lives are at stake, and especially those who are too young to have a voice. We demand this government to plead guilty on behalf of their inaction and the rights violated until now.

The failures of our government to address the climate crisis will have direct consequences on our rights to life. Since this catastrophe has detrimental effects on society and our livelihood, we need a radical transition away from fossil fuels as urgent as ever. The issues which have arisen as a result of

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<sup>6</sup>Greenpeace Luxembourg; *Green Hypocrisy: Luxembourg's Pension Fund Invests in Oil and Coal*. 17 June 2020.

<sup>7</sup>Greenpeace Luxembourg; *'Gréng Relance Fir Lëtzebuerg' Annulée Réaction de Greenpeace à l'Occasion de La Publication Du Plan National Intégré En Matière d'Énergie et de Climat (PNEC)*. 29 May 2020.

<sup>8</sup>Greenpeace Luxembourg; *Investing in Climate Change: A Climate-Related Analysis of the 100 Largest Investments Funds in Luxembourg*. 27 January 2021, p.2+5

<sup>9</sup>Greenpeace Luxembourg; *Green Hypocrisy: Luxembourg's Pension Fund Invests in Oil and Coal*. 17 June 2020.

<sup>10</sup>Greenpeace Luxembourg; *Investing in Climate Change: A Climate-Related Analysis of the 100 Largest Investments Funds in Luxembourg*. 27 Jan. 2021, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Greenpeace Luxembourg; *'Gréng Relance Fir Lëtzebuerg' Annulée Réaction de Greenpeace à l'Occasion de La Publication Du Plan National Intégré En Matière d'Énergie et de Climat (PNEC)*. 29 May 2020.

this crisis need to be addressed at its source. This means recognising its wrongdoing and taking responsibility for environmental destruction and climate neglect.

As young people, we stand to experience the worst consequences of climate change within this century. If you fail to adequately and urgently combat this crisis, we will bear this burden. A future of environmental collapse is no future. How dare you!

Signature,



Representatives of Youth for Climate Luxembourg,

Natasha Lepage

Julien Wald