MANIFESTO ANALYSIS: ALLIANCE OF LIBERALS AND DEMOCRATS FOR EUROPE (ALDE)

IEEP is carrying out an analysis of the European parties' manifestos ahead of the European elections, to assess their commitments on environmental, climate and sustainability issues, against Think 2030 recommendations. This first analysis looks at the ALDE manifesto.

I. Highlights

The manifesto addresses climate change by emphasizing the need for a decarbonisation of Europe's energy, transport and infrastructure. It calls for a 55% target reduction in GHG by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and refers to a number of accompanying policies, including, for instance, investments in smart infrastructure and R&D in low emission technologies, an end to kerosene tax exemptions or a ban on the use of cohesion funds for projects not aligned with the Paris agreement.

The manifesto highlights the need for the EU to play a leadership role on the world's stage on environment and climate issues, but makes few proposals regarding the domestic environmental governance agenda. Regarding biodiversity, the proposal for a *Paris Agreement on biodiversity* falls short of specifying what it would contain and how it would be enforced. Compared with ALDE's 2014 manifesto, there is no detailed proposal for reforming the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The document lacks an overarching sustainability plan for Europe, based on a credible pathway to achieve both the SDGs and the implementation of the Paris agreement. The manifesto is also silent regarding a number of targets of the 7th Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of relevance to health and well-being, for instance on air quality and noise pollution. Finally, it does not sufficiently address sustainability within EU external policies and makes no innovative proposals regarding the sustainability of trade.

II. How prominent is the environment within the manifesto?

No title in the manifesto directly refers to environmental actions, however reference is made to a number of environmental issues including climate change, environmental degradation, plastics, energy, healthy planet, resource efficiency, carbon neutrality, smart mobility, sustainable growth, nature or agriculture, health and food systems. The manifesto also mentions the global role the EU should have on such issues, and seeks to align measures with the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.

World cloud analysis[1] of the ALDE manifesto text confirms the alignment to the central values of this political movement. Market and economy-related terms are central (liberals, free, trade, market, labour, economic, innovation, jobs, skills), as well as democracy and EU values (Europe, rights, States, Member, Union, citizens, law, rule). Words related to environmental policy like climate, sustainable and energy are much less prominent.

III. Problem analysis, objectives and proposals pertaining to the environment included in the ALDE manifesto

Issues	Problem analysis	Objectives, principles and targets	Proposals, policies and instruments
Climate change	**Decarbonisation** of energy, transport and infrastructure Crucial role of the private sector **Misaligned tax systems**: obsolete fuel tax exemptions **Transport and energy** as key sectors	Implementation of the Paris Agreement targets and the SDGs 55% target reduction in GHG by 2030 compared to 1990 levels Carbon neutrality by 2050 Highly efficient energy sector fully based on renewables Stable framework for sustainable investments and finance Reduction in industry and transport emissions including aviation and shipping R&D: strengthen knowledge economy by investing in R&D; reach target of 3% of GDP invested in R&D by 2020	**Financial levers:** • *Budget:* Cohesion policy should not support programmes or projects which counter the Paris Agreement • *Investment:* in smart mobility, cross border and sustainable infrastructure including trans-European networks; self-driving vehicles; high-speed trains, inland; waterways, rail and intermodal hubs. • *Research and development*: foster R&D in low emission technologies, infrastructure, clean energy, energy efficiency, reduction of emissions in industry and transport; innovation moves towards zero-emission vehicles. • *CAP*: Reforming as a step to sustainability goals; greater transparency and equality in subsidies payments. **Economic and Market based instruments:** • *ETS*: Strengthen and cover more sectors including transport

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[1] The word cloud analysis has been done based on the text of the manifesto. Words such as Europe, European and Europeans have been removed to produce the image in order to have a clearer idea of the main policy themes covered by the manifesto. The word cloud was generated on https://www.wordclouds.com/

			• *Taxation*: See an end to the obsolete fuel tax exemptions for international aviation by updating the Chicago Convention **Key policies and regulations**: • Complete the Energy Union • Straighter flight routes in European airspace • Competition: end to rail state monopolies
Biodiversity loss	Importance of **ecosystems** for food, air and water	"**Nature knows no border**": need for working on nature and environment together	International Paris Agreement on biodiversity Establish an **economic value** for natural capital and ecosystem services
Global challenges	**Leadership** needed by the EU to set global ambitious targets and increased international cooperation	Fair and sustainable global trade	Call on negotiators to preserve several principles including **sustainability International Paris Agreement on biodiversity**
Plastic pollution and ocean health	Not described	**Resource-efficient circular economy**	Not described
Health/food systems	Issues of **food security** and **antimicrobial resistance**	Promotion of alternative and environmentally friendly agricultural methods. Opposition to a "renationalisation of agricultural policy".	Call for a reform of the Common Agricultural Policy as an essential step to reach sustainability.

III. Comparative analysis

We based our analysis on the following dimensions:
- Is the environment higher on the agenda than before?
- Are there references to existing key international commitments?
- Are recommendations aligned to Europe's existing environmental strategy?
- Have lessons from the most recent evaluations been taken into account?
- How do they compare with recommendations from European environmental experts?

Comparison with 2014 Manifesto

The 2019 ALDE manifesto contains a greater emphasis on climate change than in 2014, including more specific set of proposals on this issue, with a particular focus on the **decarbonisation of transport**. There is **less emphasis on the CAP** compared with than in 2014, which set out some ambitious and specific reform agenda. In 2019, the manifesto mentions plans of a 'substantial reform and rethink of agricultural subsidies', recognising the CAP as 'an essential step to [achieving] sustainability goals.'

Comparison with international commitments

The manifesto includes recommendations aligned with the **Paris Agreement**. It lays out elements for the implementation of the Paris Agreement targets and contains a target of 55% target reduction in **greenhouse gas emissions** by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and **carbon neutrality** by 2050. **SDGs** are mentioned alongside the Paris Agreement targets and the global role the EU should take on setting global environmental and sustainability targets. The targets are taken as a whole and the focus seems to be more on the Paris Agreement, with **no clear or specific strategy for the SDGs**. The Energy Union is presented as the step towards those targets, as well as increasing research and development in low emission technologies. While there is no reference made to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, there is instead a **proposal for a Paris Agreement of biodiversity**. It would be interesting to have a clearer idea of what would be in a new biodiversity agreement, how it would build on existing commitments like the Aichi targets, and what ALDE think would make it more likely to be enforced in practice than the current CBD. For instance, the **Think2030 paper on *valuing biodiversity and halting its decline by 2030*** asks for better implementation and delivery mechanisms, as well as making biodiversity conservation a more inclusive movement for citizens and other stakeholders.

Comparison with 7ᵗʰ Environmental Action Programme evaluation (2018)

Regarding the link between the manifesto and the 7ᵗʰ EAP, there is no strong emphasis on the need to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's **natural capital**. The manifesto does not make reference to the need to **safeguard** the Union's citizens from **environment-related pressures** and risks to health and wellbeing. It makes reference to one of the four enablers contained in the 7ᵗʰ EAP, related to making more and wiser **investment** for environment and climate policy. There is however no reference to the issue of better **implementation** of legislation as well as ensuring better **information** by improving the knowledge base. The full **integration** of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies is also lacking in the manifesto. It refers to one of the two additional horizontal priority objectives, which intends to help the Union **address international environmental** and **climate challenges more effectively.** There is however no mention of the need to **make** the Union's **cities more sustainable**.

Progress on meeting the 2020 goals set in the 7ᵗʰ EAP has been evaluated in the EEA Environmental indicator report 2018 in support to the monitoring of the 7ᵗʰ EAP. In the following table, targets seen as unlikely to be met by the EU have been listed, and we have looked whether they were mentioned by the ALDE manifesto.

Environmental objectives unlikely to be met by 2020 (EEA, 2018)	Commitment/mention in the ALDE manifesto
Exposure of terrestrial ecosystems to eutrophication due to air Pollution	Not mentioned
Gross nutrient balance on agricultural land: nitrogen	Not mentioned
Land take	Not mentioned
Status of marine fish and shellfish in European seas	Not mentioned
Abundance and distribution of selected species	Nature and biodiversity protection mentioned without proposal
Species of European interest	
Habitats of European interest	
Status of surface waters	Not mentioned
Greenhouse gas emissions from transport	Proposals for decarbonisation
Animal product consumption	Antimicrobial resistance
Share of environmental and labour taxes in total tax revenues	ETS scheme and obsolete fuel tax exemptions
Exceedance of air quality standards in urban areas	Mentioned without proposal
Exposure to environmental noise	Not mentioned

Comparison with Think2030

The Think 2030 platform listed 30 key recommendations for 2030, divided into five main areas: Governance 2030, Prosperity 2030, Wellbeing 2030, Nature 2030 and Peace and Security 2030. The following table assesses links between the manifesto and the 30 key recommendations.

Governance 2030	• No mention of the need for a **coherent plan for sustainability as part of a post-2020 strategy** • No reference to key environmental governance issues such as policy-science interface, subsidiarity, implementation and access to justice or mainstreaming environmental issues within the semester process. • Reference to the need for multi-level governance including need to "**reevaluate and renegotiate the division of responsibilities**" based on simplification and subsidiarity.
Prosperity 2030	• **Focus on decarbonisation**, with a range of proposals focusing on energy and transport, mostly using existing instruments or proposing the completion of existing initiatives. Reference to taxation of aviation fuel. • **Proposal for a reform of the CAP**, with a focus on **promoting more sustainable production methods,** but no reference to consumption-related issues or to the need to remunerate farmers for public goods provision. • **Some reference to sustainable growth** without concrete proposals on greening the macroeconomic and monetary framework of the EU; reference to the need to move to a more resource-efficient, circular economy but no concrete proposals; no reference to sustainable consumption. • **Mention of the role of the EU budget** in avoiding support to projects that would not fit with the EU's climate and energy objectives.
Wellbeing 2030	• **No reference to health and pollution** or the need for a **just transition.** A reference to the needs of children to live on a **healthy planet** but without a concrete proposal.
Nature 2030	• **Incomplete approach to natural capital**: Concrete proposal on **biodiversity at the global level but not at the European level**. Reference to ocean health but without a proposal; reference on the importance of water but without a proposal; no reference to soil and land degradation; no reference to the bioeconomy. • Suggestion to "establish an economic value for natural capital and ecosystem services" is **concerning**: while it is important to explore the contribution of natural capital and ecosystem services to human welfare and wellbeing, this should be done using a **variety of different sustainability indicators** and units of measurement.
Peace and security 2030	• **Emphasis overall on global challenges but incomplete approach**. While the Paris Agreement, the need for "a Paris agreement on biodiversity", and sustainable trade are mentioned, there are no references to the linkages between **Europe's external policies** (diplomacy, defense, development) **with sustainability**.

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