



Brussels, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

## **Press Release**

*White paper on European elections about a green and healthy urban environment*

### **SoGreen Alliance pleads for Green Deal 2.0 with urban chapter for next EU-semester**

*Today March 21<sup>st</sup> 2024, at the start of a new Spring, the SoGreen Alliance publishes a white paper with recommendations for urban green policies in view of the upcoming European elections and the next EU-semester 2024 - 2029. In the white paper, with the title 'We want to pass on a liveable and greener world for our children and next generations', the Alliance pleads amongst others for an advanced EU Green Deal 2.0 with a specific urban chapter. The SoGreen Alliance, which is a cooperation of eight European associations of urban green professionals, wants to take up a pro-active role in realizing a green and healthy urban environment and seeks with this white paper the cooperation with European policy makers and relevant stakeholders on this topic.*

In the white paper the SoGreen Alliance refers to the current societal challenges in the urban area and the opportunities that greenery and nature-based solutions offer here. The EU Green Deal, launched by the European Commission in 2019, has set a great ambitions in becoming a climate-neutral continent by 2050. The SoGreen Alliance welcomed the Deal, because it integrated green solutions into different initiatives in for example the Climate Law, the Renovation Wave, the EU Taxonomy, the Skills Agenda and the Nature Restoration Law. According to the SoGreen Alliance, it is now time for the next step.

#### *EU Green Deal 2.0*

After the elections for the European Parliament and the start of the new European Commission, there must be an at least ambitious work program on greening the urban area as there has been in the past five years. The SoGreen Alliance concludes that the urban area needs extra attention at European level. Although green cities are already fragmented on the EU agenda, it would be good to evaluate the current status of the green transition in urban areas, to combine different policies and to look where new impulses could be given. Water and Soil are vital in a holistic approach on the application and effectiveness of greenery and nature-based solutions in the built-up area. The availability of water during periods of heat and drought becomes an urgent topic. Rainwater needs to be collected and stored for different use. Greenery and nature-based solutions can be applied for that. To create an even bigger potential, the soil in the built-up area must be unsealed and transformed into fertile growing spots. Soil innovation is also important in view of the reduction of peat components in growing media. Besides water and soil, a further elaboration is needed on the aspect of circularity so that green 'waste' becomes a natural source for new products or new applications. The further elaboration of the urban ecosystem for pollinators, and biodiversity in general, is also a high priority. Looking at the greater urban agenda that must defined behind all these development, the SoGreen Alliance pleads for a specific chapter for the built-up/urban area in the follow up of the EU Green Deal; the EU Green Deal 2.0.

The SoGreen Alliance introduces in the white paper also recommendations on 'Green transition at local level', 'The Built-up area as carbon sink', 'Biodiversity' and "Skills development'. In the coming weeks the white paper will be presented to the European institutions and different stakeholders at European level. The white paper can be found at the website of the SoGreen Alliance:

[www.onthegreenmove.com](http://www.onthegreenmove.com).





*Note for the press, not for publication:*

If you have questions about our proposals, you can contact Egbert Roozen by mail [contact@elca.info](mailto:contact@elca.info) or by mobile phone +32 468 35 11 91.

The partners in the SoGreen Alliance are:

- European Arboricultural Council
- European Federation of Green Roof and Living Wall Associations
- European Interior Landscaping Organization
- European Landscape Contractors Association
- European Nurserystock Association
- IFLA Europe, International Federation of Landscape Architects
- International Organization for Natural Bathing Waters
- World Urban Parks Europe

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