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I left my country the United States, to live in Europe. Europe is known for its progressive environmental policies, a reference to human rights and a global player for peace. The continent where I felt at home. That was 35 years ago, and of course the old continent - like all of us - has changed significantly in that time. For one, people in Europe are deeply affected by the world's current path towards 3 degrees Celsius. Extreme weather events, heat and cold waves are becoming the new norm in Europe, particularly affecting the vulnerable and poor whose numbers are unfortunately growing. Millions of people are being forced away from their homes by climate and weather-related disasters, some to seek refuge in Europe. The issue of solidarity and the shared responsibilities of the continent triggered fierce political discussions and gave space to fear-fuelled politics.

The timing of this Dialogue couldn't be more appropriate after last weekend's G7 meeting in Canada. The display of an active destructive approach to the existing world order and multilateralism was stunning. Just when we thought we could not be shocked anymore by the actions of Mr. Trump, we were. I had two main take aways from the G7 this year

First, the Paris Agreement is needed not only to address the climate crisis but also because it is a beacon of how the world can and must work together to solve collective problems and

Second, the importance of EU leadership on Paris - for a just and peaceful world where multilateralism works and for climate justice is multi-fold bigger than it was last week.

Now, that may seem daunting but I want to share with you the shared and progressive leadership that is alive and kicking among the citizens of the old continent. I can see that everywhere I go. We heard before how urban centres and progressive corporations lead the way in upholding Europe's fundamental values. They base their investments and actions on the public interest and the will to see real transformative action on these issues. I hear many stories about heroic efforts of citizens to transform their communities and to uphold the fundamental values of the continent. Hungarian, Belgian, British and German citizens organize to provide much-needed humanitarian support and open their homes to refugees. Communities take on energy giants to reclaim their energy systems from fossil fuel reliant private owners and turn them into sustainable

clean sources of energy accessible to all. Parents protest for car-free zones and demand clean air in cities. Grandmothers take governments to court to defend the rights of the next generations and demand climate action.

The common element of these stories is an all-encompassing approach to tackle everyday problems with sustainable solutions. And the solutions turn out to be great for the future of Europe and great for the world's climate.

These European struggles towards a more sustainable future are not without political confrontation. One cannot go by not noticing that there is a significant gap between the ambition level of member states' governments and non-states actors, including communities and individuals. More often than not, progressive proposals on climate action are passed by one European institution and watered down or rejected by another.

More often than before I hear municipal leaders calling for more autonomy and resources to be able to take climate action in their hands. And the painful lack of political leadership also taints Europe's geopolitical standing on climate action: as a matter of fact, as of today, Europe's emission reduction commitments are not in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. We are here today to talk about how to change that.

If one understands and listens to the science, you know we have to change it. According to recent science, The impacts we thought we would experience at 2 degrees, are now likely to happen at a mere 1.5 degree temperature rise. We have to get to net zero at the very latest by 2050, which means the EU has to get there before then.

Luckily, important European businesses, small, medium to large are stepping up; see the recent announcement from Nordic business leaders; leading the way to reimagine our life in a 1.5 world. They are all engaged with questions on how mobility will look like for our children's children, on how will we stay warm, or cool, in our homes? How, and where, will we generate electricity? Can we use the opportunities of technological developments to address energy poverty, emission reduction, environmental pollution, social inequality, local sustainability and job creation at the same time? Business leaders are saying yes to all these, and send the wake-up call that the transformation happening now offers great opportunities to Europe, to get back into this leadership role and prosper as a region. Nordic business statement strong signal.

I bring these stories to ensure they are heard, for often I think in Brussels or Member State capitals you hear only the stories of opposition to the transformation. However, there are millions of people, young (as we have heard), old people from the east, the west, the north and the south, who are fighting for change.

History shows that people power can make history and transform Europe into what it, and the world, needs it to be. As a young student, I was so inspired by

the shipyard workers in Poland that fought for freedom and justice. Those same people can be the backbone for the offshore wind industry in Poland -- once again charting new territory that will empower (literally) millions - and avoid climate disaster for the most vulnerable people around the world.

I am convinced that addressing climate change head-on would breathe life into the European spirit. Because real, meaningful climate action will take people power to tackle energy and food sovereignty, urbanisation, unemployment, mass migration and social inequality - the root causes of the issues Europeans are deeply concerned about and experience daily. Climate action offers solutions to the old continent that take us into the 1.5 future instead of the 3 degrees nightmare.

I dare to say that Europe needs a new Schuman Declaration, as ambitious as it was then, this time centred around climate action, a solar and wind community, to embolden solidarity and cooperation of the European nations.

Greenpeace working in alliance with so many calls on the EU to create that solar and wind community and to increase its climate ambition.