

Dear ministers and delegates,
Dear Carole, Dear Camille,
Ladies and gentleman,

On behalf of Mouvement Ecologique, Friends of the Earth Luxembourg, I am honoured to welcome you in our beautiful „home“, nestled in this exceptional location.

First, let me introduce myself with a small story. Once I entered a pub and a stranger came up to me and said: Lady, I like what you say (and do), but I would never want to be married to you.... Well... One of the reasons for this could be, that I am sometimes maybe a little bit „straight forward“ - as generally people from the south of Luxembourg are. Obviously, this little introduction has the aim of preparing you to a few rather direct words in my short speech...

I could tell you, that my grandfather was imprisoned in a concentration camp during World War II, but never spoke about it, and that for this - and other reasons - I grew up with the conviction of the necessity of the European Union. Or that I spent my childhood 1 km away from the home of the current President of the European Commission, and that his influence, let's say his „aura“ was such, that I breathed the importance of Europe during my childhood years...

But I won't. Even though the great peace-keeping value of the European Union is undisputed, I believe that Europe needs an additional vision for the 21st century.

I am afraid to tell you that the current European Union is - at present - no longer my Europe!

The convictions of our ecological movement - and mine too - are based on the values of a union of nations, a union with common democratic, ecological, human and social values, and an economic system that serve these values.

But unfortunately we have to admit that these values no longer seem to have the importance they deserve. Let me give you a few examples of our deep preoccupation:

- More than 2.3 million people in Europe signed the petition of a self-organized citizen initiative against **CETA and TTIP**. The quorum needed for a regular European citizen initiative is 1 million signatures. We exceeded it largely! And we have reached the country quorum in over 17 countries (the minimum required being only 7). What a unique success! But nevertheless - ignoring at

this moment this clear statement of people, the opinion of scientists, universities, very large parts of civil society, over 500 NGOs through Europe - the European commission pursues CETA and TTIP in a way undermining our democratic, social and ecological values. We know the answer of some of you to this statement: you say, we guarantee that all these values will be granted and that CETA and TTIP just support our economy. But we did read the CETA agreement and leaked reports of TTIP, and we got the conviction out of this analyse that the democratic, ecological and social values **would** be fundamentally eroded by CETA agreement like proposed and by TTIP like it is discussed at this moment! And in fact, I am sure those who support CETA and TTIP know this, but I think, they most of them just do not want to admit it. The promoters just have the conviction that - partly due to geopolitical reasons - the price of the support of some economic actors is worth whilst reducing other common values. In fact, they put the priority on a neoliberal market!

Two examples for this, I could give hundreds:

* It is obvious that the protection of investments, as it is defined in CETA-agreement and discussed in TTIP, will prevail over other ecological and social values. That an industry should become the right to seek compensation before a court for a potential benefit loss because of national legislations and restrictions defined in it, is not acceptable.

* The fact, that the Investor-state-dispute settlement ISDS is still pursued, that it is planned to even build up a new kind of „private“ court beside legal courts, calls into question our legal system as well as our democratic values.

And I am convinced, that a real democratic and public debate on a document of 1500 pages - like CETA - is just not possible. And I would think that even you did not read the complete document. And it is not acceptable, that new legislation which will influence all social areas and the life of millions of people all over the world could be decided without a real debate.

We - of course - are although in favour of a trade with the American States, a market that in fact is already very developed. And we believe that investors should be reasonably protected. **But CETA and TTIP stand for a neoliberal market, where the benefits of some industries dominate over the values that are the very foundation of Europe. Let me point it out very clearly, in fact on behalf of over 2.3 million people: if you want to push through CETA and TTIP, lots of people will loose their confidence in EU.**

Dear ministers and delegates, you represent the environmental interests in Europe. We trust you will be the European defenders on behalf of all European ecological and social unions ...

- Let me now talk about another theme that affects many people: biodiversity. In Luxembourg, we finally bear the fruits of **EU legislation in the domain of nature protection**. Without the EU, the loss of biodiversity – which is still very alarming – would even be worse. But luckily we had an have the EU. And so, for example, some very rare birds species have rediscovered Luxembourg. Splendid nature areas are protected ... a.s.o. What a success story! And all of you - as environmental ministers and representatives - know that nature protection bears real economic advantages. The loss of biodiversity costs every year 450 billions (!), the benefits of ecosystem services are estimated at 300 billions, 8 billions of jobs are safeguarded thanks to biodiversity, nature protection only costs 6 billions, so the calculations of the EU-Commission.

And nevertheless the EU goes the way to do a so-called fitness check about nature directives. We all know, that the aim of this fitness check is not nature protection, but a deregulation in favour of economic interests. I must admit that I feel a bit ashamed that this happens under a Luxemburgish president of the Commission. Yes: one always can do better when implementing European directives. But the nature directives themselves are efficient and must be respected. If you would accept any weakening, you would contribute to leaving a poorer world to our children, and you would damage the economy. Lets collect the fruits of the work done over almost 30 years, by EU and member states! Please, engage for strong nature directives. **Please stop the fitness check, as over 100 environmental NGOs in Europe ask for!**

- I started my little speech with the aim that EU has to take over the key themes. And, which other theme could be more important than **climate change**. The month of June was the hottest we ever had, the consequences of climate change are felt everywhere. In our countries we experience heat, storms... other countries as Bangladesh do really suffer. We as environmental NGOs know very well that in medias and in surveys climate change isn't the top topic anymore. But, what is the reason? For us, the reason does not seem to be that people are not concerned. It is rather a kind of self-protection: the climate change, if we can not limit it, would have such dramatic consequences, that a quite normal human reflex is to close the eyes in front of that evolution. Like a little child, who wants to hide and thinks that he/she cannot be seen, as

he/she does not see him-/herself. Well, you are aware that it does not work!
You all will be sitting in Paris for the climate summit. We urge you with all our passion,

- to decide on a roadmap towards the 100 billion US dollar by 2020,
- to work with other developed and developing country partners on climate finance post-2020,
- to maximize the reform of the EU ETS and dedicate revenues to the Green Climate Fund,
- to use the Paris Agreement to help “shift the trillions” and phase out fossil fuel subsidies.

Climate change has to become the priority.

A last point: I know that the economic situation in other countries is very different and cannot be compared to our country. But nevertheless: we have to discuss about what economic growth, welfare, wellbeing ... means in the future. We all know that our ecological footprint is not bearable any more, not sustainable for next generations and that unlimited growth is not possible on a limited planet. Why do we pursue such an illusion? We have to build up a more equal economic system with the so-called developing countries... and so we know, that we have to discuss our future economic model. And we have to consider much more that all analyses show that the key points for welfare are solidarity, social relations, participation rights ... These are the criterion for peoples' happiness, not maximizing material goods and economic growth which has become an end in itself.

So lets talk about an economy that responds to these common values and that respects nature limits. What an exciting challenge!

Allow me to conclude my short speech: Do not sacrifice EU basic values for some short economic interests. People expect from all of you a Europe that rests on common values of solidarity, well being, democracy... that is why generations of people have been committed themselves for hundred of years. Those values could even be the common aim for young people to identify more and to engage for Europe. This would be our and my Europe.

And in a way, we are on a turning point. Lets take the right direction. And help people to regain confidence that EU is not e neoliberal building, but a building of human values.

We - as NGOs - invest our power, our creativity, our commitment for a sustainable future.