



# ECOLISE

**EUROPEAN NETWORK**  
FOR COMMUNITY-LED  
INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
AND SUSTAINABILITY

## Empowering Communities for a Regenerative Future

### CPR partners meeting 12 June 2024

# Localising the European Green Deal

- *Harnessing the power of community-led grassroots initiatives*



# TIME FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION MANIFESTO

## ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

January-June 2024



ECOLISE



Funded by the  
European Union

1. 15 mins **Presentation & Q&A:**  
**Localising the European Green Deal**
  - *About* ECOLISE
  - *Process:* Time for Collective Action Manifesto
  - *Content:* Policy demands from the Manifesto
1. 10 mins **Exchange** in small groups
1. 15 mins **Exchanges** in the plenary
1. 5 mins **Next steps**

# About ECOLISE...

## ECOLISE



**EUROPEAN NETWORK**  
FOR COMMUNITY-LED  
INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
AND SUSTAINABILITY



**50 members** in 24 European countries

- learning !
- action !
- advocacy !
- exchange !
- cooperation !
- knowledge development !

Three original and main movements represented: Transition, Ecovillages, Permaculture but also ICLEI Europe – Local Governments for Sustainability, educational and scientific players such as Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) Wales/ UK, DRIFT Rotterdam/ NL & others

# Community-Led Initiatives are diverse...



Community Supported  
Agriculture initiatives



(Urban) Community gardens



Traditional local communities



Local Action Groups (LAGs)  
from the CLLD programme



Community-driven businesses  
and cooperatives, community  
currencies



Co-housing, communes,  
squats, spiritual communities

...



# Community-led initiatives are...

...self-organised initiatives of people working together on an ongoing basis towards some defined set of environmental and/or social goals, usually within defined localities or communities of place<sup>8</sup>. Examples of community-led initiatives include transition movements, permaculture projects, ecovillages, energy communities, community-supported agriculture, and local sharing economies<sup>9</sup>. Many of these initiatives appreciate that sustainability is an ethical obligation and aspire to values such as cooperation, diversity, inclusion, resilience, equity and justice.

**Process: participatory advocacy: The Manifesto =  
Outcome of coworking with > 900 persons from >  
140 organisations**



# **TIME FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION MANIFESTO**

**Community-led initiatives & the European Green Deal**

**#1** Support community-led initiatives as laboratories for transformative social innovation. **#2** Support the right to have a choice to live sustainably. **#3** Harness the power of community for a strong localised Green Deal. **#4** Meaningful public participation and lively democracies. **#5** Finance and resource community-led solutions. **#6** Imagine the possibilities: from “what is” to “what if?”. **#7** From extraction and infinite growth towards care and wellbeing.



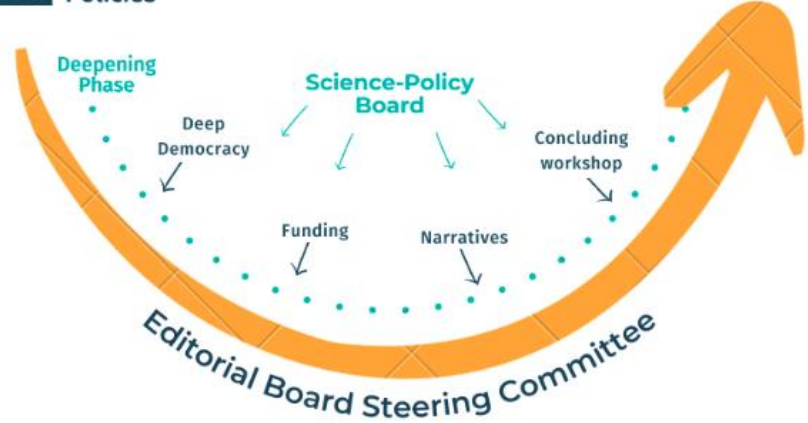
# Deliberation process



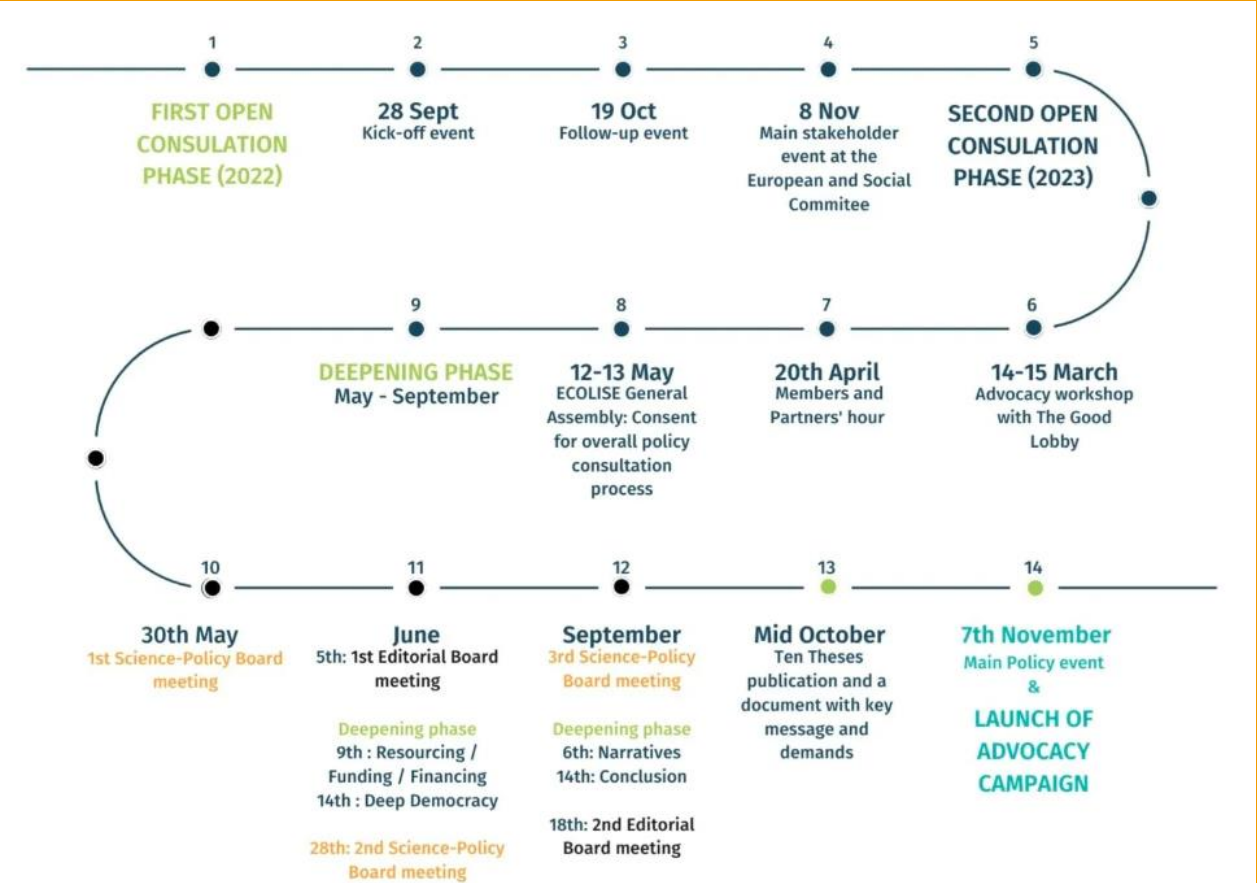
#10theses  
Towards  
Transformative  
Community-Led  
Local  
Development  
Policies



2-4 pages  
with key  
messages  
and  
narratives



# Deliberation process



# Launch of the Manifesto - Main Policy event

## 7 Nov 2023 with > 500 people



*If we do not build a bridge between local governments and EU levels of policy such as the European Commission, we won't be able to create the just transition.*

**Tom Meeuw**, Deputy Mayor of Antwerp, BE



*We need hope. You can't tell people the planet is on fire but there is no exit or escape.*

**Maria Serra Olivella**, Youth Activist



*The current economic model, which is based on growth, is seen as something that has no alternative. And this is dangerous.*

**Philippe Lamberts**, MEP and Co-President of the Greens/European Free Alliance



**ENERGISER!!!**

**Stretch, take a breath, look at  
something ...**

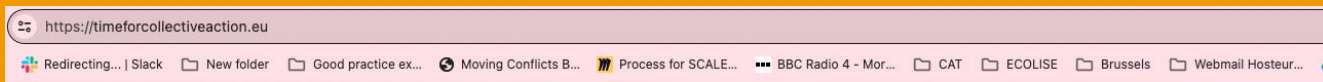
**GREEN...**

**Time for questions...**

# Campaign phase: #TimeforCollectiveAction



# Call to action: sign the manifesto!



# TIME FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION SIGN THE MANIFESTO

The upcoming European elections in June 2024 are critical to secure the most powerful policy tool we have to date towards a greener, fairer and more sustainable Europe: the European Green Deal.

Sign the Time for Collective Action Manifesto and show policy makers that you demand urgent action for people and the planet: a strong, ambitious and localised European Green Deal with communities at the heart.

[LEARN MORE AND SIGN THE MANIFESTO](#)



# Goals of the campaign: ECOLISE way of doing advocacy



## Colibri approach

bringing the drop to do something in a burning forest

## Awareness Raising

for the “make or break moment” of the European Green Deal

## Deep Conversations

triggering deep conversations and widen the scope of social imagination

## Mobilisation

Mobilising community-led initiatives for political action overall



## Theory of Change

systemic (social change)

## Capacity Building

empowering political action among members and partners

## Joining forces

complementing other campaigns such as Vote for Nature Alliance (CAN-E, EEB)

## Alliance building

building a strong alliance which advocates for citizens and communities as agents of change

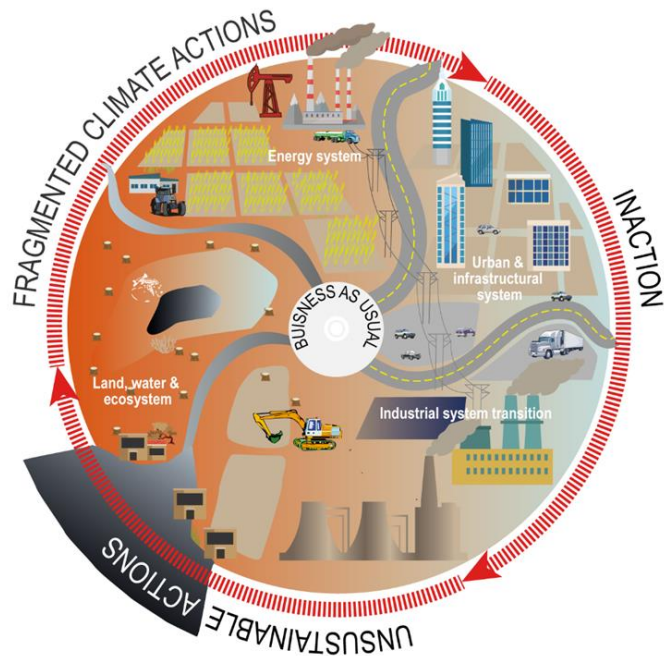


“go vote for a strong European Green Deal with citizens and communities at the heart”

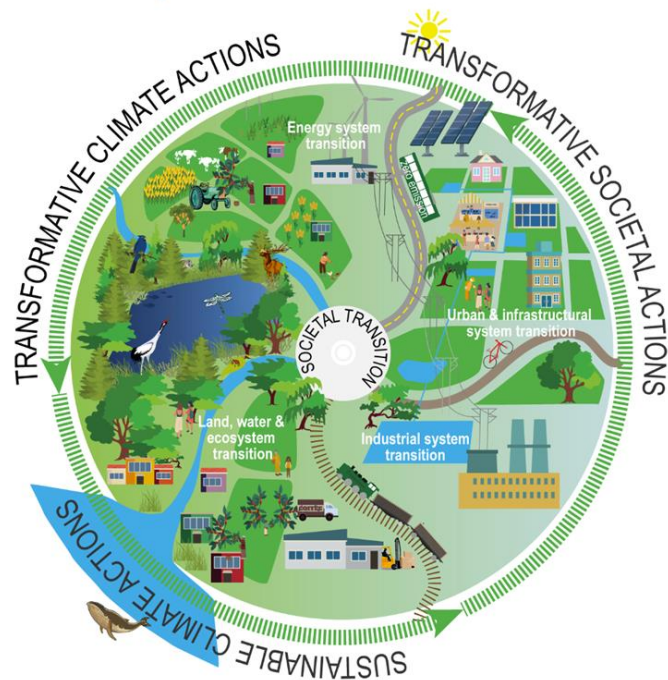
# Goals of the campaign: Advocate for citizens and communities as agents of change ... and a strong European Green Deal

## Transformative actions and system transitions

(a) Societal choices that generate fragmented climate action or inaction and unsustainable development perpetuate business as usual



(b) Societal choices that support CRD involve transformative actions that drive five systems transitions





# Campaign mechanism



Join the alliance



Find your own voice

**TIME FOR  
COLLECTIVE  
ACTION  
MANIFESTO**



Ripple effect

Read the manifesto



Deep conversations

# The power of storytelling



Stories have the power to  
change behaviours and thought  
patterns, leading to positive  
outcomes



Storytelling goes beyond creating  
awareness, it creates empathy.  
Empathy leads to action



Stories bring people together,  
and inspire change

# Storytelling

1

Support community-led initiatives as laboratories for transformative social innovation.

2

Support the right to have a choice to live sustainably.

3

Harnessing the power of community for a strong localised Green Deal.



**Core Messages**



**Storytelling trainings**



**Find your own voice**

- Framing core messages
- Empowering campaign partners to speak in their own voice: producing diversified stories around these core messages.

## Partnership concept

**Being a partner is simple!**

- Read the [Time for Collective Action Manifesto](#) and support its content
- Communicate the campaign to your networks - in whatever way you wish

Collaboration: Over 60 confirmed campaign partners 2024 who support the [Time for Collective Action Manifesto](#)

**... we invite you to join us!**





**ENERGISER!!!**

**Stretch, take a breath, look at something ...**

**GREEN...**

**Time for questions...**

# Key policy asks from grassroots initiatives to EU level policies / European Green Deal



# TIME FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION MANIFESTO

Community-led initiatives & the European Green Deal

**#1** Support community-led initiatives as laboratories for transformative social innovation. **#2** Support the right to have a choice to live sustainably. **#3** Harness the power of community for a strong localised Green Deal. **#4** Meaningful public participation and lively democracies. **#5** Finance and resource community-led solutions. **#6** Imagine the possibilities: from “what is” to “what if?”. **#7** From extraction and infinite growth towards care and wellbeing.

**“Having the right policies, infrastructure and technology in place to enable changes to our lifestyles and behaviour can result in a 40-70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This offers significant untapped potential... The evidence also shows that these lifestyle changes can improve our health and wellbeing.”**

IPCC Working Group III Co-Chair Priyadarshi Shukla 2022



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”**

**Margaret Mead**



# Key messages for localisation of the EGD

## 1 Support community-led initiatives as laboratories for transformative social innovation.

Collective action by citizens can help inspire the cultural change in mindsets, norms and values needed for fundamental lifestyle changes towards sufficiency to become widespread [10]. Community-led initiatives are –at their best– laboratories of transformative social innovation [11,12], inspiring new social practices and turning sustainable lifestyles into a good habit.

Many community-led initiatives on biodiversity, energy, food and mobility go even further: They show that it is possible to have a positive socio-ecological impact [13,14] by caring for people and nature as the basis of all life. Diverse grassroots responses can create virtuous cycles, improving the resilience, health and wellbeing of communities and the natural places they live in [15, 16].

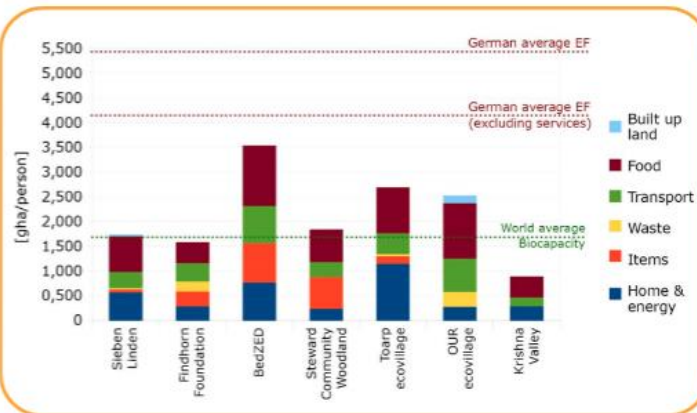
Cultural changes are connected to new ways of knowing, doing, organising and framing [17]. Practices of community-led initiatives are often based on whole-systems thinking, as in permaculture and sociocracy. Community-supported agriculture, energy communities, transformative learning [18] and sharing economies (such as in transport, or time-sharing) are other examples. The social innovation that such initiatives can bring to wider society needs to be supported by policy.

Figure 1: Comparison between the ecological footprint of different ecovillages in Europe and average German ecological footprints. Source: Bocco, Andrea et al: [The ecological footprint of Siebenlinden](#), 2018, p. 27

### POLICY DEMAND

We ask EU policy makers to support social innovation and acknowledge the crucial role of community-led initiatives by mainstreaming social innovation in all EU funding programmes, and by creating tailor-made funding programmes on social change, demand-side mitigation, localisation and sufficiency.

We ask the European Commission to publish a communication on the relevance of community-led initiatives for climate and environmental action and for implementing the European Green Deal.



## 2

### Support the right to have a choice to live sustainably.

Everyone on the planet has the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment [19]. The freedom to live sustainably means the freedom to do all one can to guarantee a healthy biosphere as a precondition for a good life.

However, right now, the choice to live well within planetary boundaries is out of reach for most people in Europe for systemic reasons. We must mainstream diverse, sustainable lifestyles and create the conditions so that everyone, especially marginalised groups, can have the choice to live, work and act within planetary boundaries.

Community-led initiatives can inspire lifestyle changes beyond material wealth and consumption, yet systemic changes are needed to make diverse ways of sustainable living accessible to all.

#### **POLICY DEMAND**

We ask EU politicians to create the systemic conditions for mainstreaming diverse, sustainable lifestyles by changing the economic system towards care for people and the planet so that everyone can choose to live well within planetary boundaries.

#### GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

### Meet Jalotus Circular Economy Center

Finland

Jalotus was established as a project of the city of Kerava, Finland, as part of a nationally active transition movement for sustainable living. Their mission is to support the transformation from passive consumers to active citizens, reducing their environmental impact.

[www.jalotus.fi](http://www.jalotus.fi)



## Harnessing the power of community for a strong localised Green Deal.

The European Green Deal has the potential to guide national, regional and local policies and action towards transformative change. Citizens and communities need strong environmental and social protection to thrive. Its implementation depends on citizens and local stakeholders [21].

But there is no binding mechanism in place for local-level implementation of the European Green Deal across Member States and no dedicated resourcing (funding, capacity building) for community-led sustainability action [22]. Existing funding programmes are generally quite limited for local stakeholders [22], such as citizens' initiatives or local governments, leaving the potential of grassroots sustainability action largely untapped.

To achieve the goals of the European Green Deal, we need to adapt it to the local context. We want to see local and regional Green Deals that connect citizens with governments and the natural habitats they live in. These place-based Green Deals would include binding plans in line with European Green Deal targets and timelines and a holistic approach to the planetary crisis, addressing climate, biodiversity and pollution together. They would involve citizens and community-led initiatives in mitigation and adaptation, aiming to create virtuous cycles and build the resilience and wellbeing of communities.

### POLICY DEMAND

We call on local, national and EU policy makers to promote lifestyle and societal changes and widen the scope for collective action for sustainability –hand in hand with the systemic change needed.

We ask EU policy makers to:

- Support a strong and ambitious European Green Deal by reinforcing laws with binding targets for all Member States and governance levels in line with the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Prioritise the goals of the European Green Deal and mainstream these throughout all EU funding and policy frameworks, making it the guiding light for territorial development and support this with dedicated funding via Integrated Territorial Investments and Community-Led Local Development [23].
- Support local or regional Green Deals through EU funding, regulations, strategies and frameworks. This entails binding plans with targets and timelines aligned with the European Green Deal and direct access to climate and environmental funding for municipal, local and regional authorities and community-led initiatives. Creating synergies and coherence between existing structures and initiatives such as Local Action Groups (LEADER/Community-Led Local Development), the Covenant of Mayors, the EU Climate Pact, the Rural Pact, and Smart Villages is crucial.

## 4 Meaningful public participation and lively democracies.

The science is clear: we need transformative change to tackle the climate and biodiversity crisis [2,3]. But the political will is lacking. Continuing political disregard for the potential for citizens and community-led initiatives to respond to the planetary crisis increases the risk of social unrest, political apathy, disillusion and polarisation.

We believe that a democratic system that offers meaningful public participation has the potential to drive practical action and higher ambition in sufficiency-oriented policy making under the European Green Deal. Many community-led initiatives apply innovative forms of governance and participatory democracy that support responsible, self-empowered action.

### POLICY DEMAND

We call on EU policy makers to:

- Develop mechanisms for direct links and structured dialogues between grassroots initiatives and local, regional, national and EU levels of governance.
- Adopt strong direct democracy approaches, such as participatory budgeting and citizen assemblies.
- Support organised, publicly-financed connecting spaces and intermediaries such as associations, whose role is to interact between citizens and governments and which possess the resources, competencies and skills needed to nourish deliberative public participation.

### 4.1 Participation in the national energy and climate plans and long-term strategies

EU Member States are required to submit 10-year national energy and climate plans (NECPs) and long-term strategies (LTS) outlining how they intend to meet their energy and climate commitments. The current draft NECPs are greatly insufficient [25]. They fail to align with EU 2030 climate targets and lack the meaningful participation of, and consultation with, local governments and communities. Community-led initiatives need to be part of a structured stakeholder dialogue, including citizen assemblies to inform the drafting and implementation of NECPs and LTS and align with local and regional Green Deals.

### POLICY DEMAND

We call on EU policy makers to strengthen and improve the monitoring of national obligations associated with NECPs and LTS, in line with demands by Climate Action Network Europe (CAN-E) [25] and the European Committee of the Regions [26].

Specifically, we call for:

- The establishment of permanent multi-level energy and climate dialogues, including on regional, local and municipal levels, to ensure that climate policies are designed using a bottom-up approach that involves and empowers local communities. Community-led initiatives need to be involved in these structures as part of larger citizen assemblies [27].
- Include localisation and strengthened multi-level governance as binding criteria of NECPs, with municipal, local and regional governments and community-led initiatives at the heart of localisation. This includes linking NECPs to existing frameworks for Local Green Deals and governance methods such as Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans [28].

## 5 Financing and resourcing community-led solutions.

Healthy communities connected to nature form the basis for socio-ecological innovation and sustainability action. Community-led initiatives that care for people and the planet are essential, yet their activities are not adequately valued by the market or the public sector.

We advocate to change public resourcing to support care for people and the planet. Communities undertaking this care work need core funding for their activities that is not project-bound, guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of CLIs. They also need sufficient and appropriate resourcing of the infrastructures, institutions, organisations and activities necessary for communities to take care of their social and ecological habitats [29].

### POLICY DEMAND

We call on the European Commission to adequately resource people and communities for the green transition with specific attention to providing core funding for community-led initiatives. Social innovation and community-building need to be earmarked in all EU funding programmes.

Policies must empower communities to respond to the planetary crisis and take action. This includes ensuring that people have enough time, adequate skills and competencies, as well as the social, cultural and financial resources to tackle this challenge.

### GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

## Meet Tamera Ecovillage Portugal

Started in 1978 with a small group, Tamera is an experimental peace research village of around 200 inhabitants (including children) located in southwest Portugal, with a mission of empowering people around the world to build a regenerative, nonviolent culture.

[www.tamera.org](http://www.tamera.org)



**ENERGISER!!!**

**Stretch, take a breath, look at  
something ...**

**GREEN...**

**Time for questions...**

# Exchanges (10 mins)

What are your experiences with European Green Deal implementation/ localisation overall? Do you have any experiences involving community-led initiatives?

How useful and accessible are the funds under the CPR for EGD implementation overall? For grassroots initiatives specifically?

... turn to your 2 neighbours, introduce yourself and have an exchange on the proposed questions...


What could be the role of the CPR partners to advocate for a swift localisation of a strong European Green Deal in the next policy cycle? For grassroots initiatives specifically?

# Exchanges in the Plenary

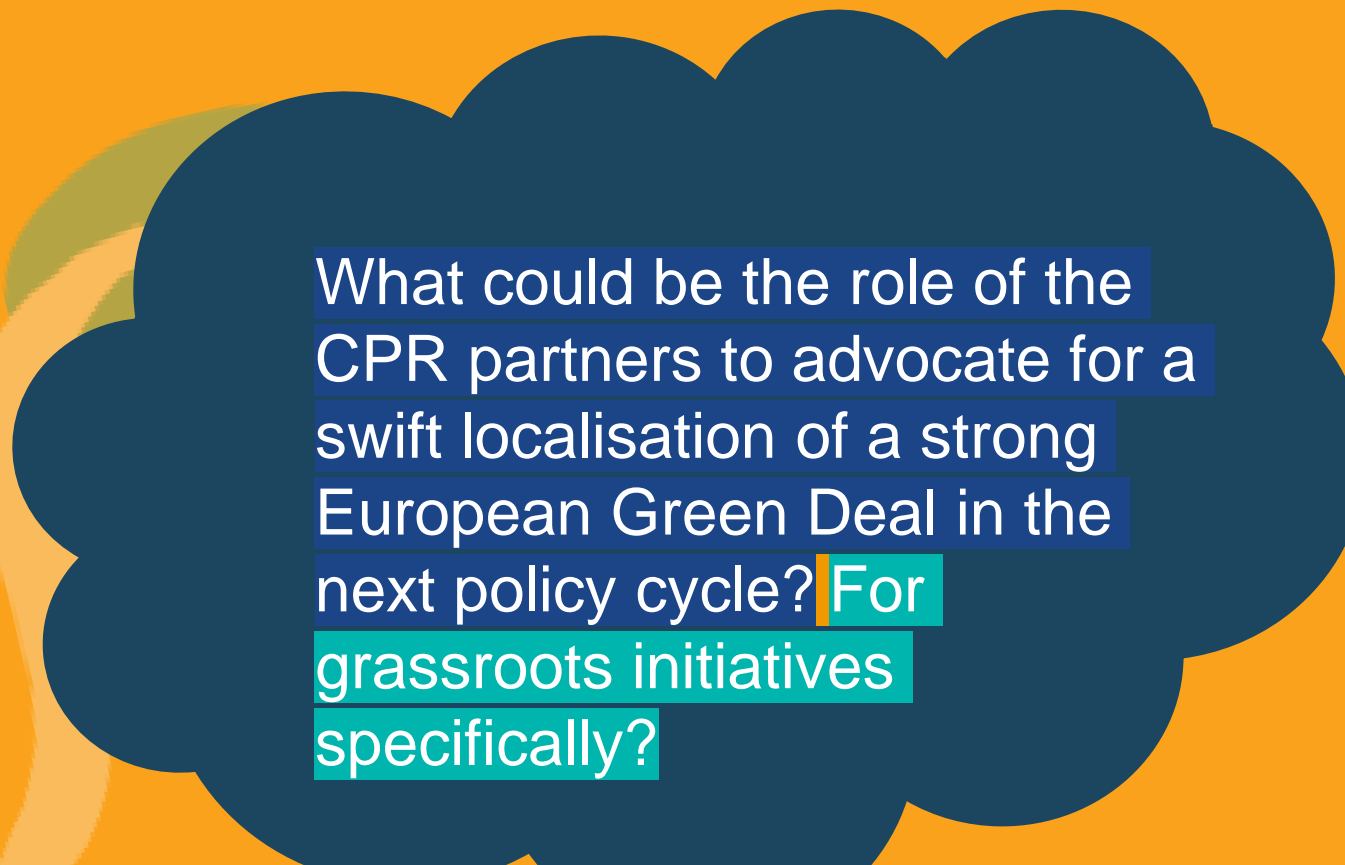
(15 mins)

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For grassroots initiatives specifically?



What could be the role of the CPR partners to advocate for a swift localisation of a strong European Green Deal in the next policy cycle? For grassroots initiatives specifically?

**Thank you for your attention!**

Please get in touch:

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[www.ecolise.eu](http://www.ecolise.eu)

[www.communitiesforfuture.org](http://www.communitiesforfuture.org)

<http://timeforcollectiveaction.eu> (Time for Collective Action Manifesto dedicated website  
- for signatories)



# THANK YOU!

[info@ecolise.eu](mailto:info@ecolise.eu)

[www.ecolise.eu](http://www.ecolise.eu)

[www.communitiesforfuture.org](http://www.communitiesforfuture.org)



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