

Former commissioners & national ministers warn rollback of sustainability rules risks undermining trust in European institutions

International leaders including **Josep Borrell** – former High Representative of the Union and former Vice-President of the European Commission; **Mary Robinson** – former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and former President of Ireland and **Linda Kromjong** - President of business association amfori - have today sent an open letter to the institutions and governments of the European Union. In it, they warn against the risk of dismantling regulatory progress on sustainability, claiming this would be a 'backward step' and would 'undermine trust in European institutions'.

The statement responds to the European regulatory package known as *Omnibus I*, which proposes reviewing and postponing various sustainability-related regulations on the grounds of enhancing competitiveness. The signatories warn that changes to the laws that were built on broad consensus, could represent a concerning setback for the EU's social and environmental commitments. They assert that sustainability is not an obstacle, but a key pillar of a truly competitive economy.

"We reject the false dichotomy between sustainability and social responsibility on the one hand, and efficiency and competitiveness on the other. These goals are compatible and mutually reinforcing: A strong commitment to sustainability enhances competitiveness, builds resilience, mitigates risks, and ultimately contributes to long-term value creation and trust," the text states.

While the signatories support efforts to streamline demands for companies, they state: "However, we believe it is essential to uphold certain non-negotiable principles and political commitments that have established the European Union as a global leader in social and environmental matters".

They further warn that weakening the EU's legal framework on sustainability would undermine those core principles and send mixed signals to the market at a critical time for Europe's transition to a fairer, more sustainable and resilient economy: "upholding the highest standards of legislative quality, robustness, alignment with relevant international standards and clarity remains imperative for achieving policy objectives and reinforcing the EU's legislative excellence. Abandoning the regulatory progress made in social and environmental areas would be inconsistent and would undermine trust in European institutions".

The letter calls for staying the course in the implementation of sustainable policies — with appropriate support mechanisms for businesses — but without abandoning existing commitments on human rights, environmental protection, and social justice.