

European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60
1050 Ixelles

European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

30 September 2026

Dear President Von der Leyen,

We are writing to you as a cross-party group of MEPs who recently met with communities from around Europe affected by PFAS pollution. While already aware of the scientific evidence for the devastation caused by PFAS pollution, we were nevertheless shocked by the witness of the people who endure its effects daily.

Recently, we listened attentively to your State of the Union address for mentions of the pollution and health crisis we are facing in Europe, and for your commitment to a timely proposal for a broad ban on PFAS. We were concerned when PFAS pollution did not make it into the priority issues raised in your speech, given the urgency of the issue. For people living the effects of PFAS pollution, the need to prioritise action is clear. We outline their stories in this letter to provide a conduit for their voices.

Starting only a few kilometres from the European Parliament, we heard how people in Uccle, living near the site of a factory that manufactured firefighting foams, are unable to plant fruit and vegetables in their gardens for fear of contamination.

In Flanders, communities in Zwijndrecht and Ronse are exposed to groundwaters contaminated by PFAS and have to undergo extensive health monitoring due to the health risks associated with the pollution.

In Dordrecht in the Netherlands, exposed communities have experienced elevated levels of cancers, due to pollution from a company that even now is asking for a permit to continue its production of trifluoroacetic acid.

In Altötting in Bavaria, the area polluted by two factories extends to 380 km², while residents in Manching are exposed to PFAS pollution due to decades-long use of firefighting foam containing PFAS at a nearby military base – a common issue throughout Germany.

Turning to Italy, communities in Veneto, Tuscany, Piemonte and Brescia have been exposed to extensive PFAS pollution from the chemicals, textiles, paper, cement, waste incineration and aviation industries, with PFAS present in their air, water and soil. Like the area of Spinatta Marengo, where CEOs of the Syensqo facility are currently facing a penal court case for PFAS contamination; something that did not stop your colleague Commissioner Roswall from

meeting with these same CEOs in a visit to the factory in March. She did not meet with local communities or provide any means for those impacted to raise their concerns.

In France, people living near chemical plants on the Rhone River have elevated levels of PFAS in their blood, which leaves them in a constant state of worry for their health and that of their children. Similarly, residents in the département of Gard are terrified of the risks of cancer and thyroid disease linked to the exceptionally high concentrations of trifluoroacetic acid found in their water.

These gut-wrenching stories likely show only a fraction of the damage that PFAS is causing to communities across the EU. More than 23,000 sites across Europe are already contaminated by PFAS, with an additional 21,500 suspected sites. An estimated 12.5 million Europeans are drinking contaminated water.

We impatiently await the Commission's proposal of a broad PFAS restriction pending the finalisation of ECHA's opinions. But the restriction is only half the battle. Given the level of pollution that is already locked in, we also need comprehensive action to harmonise and enforce the responsibility of polluters to provide remediation and compensation for affected communities, and to ensure these communities are actively supported in availing of their rights.

We are aware that many affected community groups, under the banner of the European Environmental Bureau, have sent several requests to meet with you, but that their requests have been turned down. We urge you to meet with them, as we have, as they represent an important stakeholder group in the discussion around PFAS. We appreciate the intensity of your agenda, but would stress that, having found time to meet with the chemicals industry on many occasions (structured dialogues, participation in industry events and meetings with individual companies), it is imperative that you and your Commission are seen to engage with all sides to this discussion. Impacted communities should be granted the same opportunity to participate as industrial actors enjoy. When European citizens raise their voices together, we have a duty to listen.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Lynn Boylan MEP – The Left – Ireland
Cristina Guarda MEP – Greens/EFA – Italy
Majdouline Sbai MEP – Greens/EFA - France
Marie Toussaint MEP – Greens/EFA – France
Dario Tamburrano MEP – The Left – Italy
Rudi Kennes – The Left – Belgium
Sara Matthieu – Greens/EFA – Belgium
Jutta Paulus – Greens/EFA - Germany