



From: Scientists Warning Europe,

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To: The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, Prime Minister,

10 Downing Street,

London, SW1 2AA

To: The President of the Council of Ministers, Professor Mario Draghi

Palazzo Chigi, Piazza Colonna 370

00187 Rome – Italy

28 October 2021

Dear Prime Ministers of the UK and Italy

We write to you in your capacity as co-hosts of COP26. We refer to our previous letter to Prime Minister Johnson on 12 February this year in support of the letter from Dr James E. Hansen.

We finished this previous letter with a quote by Winston Churchill “History will be kind to me because I intend to write it”. We call on you both now to follow Mr Churchill, pick up your pens and write the chapter in future history books entitled “The Leaders that Finally Solved the Climate Crisis”.

We agree with Sir David Attenborough that “if we don’t act now, it will be too late”. Sir David has, with tens of thousands of other scientists, been raising the alarm on the climate and biodiversity crisis for decades. The first World Scientists Warning to Humanity was issued back in 1992.

Action has been put off or watered down for many years, decades even, by financial or business interests or due to political expediency. The proverbial can has been firmly kicked down the road but the road has ended at a cliff edge and the can teeters terrifyingly on this edge.

The scientific world has done all it can to give you and other politicians the scientific advice needed to make the vitally important decisions required. Now you must take up your pens and write yourselves into the World’s history books by selecting net zero targets for the UK and Italy significantly in advance of 2050.

For us to have any chance of staying under the 1.5°C threshold identified in the Paris Agreement this should ideally be 2030 or as near as possible.

In this letter we avoid stating the latest scientific facts to you again. What is the point? The scientific world has researched and reported, peer-reviewed and presented report after report after report. Most scientists are quite frankly fed up. The dire facts have all been presented, re-presented and re-examined time and again. Now it is the twelfth hour, a minute before midnight. Now is the time for moral courage and real leadership.

As Prime Minister Draghi has said before we now need to do “whatever it takes!”

All current politicians of whatever level and wherever in the world must be aware they will be called to account for their actions or inaction in the face of the Climate Crisis not only at the ballot box but also by their children and grandchildren in the living room and around the breakfast table.

You are the Prime Ministers of two of the most advanced and respected nations of the World, members of the G7 and joint hosts of COP26. This is the most important event in the history of the planet. We have been told by Sir David Attenborough “to act now or it will be too late” and John Kerry has said COP26 is humanity’s “best last chance”. We put it to you, Prime Ministers, that it is also your best last chance to truly step up, be hugely more ambitious than in the past and lead the World at this crucial moment in time.

We again offer our commitment and help to you in achieving this.

Yours faithfully



Ed Gemmell, Managing Director, Scientists Warning Europe

For and on behalf of

Professor Kevin Anderson, Chair of Energy and Climate Change, Tyndall Centre, University of Manchester

Professor Phoebe Barnard, Professor of Environmental Futures, University of Washington, USA and lead author of the paper World Scientists’ Warning Into Action, Board Member Scientists Warning Europe

Professor Lorenzo Fioramonti, Professor of Political Economy in South Africa and Member of Parliament in Italy

Professor Dave Goulson, Professor of Biology at University of Sussex, Scientific Advisory Panel Member Scientists Warning Europe

Professor Joanna Haigh, Emeritus Professor of Atmospheric Physics, Imperial College London

Dr James E Hansen, Director, Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions program, Columbia University Earth Institute

Professor Tim Jackson, Professor of Sustainable Development and Director of the Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP), University of Surrey

Professor Felicia Keesing, David and Rosalie Rose Distinguished Professor of Science, Mathematics, and Computing, Bard University, New York

Professor Sir David King, FRS, Founder and Chair, Centre for Climate Repair at Cambridge University

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