

10 Key messages of the First European Forum on EHRDs shared on Day 2 by the elected Message Carriers

CRIMINALISATION AND SLAPPS

1. Guarantee the protection of environmental protest, implementing international standards and recognising it as a matter of public interest. Stop misusing laws (e.g. extremism, terrorism, defamation and other frameworks) against HRDs and communities' activities.
2. Ensure capacity-building and awareness raising on local, national and regional level of legal professionals or those affected by SLAPPs and criminalisation to for early identification and dismissal of cases within the existing judicial system at the earliest possible stage. Embed structural options for dismissal mechanisms for SLAPPs proceedings.
3. Have measures in place to prevent those impacted by SLAPPs and criminalisation are not 'priced out of courts', including through financial assistance to ensure legal fees are not a burden. Ensure that those affected can access justice and remedies through regional and international judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.
4. Establish and implement an international legal mechanism to counter SLAPPs and criminalisation of EHRDs' work that goes beyond the EU Anti-SLAPP directive. (e.g. amendment to the Aarhus Convention or the European Convention on Human Rights)

ENVIRONMENTAL DE-REGULATION AND THE RIGHT TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT IN EUROPE

1. Adopt a binding legal framework recognizing the right to a healthy environment grounded in a decolonial approach (for example, through differentiated financial responsibilities of different countries), that includes specific provisions on the heightened protection for environmental human rights defenders and financial support for participation in international fora related to environmental decision-making
2. Strengthen binding obligations for all participating countries through international monitoring instruments, in accordance with the Aarhus Convention and other relevant international and national laws, to ensure transparency, equality, accessible information for communities and independence in the proper conduct of environmental assessments. These instruments should have local, national and regional application and respect the environmental needs of all living beings in the local area.
3. Uphold communities' right to information and the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples, and ensure stronger democratic involvement, enabled through open civic space, and guaranteed participation in processes and negotiations (Anna to cite 2 or 3 examples to illustrate - EIA, trade agreement negotiations, infrastructure projects)

CORPORATE HARM

1. Parent entities domiciled in Europe must uphold - throughout their entire value chain - the highest standard of protection between applicable local law and European standards, including mandatory impact assessments, inclusive community consultations, the right to Free, Prior

and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples, and corporate accountability regardless of where harm occurs.

2. Address disinformation on corporate environmental harm and establish independent bodies with a clear mandate to review and validate environmental reports and other disclosure provided by companies. These review processes should encompass systematic, ongoing, and meaningful consultation with defenders and communities, and compare companies' reports and disclosures against concerns, complaints and reporting from affected communities and defenders to ensure accuracy, completeness, good-faith, transparency and public trust, aligned with EU due diligence and reporting obligations.
3. Enact criminal offences carrying custodial sentences against corporations, including company directors and investors, who commit environmental harm.