



RESOLUTION
On European youth fighting against
Climate Change

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Climate Change is a constant natural process, whose past evolutions have always had effects on living conditions on the Earth. This process includes both climate related factors such as ocean variability and glaciations and non-climate factors, such as plate tectonics, volcanism and solar and orbital variations. All these factors are object of permanent study by scientists and recognized as causes of climate changes.

Apart from these natural causes, a consensus has been reached by the international scientific community that the most recent period of climate change is influenced by human-made factors as well. The reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have established an accelerated global warming caused by the enormous increase in certain gas emissions produced within our society. Fossil fuels, aerosols consumption and cement manufacture are the main human-produced sources of such gas emissions. Additionally, a wide range of other human factors such as land use, deforestation and intensive agriculture also influence climate variations. This signalises an urgent need for changing both patterns of economic production and consumption, which are clearly unsustainable in the context of global warming.

As the Policy Paper on Sustainable Development of the Youth Forum maintains, *“Climate change is one of the largest ever threats to humankind and it is the clearest example of where younger and coming generations’ needs are compromised by older and current generations’ lifestyles.”* The disrespect towards the lives and rights of the next generations is visible by the refusal of the full implementation of the precautionary principle by authorities around the globe. This current reality urges us to continue lobbying local authorities, national governments and the EU to fulfil their commitments and to make this issue their priority in each aspect of their policies.

The European Youth Forum acknowledges the challenge that climate change lays ahead for our common future and it has thus organised The Information and Networking Days on Climate Change in Brussels in December 2007. The discussions held then among YFJ member organisations pointed out that there is a need for a strong position of youth when it comes to measures to reduce climate changes. In this respect, the European Youth Forum:

- Identifies climate change as the main threat for the future living conditions of today’s youth and acknowledges its dramatic effect on the inequality in the global distribution of resources
- Points out that the effects of climate change are already tangible (severe draughts and floods, the process of disappearance of the clearly divided four seasons in temperate climate areas, the increasingly high temperatures in summer or the melting of the glacial calotte to mention some of them) and affect the daily lives of millions of citizens and shows its concerns about the increased risk of forthcoming ecological disasters.
- Warns about the potential negative consequences that climate imbalances cause not only in the ecological arena, but also in socio-economic terms and with respect to global security, as the struggle for increasingly scarce resources might trigger substantial political instability as is currently witnessed for example in Sudan

- Is aware both of the high responsibility of Europe as the main global player in this field, as well as of the opportunity it has to take leadership on the issue and become a model for dealing with it.
- Recognizes the crucial role youth in Europe can and must play in tackling the greatest threat and challenge humanity has ever been confronted with, and underlines the great importance of information and education for effective acting against climate change.
- Stresses the important impact of energy policies and mobility patterns on climate change

The European Youth Forum therefore demands that urgent measures are taken in the following areas:

- 1) Education on Climate Change at the national level - by means of:
 - Introducing courses on Natural and Human factors of Climate Change in school and university curricula. This can be achieved by integrating in courses of various disciplines an approach that highlights the effects of the Climate Change. For instance: *approaching biodiversity issues in Biology classes; tackling issues such as the real cost of pollution (Ecological Print Indices) in Economy classes; highlighting in Civic Education and History classes the International, European and National legislation on this issue, the main actors and programs as well as the agreements on the topic and their evolution; identifying the most polluted regions in the world and the consequences on the local demography in Geography classes; discussing the relationship between the Human species and ecosystems in Philosophy lessons.*
 - Practical trainings in primary and high-schools on energy saving, aimed at achieving a long-term shift in behaviour towards more environmentally friendly daily routines
- 2) Decoupling of economic growth and fossil fuel consumption-by means of:
 - Reviewing tax systems, based on the impact of both the economical and ecological costs of activities, in production stages as well as consumption stages (especially concerning the consumption of energy and water)
 - Promoting the spread of re-usable packaging systems for products, for example by introducing individual financial incentives such as charging for plastic bags or deposits on metal cans
 - Stricter regulation of advertisement and labelling policies, so that products cannot be promoted as being “ecological” unless there is concrete proof that they have been grown/manufactured/transported/commercialised respecting all environmental criteria, including their impact on climate change
 - Introducing minimum requirements for energy efficiency in all energy-consuming products and improving energy efficiency in buildings
- 3) Stimulating climate-friendly mobility of young people -through:
 - Free public transport for every person under 30 in the whole of the EU
 - Obliging national and local authorities to develop sustainable and clean public transport facilities which have the capacity to accommodate the needs of the whole of the local population.

- Encouraging local authorities to establish a geographically balanced network of facilities for youth, so that schools and leisure activities are within walking or biking distance
 - Promoting intra-urban use of bikes, by developing a network of separate bike lanes and parking places for bikes, while paying special attention to the safety of young bikers, for example by placing special traffic lights at dangerous intersections near schools and universities.
- 4) An in-depth review of the energy scenario promoted by the EU institutions - demands
- Imposing concrete penalties on member states for non-compliance with relevant international agreements such as the Kyoto protocol or the EU's own regulations and directives, modelled after the stability pact
 - Adjusting the Emission Trading Scheme by putting an end to "grandfathering", introducing a compulsory percentage of permits to be auctioned off and setting a limit to the percentage of reductions being obtained through the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation
 - Reducing the impact the transport sector has on climate change, by including aviation and shipping into the ETS, introducing user-charges for Haulage Vehicles (HGV) and setting binding emissions limits on cars
 - Promoting the use of energy from renewable sources through financial incentives and stimulating investment in R&D in the renewables sector
- 5) European Youth Forum, in recognition of its exemplary function - promises:
- To develop a sustainable and climate friendly internal travel policy and working procedures and to recommend the use of such a policy in all activities it co-organizes.
 - To continue to organize activities such as the Information and Networking Days on Climate Change held in 2007. For instance, to start developing campaigns and training sessions on climate change, its consequences and ways to combat it - all of them to be included in the discussion on the next Work Plan.