

Open Letter from European Youth to the European Union ahead of COP30

As young people from across Europe, we come together with a shared purpose: to present ambitious, science-based, and justice-centered proposals that reflect our generation's determination to secure a livable and equitable future. We call on the European Council to take strong and concrete action this crucial year, which will define how the Paris Agreement is carried out and Europe's place in global climate leadership.

This open letter, initiated by Franco-German (JAC and Klimadelegation) and European youth organizations, is addressed to you, the European Union (EU), at a turning point for global climate diplomacy. In November 2025, the EU Council will meet under the Presidency's goal of adopting a general orientation on the revision of the EU Climate Law; a crucial step toward approving the updated European Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in preparation for COP30 in Belém.

The decisions taken in these months will define Europe's credibility and legacy in the fight for climate justice. We, the youth of Europe, urge you to act with vision, courage, and responsibility; to make the European Union a leader not only in ambition, but in fairness and solidarity.

As two founding pillars of the European Union,

Germany and France play a pivotal role in defining Europe's climate leadership. The decisions they take will directly influence whether the EU fulfills its commitments to climate justice. Both countries must integrate a justice-based approach across all bilateral and multilateral cooperation, ensuring local ownership, resilience, and equitable outcomes for all. We therefore address Germany and France directly, urging them to lead by example in ambition, finance, and solidarity.

Germany

Germany must fulfill its promises and show true climate solidarity by ensuring its international commitments are ambitious, fair, and transparent.

Deutschland muss:

- sein Versprechen einlösen, bis **2025 min. 6 Milliarden Euro Klimafinanzierung aus Haushaltssmitteln für den sogenannten Globalen Süden bereitzustellen** (unter besonderer Berücksichtigung die Anpassungsfinanzierung).
- für die kommenden Jahre ein (entsprechend des NCQGs) neues, höheres Klimafinanzierungsziel setzen, das **jedes Jahr um eine zusätzliche Milliarde wächst und bis 2030 12 Milliarden Euro** erreicht.
- auf der COP30 einen neuen, **größeren Beitrag zum Fond for Responding to Loss and Damage zusagen**, um an den vorherigen Beitrag nahtlos anzuschließen.

France:

France has long positioned itself as a driver of international climate diplomacy; from the Paris Agreement to COP30 in Belém, this legacy must be upheld through leadership rooted in equity and ambition.

Nous appelons la France à :

- **S'engager à au moins doubler le financement de l'adaptation d'ici 2030**, en veillant à ce qu'au moins 50 % du financement climatique public total soutiennent l'adaptation et la résilience, en particulier pour les communautés les plus vulnérables.
- **Veiller à ce que sa Contribution Déterminée au niveau National (CDN) soit non seulement cohérente, mais qu'elle contribue à renforcer l'ambition climatique de l'Union européenne.** **La France a, ces derniers mois, envoyé des signaux contradictoires — notamment dans sa gestion de l'objectif d'émissions pour 2040 au sein de l'UE, où son hésitation a suscité des inquiétudes quant à son niveau d'ambition et à sa crédibilité internationale.**
- **Assurer la mise en place effective d'aires marines protégées (AMP) françaises** : la France dispose du deuxième espace maritime mondial. Elle doit donc porter une protection ambitieuse et effective de ces écosystèmes vivants, précieux pour la biodiversité et le stockage de carbone, en y interdisant toutes les pratiques de pêche industrielle.
- **Faire de l'ambition le moteur du multilatéralisme.** La France doit préserver et renforcer l'héritage de l'Accord de Paris en veillant à ce que le multilatéralisme demeure un instrument d'ambition, et non uniquement de compromis. Plutôt que de se contenter d'accords à minima, la France devrait conduire des efforts reflétant l'urgence telle que démontrée par la science, les principes de justice climatique, ainsi que la représentation équitable des voix du Sud global dans les processus de décision.

We urge the European Union to act on 10 priorities

1. Reclaiming European Climate Leadership

Europe's climate leadership is at a crossroads. The next NDC must close the gap between promises and action, aligning with science and justice. True leadership means standing with the Global South, not standing still.

As the International Court of Justice affirmed for the first time this year, States have a legal and moral obligation to do everything in their power to limit warming to 1.5 °C, and cooperate internationally and in good faith. The European Union must now turn its commitments into ambitious, scientifically-informed national policies. According to the 2024 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report, we are heading toward a 2.6-3.1°C warming if current trends continue. **The 1.5 °C limit must remain our objective**, it is only feasible with immediate substantial action.

The EU once set the pace for global climate ambition, but progress has stalled. To restore credibility and honor its moral and legal responsibilities, Europe must lead again; with an NDC that aligns with science and justice.

We urge the EU to:

- Commit to at least **77% emissions reduction by 2035** (including LULUCF), ensuring alignment with the 1.5°C pathway.
- Anchor the EU's NDC in **intergenerational equity and human rights**, in line with the **ICJ advisory opinion**.
- Recognize and elevate **knowledge and best practices from the Global South** as models for low-emission development.

2. Ending the Fossil Era: Mitigation and Energy Transition

Our generation refuses to inherit an economy dependent on destruction. Fossil fuels are the past; renewable, decentralized, and just energy systems are the future. The EU must commit to a complete and fair fossil fuel phaseout, rejecting false, technofix solutions that delay real change.

We call on you to:

- End the use of **coal by 2030** and **gas by 2035**, with a **binding phaseout plan** across all sectors.
- Halt all **new fossil infrastructure projects and subsidies** immediately.
- Triple **renewable energy capacity by 2030**, ensuring fair access and community ownership.
- Exclude **false solutions** such as large-scale CCS or BECCS that harm ecosystems and communities.

3. Adaptation and Resilience for All

Adaptation is not optional; it is a matter of justice. The EU must ensure that adaptation efforts protect those most vulnerable, integrate Indigenous and local knowledge, and strengthen social and ecological resilience.

We urge the EU to:

- Adopt a **robust Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)** with measurable, disaggregated indicators (by gender, age, disability, and socio-economic signalers) and real Means of Implementation (MoI).
- Support **grant-based, needs-driven adaptation finance**, particularly for LDCs and SIDS; together, with the **new Adaptation Finance Pledge at COP30**.
- Embed **local and indigenous participation** in all adaptation planning and monitoring.
- Prioritize **agroecology, soil health, and water resilience** within adaptation strategies.

4. Climate Finance and Economic Justice

Climate finance is an obligation, not charity. The EU must deliver predictable, transparent, and equitable funding that reflects historical responsibility and global solidarity.

We call on the EU to:

- Make **public finance the backbone** of international climate finance under Article 9.1.
- Contribute its fair share to the **Loss and Damage Fund**, ensuring at least **\$400 billion annually by 2030**, grant-based and additional to ODA.
- Ensure **gender-responsive, youth-inclusive** allocation of funds and transparent tracking of finance by type, recipient, and outcome.
- Commit to a **new collective quantified goal (NCQG)** that triples adaptation finance by 2030.

5. A Global Just Transition

The green transition must be a just transition; for workers, farmers, and communities across the world. Europe must stand for transformation that is people-centered and rights-based.

We urge the EU to:

- Support the establishment of a **Global Just Transition Mechanism** under the UNFCCC.
- Integrate **Just Transition principles** into all NDCs, NAPs, and LT-LEDS.
- Ensure **social protection, labor rights, and gender equity** across all transition policies.
- Recognize **agriculture** as a second major transformation sector and invest in equitable food transitions.

6. Gender Equality, Health, and Intergenerational Justice

A truly just climate policy must recognize gender, health, and intergenerational dimensions. Women, girls, and non-binary people must not be sidelined but empowered as changemakers.

We call for:

- Adoption of a **new Gender Action Plan** that integrates **SRHR, GBV, and unpaid care work** into all climate policies.
- Collection of **age- and gender-disaggregated data** across all climate mechanisms.
- Integration of a **“Health in All Policies”** approach that includes physical and mental wellbeing.
- Commitment to **intergenerational equity** in all EU and international frameworks.

7. Empowerment, Education, and Civic Space

True leadership involves listening to and empowering those most affected. Youth participation and education are central to climate action.

We urge the EU to:

- Fully implement **Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)** through national law and financing.
- Include **environmental and climate education** at every level of schooling.
- Guarantee **safe, transparent, and inclusive civic spaces** for youth, Indigenous Peoples, and climate defenders.
- Reject **corporate sponsorship** at COPs and adopt a **Conflict of Interest Policy** to safeguard integrity.

8. Loss and Damage: Acknowledging Responsibility

Loss and damage is the human face of climate injustice. Europe must recognize its role and respond with fairness and urgency.

We call on the EU to:

- Support the **permanent inclusion** of Loss and Damage as a standing COP agenda item.
- Ensure **predictable, accessible, grant-based finance** for the **Santiago Network and Loss and Damage Fund**.
- Recognize **non-economic losses**, cultural, ecological, and educational, as essential components of reparative action.
- Halt all **investments in fossil fuel infrastructure** and redirect funds toward just, renewable transitions.

9. Nature, Food Systems, and Biodiversity

Healthy ecosystems and resilient food systems are the foundation of life. The EU's climate policy must protect nature and transform agriculture for planetary health and justice.

We call on the EU to:

- Strengthen the **protection and restoration of ecosystems**; terrestrial, marine, and freshwater.
- Take into consideration the crucial interactions at play between ecosystems, and not considering them individually (nature-food systems, biodiversity-food, nature-biodiversity)
- Redirect **agricultural subsidies** toward **agroecology, local food networks, and plant-based systems**.
- End subsidies for **intensive livestock production** and harmful monocultures.
- Integrate **Planetary Health Diet principles** into EU food and health strategies.

10. Reforming Global Climate Governance

We envision a COP process that is transparent, participatory, and accountable. Climate governance must work for people, not polluters.

We urge the EU to:

- Adopt a **Conflict of Interest Policy** excluding fossil fuel lobbyists.
- Publish all **Host Country Agreements** and ensure safe participation for all delegates.
- Develop a new **Child Safeguarding Policy** with civil society input.
- Advocate for an **Earth Conference** uniting the Rio Conventions under a planetary justice framework.
- Emphasize the interactions in the Global Climate Governance and ensure coherent, synergistic action across all environmental, biodiversity and desertification agreements.

Conclusion: Our Generation's Call

From **Berlin to Belém, from Paris to Cayenne**, we stand as an united voice. We are the generation that refuses inaction, delay, and empty promises.

We call on the European Union to reclaim its leadership, to make its NDC a model of ambition, justice, and solidarity. It must prove that climate justice is not an aspiration but a promise kept. We call on you to act with courage, compassion, and urgency in order to make Europe a true leader in the global just transition.

We are the generation of the 1.5 °C world.

We demand **action that is fair, fast, and for all**.

No more excuses. No more empty promises. The time to act is now.