



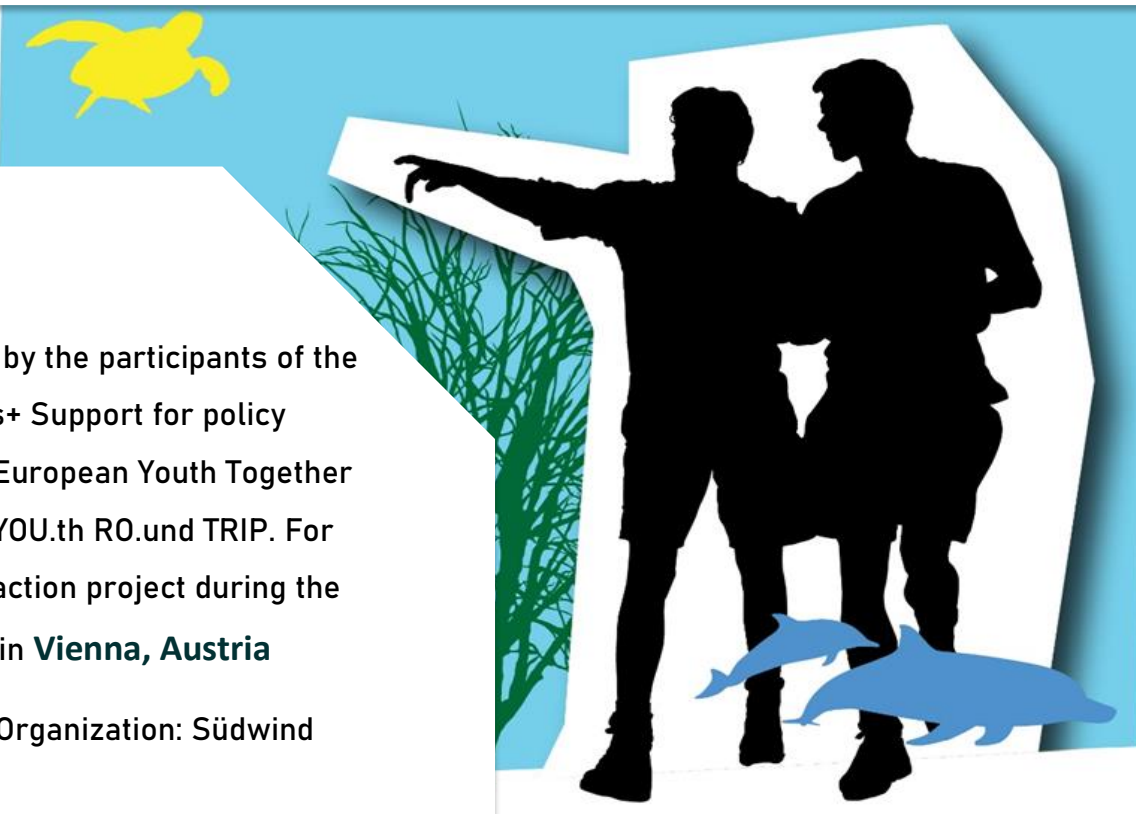
Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Policy Paper on Climate Action

Adopted by the participants of the Erasmus+ Support for policy Reform European Youth Together project 'YOU.th RO.und TRIP. For climate action project during the mobility in **Vienna, Austria**

Hosting Organization: Südwind





Executive Summary

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States express their commitment to protect the planet from degradation and take urgent action on climate change. At the same time Education and skills, and environmental protection and fighting climate change are considered priority topics by at least half of the respondents to European Youth Eurobarometer survey published in January 2018. President Juncker mentioned that European young people are less engaged in traditional forms of participation despite their interest in politics. The paradox which appears is that Member states must design policies to combat climate change which will affect youth's lives in a couple of years, while the latter do not seem to be very interested in voting and engaging with decision making. YOUROTRIP project (short for "YOU.th RO.und TRIP for climate action") aspires to foster youth participation in democratic procedures of decision making through discussions on the high priority topic of climate change.

Through YOUROTRIP project, young people from Greece, France, Spain, Portugal, United Kingdom, Denmark, Romania and Austria met, formed 'Local Youth Councils', discussed and came up with ideas which are recommending as solutions to climate change. In the context of YOUROTRIP project young people met in the beginning of March 2022 in Austria and discussed about the topic of "CO2 Reduction", and in this document, are their policy recommendations on this matter.

Introduction

"Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is an important heat-trapping gas, or greenhouse gas, that comes from the extraction and burning of fossil fuels (such as coal, oil, and natural gas), from wildfires, and from natural processes like volcanic eruptions. [...] Since the beginning of industrial times (in the 18th century), human activities have raised atmospheric CO₂ by 50% – meaning the amount of CO₂ is now 150% of its value in 1750. This is greater than what naturally happened at the end of the last ice age 20,000 years ago. (Earth Science Communications Team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, 2022)





Reducing CO₂-Emissions is seen as one of the key aspects to climate action. It is necessary to cut on emissions to achieve the goals set by the Paris climate agreement to keep the temperature below 1.5°C or 2.0°C. Therefore this overall topic give the possibility to work on different sectors and tangle the issue of climate action on different perspectives and issues.

Analysis

Greenhouse gases have far-ranging environmental and health effects. They cause climate change by trapping heat, and they also contribute to respiratory disease from smog and air pollution. Extreme weather, food supply disruptions, and increased wildfires are other effects of climate change caused by greenhouse gases. The typical weather patterns we've grown to expect will change; some species will disappear; others will migrate or grow.

Today, climate change is the term scientists use to describe the complex shifts, driven by greenhouse gas concentrations, that are now affecting our planet's weather and climate systems. Climate change encompasses not only the rising average temperatures we refer to as global warming but also extreme weather events, shifting wildlife populations and habitats, rising seas, and a range of other impacts (National Geographic, 2019)

Good practices

The required changes span technologies, behaviors, and policies that encourage less waste and smarter use of our resources. For example, improvements to energy efficiency and vehicle fuel economy, increases in wind and solar power, biofuels from organic waste, setting a price on carbon, and protecting forests are all potent ways to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other gases trapping heat on the planet. (National Geographic, 2019)





Organizations like Intel, which last year installed the then-largest wind micro-turbine array in the US on the roof of its worldwide headquarters in Santa Clara, California facilitating 18 on-site solar plants at several of its facilities, representing an installed solar capacity of approximately 7,000 kW (and growing) or Walmart which has put solar panels on the roof of the store, replaced some traditional lightbulbs with LEDs, made refrigerator cases more efficient and put in a charging station for electric vehicles are already contributing to a cleaner planet. (Climate Reality Project, 2016)

Conclusion

Communities around the world are already recognizing that adaptation must also be part of the response to climate change. From flood-prone coastal towns to regions facing increased droughts and fires, a new wave of initiatives focuses on boosting resilience. Those include managing or preventing land erosion, building microgrids and other energy systems built to withstand disruptions, and designing buildings with rising sea levels in mind.

"We have the technology today to rapidly move to a clean energy system," write the authors of *Designing Climate Solutions*. "And the price of that future, without counting environmental benefits, is about the same as that of a carbon-intensive future. (National Geographic, 2019)





Recommendations

The sectors of Food, Energy Production, Electronics, Clothing and Transport/Mobility seem to be the most significant sectors for emissions. Therefore, the ideas on how policies should change evolve around these topics.

For the food sector we have the following recommendations:

- Recyclable packaging methods
- Encourage vegan / vegetarian diet
- Promote make available and choose campaign for organic and local and seasonal food
- Regulate market prices
- Sensibility education: Include a new subject in school about climate (including food production) to raise awareness from early on
- Renewable energy for food
- Increase import taxes (create more small size farms)
- Reduce food waste (develop apps such as “Too good to go”)

For the energy production sector, we have the following recommendations:

- Invest in research and development of renewable energy
- Analyze regions, deciding which form of energy production is the most suitable (windmills, solar panels, water, biomethane green gas biofuel from algae production)
- Exportation of renewable- energy productions outside the EU.
- Tax-reduction for energy producers in the EU to promote the transition from fossil fuels to green and renewable sources.

For the electronics sector, we have the following recommendations:

1. Urge companies and citizens to recycle more electronics
 - create an obligation for a certain percentage of recycled materials in new electronics



- make it more accessible for citizens to recycle their old and broken electronics - by increased number of recycle bins and resolutions for returning microchips and other important materials back into the circle
2. Encourage sustainability in businesses
 - create a climate tax for companies who don't shift towards sustainable production
 - introduce a CO2 tax
 - give financial incentives to companies in order for them to become more eco-friendly
 3. Promote responsible rather than mass-consumption
 - increase education about consumption and awareness about carbon footprint
 - promote awareness campaigns on responsible consumption

For the clothing sector, we have the following recommendations:

- Promote Circular Economy in fashion industry
- Promote local products/brands; This is beneficial because the use of local material encourages a circular economy and the better knowledge of the customers' needs, leads to less waste. Also, the CO2-emissions are less as the need for transportation is reduced. Promotion and less taxing for the owners of local brand businesses.
- Transparency of manufacturing process
- Limitation of production of clothing from animal origin; Research has shown that over 100 million animals are killed per year for the production of clothes. We suggest that higher taxes should be implemented on animal products.
- Offer financial incentives for investment in ecofriendly products.





For the sector of Transportation/Mobility, we have the following recommendations:

- Raise social awareness and invest in general environmental education
- Public transport incentivization should be more appealing/accessible to use public transport.
- Investment for Bicycle lanes

References

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3. The Climate Reality Project website, 2016 <https://www.climate reality project.org/blog/5-major-businesses-powered-renewable-energy>