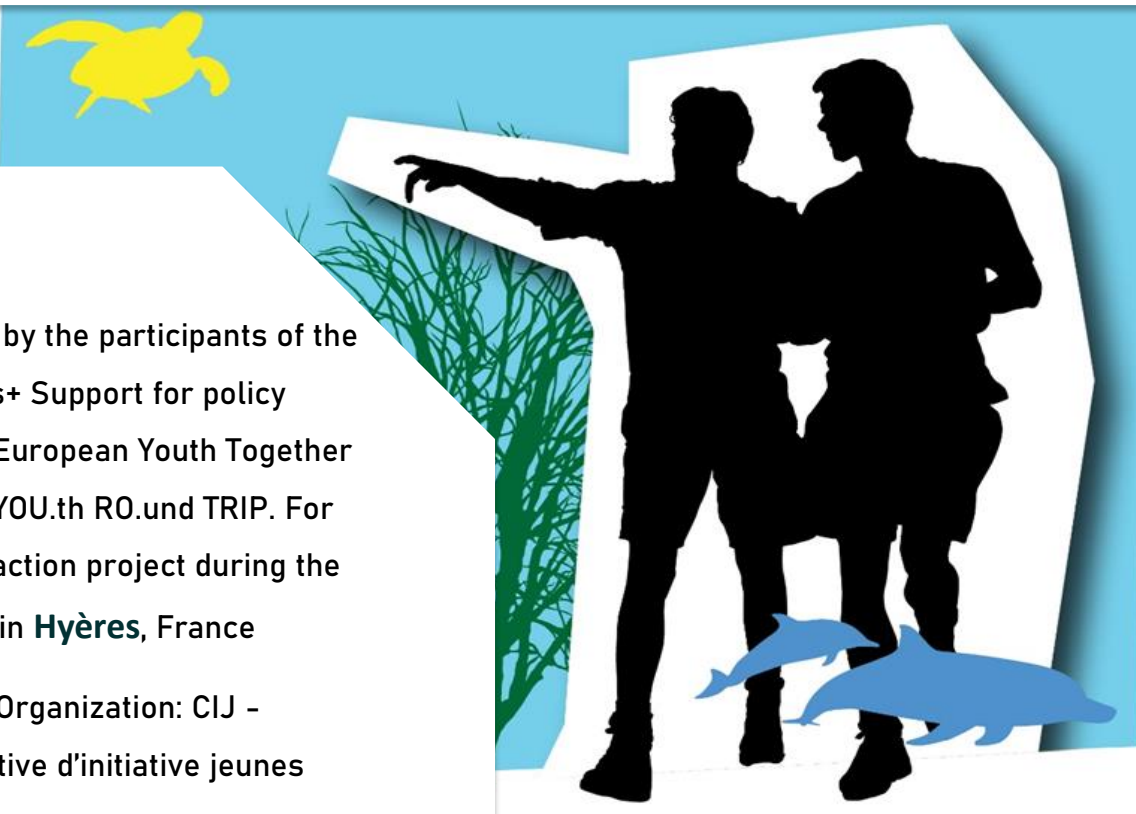




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Policy Paper on Climate Action



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 Hyères, France

Hosting Organization: CIJ - Coopérative d'initiative jeunes





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 November 2021 in France and discussed about the topic of "Water Preservation", and in this document, are their policy recommendations on this matter.

Introduction

Water is a limited resource that needs to be conserved and used sustainably in terms of both quality and quantity. It is not a commercial good. However, it is under strain from a wide range of uses in a variety of industries, including transportation, energy, agriculture, and tourism.

In addition to the above, climate change is already affecting water access for people around the world, causing more severe droughts and floods. Increasing global temperatures are one of the main contributors to this problem. Climate change impacts the water cycle by influencing when, where, and how much





precipitation falls. It also leads to more severe weather events over time. Increasing global temperatures cause water to evaporate in larger amounts, which will lead to higher levels of atmospheric water vapor and more frequent, heavy, and intense rains in the coming years.

Analysis

Moreover, climate scientists predict that this shift will lead to more floods since more water will fall than vegetation and soil can absorb. The remaining water, or runoff, drains into nearby waterways, picking up contaminants like fertilizer on the way. Excess runoff eventually travels to larger bodies of water like lakes, estuaries, and the ocean, polluting the water supply and limiting water access for humans and ecosystems.

When fertilizers from farming wash into lakes and the ocean, they promote the rapid growth of algae. These resulting algal blooms clog coasts and waterways with clouds of green, blue-green, red, or brown algae. The blooms block sunlight from reaching underwater life and diminish oxygen levels within the water. Toxins from the blooms can kill off fish and other aquatic animals, make people sick, and even kill humans. These toxins are especially dangerous because they can survive purification processes, making tap water unfit to consume once contaminated. Algal blooms also impact industries that rely on the water for business, and often cause local waterfronts to shut down during blooms. As the climate warms, harmful algal blooms happen more often and become more severe.

As the ocean warms, freshwater glaciers around Earth begin to melt at an unsustainable rate, which results in rising sea levels. The freshwater from the melted glaciers eventually runs into the ocean. With the rising of sea levels, salt water can more easily contaminate underground freshwater-bearing rocks, called aquifers. A process called desalination removes salt from salt water, but it is a last-resort, energy-intensive, costly process for places where there are persistent droughts and freshwater is lacking. The Middle East, North Africa, and the Caribbean use desalination to produce freshwater out of necessity.





In the Northern Hemisphere—where snow, a freshwater source, typically accumulates—warmer temperatures mean less snowfall, which leaves less water available in local reservoirs after winter. This negatively impacts farmers, who are left without enough water to irrigate their crops in the growing season (National Geographic, 2021).

Concern about water availability and the requirement for water conservation in EU Member States has been also growing due to the rise in droughts and long-term imbalances of the water supply in Europe. According to a thorough analysis conducted by the European Commission in October 2006, there is significant room for improvement in the way that water is currently managed, particularly in terms of its ability to be saved.

Good practices

Charity: water

Charity: water is a nonprofit organization bringing clean and safe drinking water to people in developing countries. Their partners select water point locations based on geography and assessments of need. Then, they also consider the potential for building strong relationships with local stakeholders, the risk of overlap with the work of other organizations, and the availability of spare parts and repair services. Additionally, a community's willingness to participate is important, since strong programs require buy-in and participation to sustain water points over time. charity: water work with sector experts to know which approaches are most effective to deliver water, sanitation, and hygiene services in developing countries. They've funded 38,113 water projects for 9.6 million people in 24 countries around the world. In the last nine years, the organization dug more than 16,000 water projects and set new standards for donor engagement and public communication.

Project “Reduced Water Loss” in South Africa

Innovative pressure control technology was integrated into Sebokeng and Evaton's water delivery system through a public-private collaboration. These two low- to medium-income residential communities have access to clean





water now. The project sought to cut the cost of providing water by lowering the energy needs for pumping while also reducing water losses by managing the pressure in the water distribution network. The initiative reduced the amount of water needed from the bulk water supplier by 25% and resulting in annual water savings of almost 10 million m³. In the sub-Saharan African water sector, this was one of the first performance contracts of this kind with a shared savings approach. (A Catalogue of Good Practices in Water Use Efficiency: A Pilot Phase Report, 2012)

Project "ACQWA: Assessing Climate Impacts on the Quantity and quality of Water"

The goal of the project is to use advanced modeling techniques to quantify the influence of climatic change on the major determinants of river discharge at various time and space scales, and analyze their impact on society and economy, also accounting for feedback mechanisms. At the end of the works a summary for policymakers will be provided: this document is similar in its concept to the philosophy developed by the IPCC to condense the information contained in the detailed reports. The ACQWA summary for policymakers will provide a short comprehensive overview of the most important conclusions of the ACQWA Project and the policy-relevant issues and solutions. Website: <https://www.acqwa.ch/>

Conclusion

Water is the foundation of all life and is necessary for human survival. It is required for energy production, ecological preservation, and soil fertilisation. Large-scale migrations have been sparked by it, and it has also been the focus of disputes and conflicts between communities, regions, and countries as well as the topic of regional and international treaties.

There are many strategies and objectives, but there are also many actions that need to be taken in order to fast transition to a "greener" way of life. In all EU member states, there should be uniform strategies and accepted practices. It





should be encouraged to be used in daily life, communities, homes, and businesses in addition to the strategy and the law.

Recommendations

Regulate access to protected coastal areas

Coastal areas attract many tourists every year in search of sun, nature and sea. Many of these sites often suffer from mass tourism which affects the surrounding ecosystem. Tourist pollution is a major problem because it threatens and weakens ecosystems, promotes subsidence, soil deformation and erosion, increases the risk of fires, etc.

Mass tourism also leads to the development of hotel complexes which not only modify the landscape but also have a strong impact on biodiversity (pollution, poor waste treatment, discharges into waterways, etc.). Therefore, there is an urgent need to restrict and organise the frequentation of these so-called exceptional places and the development of tourist complexes with a strong negative impact on biodiversity.

In conclusion, the European Union should act to preserve coastal areas and prevent the impact of tourism. Better management of tourism in exceptional and often natural coastal areas would allow better preservation of these areas and their ecosystems.

Subsequently, we propose the establishment of a common regulation for the countries of the European Union on the use of protected areas, particularly those located on the coast, whether on foot or by boat. The main aim is to protect the various ecosystems. The regulation of the use of these sites is achieved by setting quotas and signing a charter and a commitment to preservation, which in case of violation will be sanctioned by a fine and more in case of recidivism. Such regulation activities could be:

- Create quotas for natural places and protect
- Promote tourist awareness
- Impose strict regulations on visitor numbers (fines for offenders)



- Fix a limit on boat access to coastal tourist areas and prohibit ink disposal to avoid damaging the seabed.

In addition, we propose the promotion and support awareness-raising activities for tourists in protected tourist areas. Promote and support awareness-raising activities for tourists in protected tourist areas. To encourage this, European projects should be promoted by the European Union to enable local actors to become involved in raising awareness activities. The implementation of such projects would allow the creation of effective methodologies and tools to be disseminated throughout the territory.

Transition to sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is a growing concept. Sustainability in and by the tourism sector is referred to as sustainable practices. Recognizing both the positive and negative effects of tourism is a goal. It seeks to maximise the good effects while minimising the negative ones, by *"taking full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, meeting the needs of visitors, professionals, the environment and host communities"* (UNWTO). More sustainable tourism practices seem to be a good idea to allow both the preservation and the respect of ecosystems.

Sustainable tourism seems to be an alternative in the sense that it can allow hotel operators to provide quality service and preserve the environment. The European institutions should make it a point of honour to encourage a more sustainable mode of tourism that respects the planet. To this end, they should consider imposing the creation of sustainable seaside tourism sites on all new constructions or acquisitions. In addition, to accompany the transition of all seaside tourist sites by 2050, the European Commission should consider setting up a European fund to support the sustainable transition. This fund would make it possible to help all structures wishing to convert their services to a more sustainable mode of operation. This fund could be managed by the national authorities of the Member states.

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