

# „Just Climate!“

## Young Austrian Position Paper for the UN Climate Conference #cop25

*Together* we are sharing young Austrian voices. Many young people are disappointed by the lack of responsibility for climate action, the atmosphere, biodiversity and by the continuous exploitation of natural resources. Youth all over the world is determined to preserve and defend the integrity of our planet, its living inhabitants, and call for climate justice for future generations.

The catastrophic effects of the climate crisis are already well noticeable in Austria. In 2019 there were more deaths from heat distress than from traffic accidents, since 1850 more than 56 percent of glacier surface has been lost and agriculture and forestry suffer from drought and insect calamities.

The Time to ACT is NOW! Policy cannot be made in the short-term over one or two administrations. Children that are born i.e. in 2019 live in their retirement in a world that is 1 to 7 degrees warmer than in our childhood - it depends on the climate policy today.

Politicians everywhere have the responsibility to enable good living conditions and an intact nature for current and future generations.

\*This declaration underlines the recommendations of the 2019 Global Youth Climate Action Declaration, the articulated accounts by Fridays for Future Austria, the sustainability paper by the Austrian youth representation 'Bundesjugendvertretung' and other legitimate demands by civil society organisations.

### What measures do we need? What future do we want?

In order to ensure our fundamental right to a liveable and healthy environment a novel and more ambitious cooperation and mobilisation of all stakeholders is absolutely necessary. Mainstreaming climate ambition involves the personal, local, regional, national and international level.

We call for,

## Clear Objectives

commitment to and policies compliant with the **1,5 degree goal** and the Paris Agreement,

**cutting** Austrian **greenhouse gas emissions by half** until 2025, compared to 2005, and net-zero emissions until 2040.

the complete **withdrawal from fossil fuels** and energies, such as coal, oil, diesel, and gas until 2030.

an honest and transparent **communication by political leaders** about climate mitigation, climate crisis effects, the urgency to act and associated possibilities and opportunities.

## Legal Measures and Building Blocks

**constitutional changes**, that include climate action and climate crisis effects in all policy discussions, on all levels and integrate socio-ecological indicators,

an obligatory **climate impact assessment** for all new laws and regulations passed on all levels of government,

a **binding greenhouse gas reduction law** with an enabling framework for municipalities, regional governments, the federal state and industry,

a science-based climate action law with a binding **CO2 budget** to reach the Paris Agreement goals that shows the path towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions, defines financial benefits for carbon emission reductions and gives incentives for different stakeholders for climate action and mitigation,

an **(international) legal framework**, that protects and respects the integral character of human rights, environmental rights and intact ecosystems, strengthens the polluter pays principle and balances conflicts of interest,

**sanctions** for climate polluting actors and a **right**, enforceable before courts, to liveable climatic conditions,

foresight in laws and parliamentary discussions, to safeguard the rights of young and future generations and anchoring **intergenerational justice** in law-making processes.

## Economic Measures

real costs and externalities:

**rewarding climate-friendly action.** To this end, taxes and subsidies must be future-oriented and sustainable. In order to relieve negatively affected people, a fair climate bonus must be paid,

a **socio-ecological tax reform** and showing the real cost of economic activities by taxing greenhouse gas emissions, including external costs to the atmosphere and thereby creating a climate return,

**taxing of natural resource extraction** and related extractive and processing industries,

the **lowering of tariffs on ecological imports** (i.e. carbon positive programmes), and valuation of goods and services according to their ecological aspects, the sustainability of value chains, and the climate ambition of companies,

the immediate **cancellation of climate-harming subsidies** in all sectors,,

an increase in the **energy and resource-use efficiency** and the integration of circular economy by law in all industries,

**CO2 due diligence** for value chains and effectively including the real ecological costs,

funds and other forms of **assistance** to economically less-well situated countries,

support for the **technology transfer** and development of sustainable technologies in developing countries through adequate and fair investments and funding schemes,

having a constructive dialogue for the **Blue Economy** (Green Economy + oceans + atmosphere) and the creation of green bonds,

investments into **international funds**, to cope with the environmental, humanitarian and health effects of the climate crisis,

the recognition of the historical responsibility of high-emitting countries, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and securing that per year at least 100 billion USD are made available to the **Green Climate Fund**,

a strengthened **monitoring** of climate finance and reporting.

## Mobility and Energy Policies

well-defined and measurable emissions reduction targets for the mobility and energy sectors.

an **improved public transport**, that is accessible, efficient and affordable for people,

the **support** of active and **sustainable mobility forms**

- separated bicycle paths for safe travel
- cycle highways to suburban areas
- increase the safety of pedestrians
- more space for people and less for cars
- adapt spatial planning and laws to revive city centres

#### the **decarbonisation of freight transport**

- support and build Smart City Hubs
- improve international rail cargo infrastructure
- research for alternatives of long-distance freight and shipping

#### moving **long-distance travel to railways**

- remove the subsidies for air travel and related infrastructure
- prohibit flights below 1000km distance, if alternatives exist
- include true ecological costs and externalities in pricing schemes
- expand and standardise the European railway system
- subsidise “slow travelling”

#### a massive expansion and construction of **renewable energies and supporting energy efficiency**

- prohibit exploitation of new fossil energy sources
- sustainable and nature-based development of energy sector
- put energy efficiency first and use renewable energies wherever possible in all sectors and regions
- initiate a support program for decentral and rural solar panels for private houses and businesses
- oblige thermal insulation and energy saving measures in renovation works
- utilize waste and exhaust heat as a source of energy (i.e. with computer servers)
- support labour unions and workers of the energy sector and extractive industries to move to modern and future-oriented work areas

## **Ecological and Biodiversity Measures**

Ecosystems require a high and rich biodiversity, in order to adapt to the climate crisis and other anthropogenic adverse influences. In order to secure food security, adaptive capacities and carbon sink services, we have to include biodiversity and ecosystems in all climate change policies.

a high priority of biodiversity support and respecting **biodiversity in all new legal and policy initiatives**,

a commitment, that **nature-based solutions** are essential for sustainable economic systems, that support humans, innovations, and socially and ecologically fair trade and systems,

more engagement for biodiversity and ecosystem protection, the **valuation of ecosystem services** and the restoration of species-rich ecosystems

Halting net soil sealing in Austria and promoting the important **role of soils** in carbon sequestration,

Integral linking of biodiversity and climate protection and conservation.

## Youth and Society Policy

Inclusion of young people in decision-making processes:

a **participative process** and **bottom-up approaches** for decision making – focus on inclusive governance processes

**active voting rights** for youth representatives on climate issues and inclusion in policy decisions

the monitoring of all measures by an independent **scientific commission**

strengthening existing bodies, research institutions and civil society organisations in **environmental impact assessment** procedures

to promote the **resilience of society** and incorporate valuable local, traditional knowledge

an active and independent **research policy** that promotes and incorporates scientific evidence and knowledge

direct and transparent **communication** of politicians and economic leaders with the population,

a **free project budget** for individuals and associations on a municipal level to act on the climate crisis,

A pro-active policy against gender and social injustices

attention paid to the increased **impact** of the climate crisis **on women** and children

ensuring that climate **financing is gender-sensitive** and includes factors such as poverty, inequality and equity

monitoring of **social injustice**, which is exacerbated by negative environmental influences

Support for minorities and environmentally displaced people

the legal recognition of the **impact of the climate crisis on migration**

Involving young stakeholders

Support a **long-term and transparent dialogue** between decision-makers and young people from different social and educational backgrounds,

greater financial and institutional **support for youth initiatives**,

involving young people as stakeholders when drafting **national adaptation plans**.

## Land-use and Infrastructure Measures

sustainable land-use:

global standards for sustainable and **ecological forest management**, including the monitoring and afforestation of crucial forest ecosystems i.e. in the Amazon, Indonesia and Congo Basin,

include **indigenous people** and local communities in land-use and forestry decisions,

fund the **diversity of ecosystems** and sustainable biodiverse land usage,

a **ban on the conversion and destruction** of green areas and forests or the provision of compensation areas,

sustainable and biodiversity-enhancing agriculture and an **ecological management of intensive agriculture** and the fishing industry,

the prevention of **food waste**,

the **restriction of chemical fertilisers** and plant protection products,

a simple "traffic light system" that signals climate costs for food products

an infrastructure based on renewable technologies.

the **halt of large-scale fossil fueled projects**, that prolong greenhouse gas emissions for decades,

**smart cities**, energy autarky, local sustainable water and waste infrastructure

**inclusion of local municipalities** and community leaders

## Education Policy

a **climate curriculum** for all educational institutions,

climate science and climate crisis Impacts as an **interdisciplinary school subject**,

creating opportunities for young people to easily **organise a LCOY/COY** (Youth Climate Conference) or other grass roots events,

**promoting research** on climate change mitigation and adaptation,

every week on public television: "**Klima vor 8**" (Climate before 8),

campaigns of the ministries on the **positive aspects of climate protection**,

promote active communication and the **availability of basic knowledge** on the climate crisis.

Impressum:

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