



TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION SCHEME FOR CLIMATE REFUGEES

Adopted by FYEG General Assembly on 27 May 2017 in Madrid, Spain

As stated in the resolution “Hot air or climate justice? The COP21”, adopted on May 28, 2016 during the General Assembly in Prague, Czech Republic, rights of climate refugees are currently not being discussed during the Conferences of the Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conferences. This despite the fact that according to the United Nations, by mid-century one in 30 people could be displaced as a result of climate change.

It is widely recognized that climate change will primarily affect the poorest and most vulnerable of the world. The International Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) findings confirm that “climate-related disruptions of human populations and consequent migrations can be expected over the coming decades” (IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007, 10.4.6.3 Climate extremes and migration).

However, by not including climate refugees within the climate change conversation, the international community is actively ignoring this issue. Humans who have been displaced due to climate change and therefore cross a border are granted limited protection in host countries. Under international refugee law, they are not considered as refugees, and human rights law fails at giving them access to and a protected legal status within another state. In short, climate refugees do not have a legal status and this does not seem to be a priority for the international community. “Loss and Damage” funds, a crucial part of the climate talks, are currently not sufficient. Furthermore, these funds will not give people the right to a home, when theirs has been destroyed.

With Fiji being the host of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP23) this year, we need to recognize this issue even more strongly. On the low-lying Pacific islands climate change is a bitter daily reality. Some Pacific islands already struggle with producing enough food for their people, because the ocean has salinated the arable grounds. Within the region Australia and New Zealand have opened their borders for a small amount of Pacific islanders to apply for citizenship every year. Unfortunately these are also two countries that largely contribute to the problem and have a history of pushing back against effective climate change measures. Besides, the citizenship quota have an even greater negative impact on the communities on the Pacific islands. The mechanism has led to a brain-drain, leaving Pacific communities without dentists, doctors and other specialists.



We urge that climate refugees should be legally recognized in order to put pressure on states to take action. Real solutions have to be found for the problems that are already occurring because of climate change, also in the Horn of Africa. FYEG can be a stronger advocate for the issue and we should push for this in the coming years.

Therefore, the Federation of Young European Greens calls upon the European Union and its members states:

to come up with a broadened legal definition of refugees to include displaced people due to the adverse effects of climate change;

to push for an international legal framework which recognizes this definition and ensures a substantial set of rights for climate refugees and sets obligations for states;

to push for making the issue of climate refugees a core issue for the upcoming climate conference COP23;

to increase national financial contributions to reach the annual financial goals set in the “100 billion dollar roadmap” in the field of climate mitigation and adaptation to climate change;

to increase funding for climate change adaptation, without cutting financial resources for mitigation, as this helps to protect the endangered home territories of climate refugees;

to address and promote the issue of climate-related loss and damage on COP23, which includes non-economic losses such as cultural diversity and in the course of negotiations in the frame of the loss and damage work schedule established at COP22;

to support the work of the task force on displacement under the international mechanism on loss and damage established at COP21;

to diplomatically and politically support the “Alliance of Small Island States” (AOSIS), as they are among the most vulnerable and exposed states in the context of climate change;

to offer immediate and substantial humanitarian assistance to climate refugees in the aftermath of disaster;

to offer humanitarian visa as a means of temporary protection for climate refugees and work towards an international agreement for permanent rights of residence for climate refugees.