

C5 Towards a comprehensive protection scheme for Climate Refugees

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Text

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

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

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

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

35 Climate refugees should be legally recognized as such and the problem should be
36 more widely recognized. Real solutions have to be found for the problems that

37 are already occurring because of climate change. Not only in the Pacific, but
38 also in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere. This year FYEG has started their
39 contribution to putting climate refugees on the agenda by organising a webinar
40 about the topic. However, we can be a stronger advocate for the issue and we
41 should push for this in the coming year.

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

- 44 • to push for an international legal framework which recognizes and ensures
45 a substantial set of rights for climate refugees and sets obligations for
46 states by broadening the legal definition of refugees to include displaced
47 people due to the adverse effects of climate change;
- 48 • to push for making the issue of climate refugees a core issue for the
49 upcoming climate conference COP23;
- 50 • to increase national financial contributions to reach the annual financial
51 goals set in the “100 billion dollar roadmap” in the field of climate
52 mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
- 53 • to increase funding for climate change adaptation, without cutting
54 financial resources for mitigation, as this helps to protect the
55 endangered home territories of climate refugees;
- 56 • to address and promote the issue of climate-related loss and damage on
57 COP23, which includes non-economic losses such as cultural diversity and
58 in the course of negotiations in the frame of the loss and damage work
59 schedule established at COP22;
- 60 • to support the work of the task force on displacement under the
61 international mechanism on loss and damage established at COP21;
- 62 • to diplomatically and politically support the “Alliance of Small Island
63 States” (AOSIS), as they are among the most vulnerable and exposed states
64 in the context of climate change;
- 65 • to offer immediate and substantial humanitarian assistance to climate
66 refugees in the aftermath of disaster;
- 67 • to offer humanitarian visa as a means of temporary protection for climate
68 refugees and work towards an international agreement for permanent rights
69 of residence for climate refugees who have definitely lost their homes.

Reason

FYEG's Climate and Energy Working Group has worked this year on the topic of climate refugees. By observing the international climate negotiations at COP22 in Marrakesh, Morocco, we have realized the lack

of importance on the agenda and, as a consequence, the irresponsible inaction of the international community of states on this crucial issue. We are convinced that FYEG should be a strong advocate for climate refugees and pressure the European Union and its member states to take action for the most vulnerable people affected by the adverse effects of climate change.