R5 Criminalise Ecocide!

Proposer: Joves Ecosocialistes
Agenda item: 4. Resolutions

Motion text

The exploitation of natural resources is the base of the current economic and productive model. This exploitation is not based on satisfying people's needs, but on the accumulation of wealth and power for very few at all costs. Therefore, it carries with it the destruction of ecosystems and the natural relations among wildlife and the context where all living beings thrive and grow. We must put an end to this exploitation of Earth. Climate activists and scientists have been warning about the great dangers of this exploitation and its connection to social, gender, and racial injustice across all societies. Moreover, in October 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) recognised for the first time that having a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is a human right.

During the last months, we could celebrate the success of environmental litigations against the actions of public and private institutions. For example, a French administrative court recognised that the French State could be held responsible for failing to meet its commitments to mitigate climate change; and the Dutch court ruled that the petrochemical giant Shell must cut its emissions and be in line with the Paris Agreement. We welcome these wins and look forward to more advances in this field. At the same time, we regret the fact that sanctions depend solely on the environmental laws at the national level. Crimes against nature know no borders, and therefore sanctions should also be prosecuted at the international level. Moreover, big polluters and corporations, following their neocolonial and imperialist agenda, harm the environment and natural resources of the Global South, taking advantage of the invisibilisation and systemic disregard of indigenous communities and their demands.

In this context, we consider that Ecocide, defined as "widespread and/or long-term mass damage and destruction of ecosystems", should be included in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The sanctions imposed so far have been insufficient, and in most cases, the big corporations already include in their budgets paying fines for their environmental crimes. In the current context of climate emergency, we cannot accept mass destruction in exchange for money. Our rights are not for sale. The emissions, deforestation, and pollution of air and water will not stop as long as profit is put before people. In order

to protect people, we need more legal tools. Criminalising ecocide would make it possible to prosecute those who do the most damage to the environment. Its power lies in the fact that it would make big polluters reconsider their actions, as they would be put in the same box as war criminals, and that is not good for business.

With this resolution, the Federation of Young European Greens:

- Denounces the exploitation of the environment performed by public and private institutions, especially those in the Global South through practices of neocolonialism and imperialism, and urges the corresponding institutions to initiate processes for historical compensation.

- Urges the European Union to call on its Member States to implement national legal frameworks that align national and multinational companies in their territory to the EU Climate Law.

- Calls on all European states that ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to propose the correspondent amendments to include Ecocide in its list of crimes and, once changes are made, to ratify the new text.