european youth forum

European Youth Forum policy proposals for COP31: from commitments to fair implementation

I. Introduction:

The climate crisis is entering a decisive implementation phase. As the world prepares for COP31 in Antalya, the challenge is no longer whether ambitious commitments exist, but whether governments will deliver them at the speed and scale that science and justice demand. For young people, these decisions are not abstract negotiations about the future; they shape our rights, opportunities and safety today.

Across Europe, young people are organising in their communities, developing solutions and holding institutions accountable. Through the European Youth Forum, thousands of youth organisations representing millions of young people have come together to translate these experiences into practical policy proposals for COP31. Our role is not symbolic; meaningful youth participation is key to strengthening better climate governance and more durable outcomes.

COP30 established important foundations, from advancing climate finance discussions to launching new implementation mechanisms. COP31 must now transform those political commitments into measurable action. This requires stronger climate ambition, fairer financing, protection for those most affected by climate impacts, and decision-making processes that genuinely include young people, Indigenous Peoples, young women, young persons with disabilities and civil society and all marginalised groups.

We call on the European Union, its Member States and the COP31 Presidency to work with young people as partners in shaping the outcomes of Antalya. The recommendations in this paper set out concrete steps to ensure that implementation, accountability and intergenerational justice remain at the centre of COP31.

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Executive summary: Nothing for us, without us

COP31 must be a conference of fair implementation. Governments must demonstrate that commitments on mitigation, adaptation, climate finance and just transition can produce measurable, tangible change, while addressing the systemic drivers of climate and environmental crises and protecting the rights and wellbeing of present and future generations.

The European Youth Forum calls on the EU and its Member States to champion five priorities in Antalya:

1. Deliver a fair and funded transition away from fossil fuels.

COP31 must accelerate implementation of the fair transition away from fossil fuels through deep domestic emissions reductions, renewable energy, energy efficiency and a socially just phase-out of fossil-fuel subsidies while ensuring that the transition addresses the social, economic and environmental impacts of fossil-fuels dependence. Carbon markets and international credits must remain supplementary and must not delay real emissions reductions.

2. Rebuild trust through fair and adequate climate finance.

Developed countries must meet their responsibilities by providing predictable, accessible and increasingly grant-based public finance. COP31 must advance implementation of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), the global framework of climate financing, and the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap, which prioritises public, grant-based and concessional finance, while ensuring adequate finance for adaptation, loss and damage and just transitions without increasing unsustainable debt.

3. Make adaptation and just transition operational.

COP31 must turn commitments into mechanisms that improve people's lives. This means operationalising the global just transition mechanism, strengthening the Global Goal on Adaptation and ensuring that finance and support reach workers, young people, Indigenous Peoples and communities most affected by the climate crisis.

4. Put intergenerational justice and youth rights at the heart of climate governance.

Young people must have meaningful and adequately resourced roles in climate decision-making, implementation and accountability. The EU should apply a Youth Check to its climate positions and policies and champion institutional mechanisms for meaningful youth participation throughout the UNFCCC.

5. Demonstrate climate leadership through action at home.

The EU cannot credibly call for global climate ambition while maintaining unsustainable resource consumption and fossil-fuel support. European climate leadership must include reducing its material footprint, ending harmful fossil-fuel subsidies, aligning its fiscal policy with climate and social justice, addressing the structural drivers of unsustainable production and consumption and ensuring that EU climate measures do not shift transition costs onto vulnerable countries and communities.

II. Overarching demands:

a. Intergenerational justice

Demands

The EU and its Member States should:

- put intergenerational fairness at the centre of EU positions and COP31 outcomes;
- commit to a full, fair and equitable transition away from fossil fuels;
- ensure climate action does not transfer environmental, social or financial burdens to young and future generations;
- assess the intergenerational impacts of climate policies and investments;
- redirect environmentally harmful subsidies towards climate action, resilience and a socially just transition;
- protect the rights and wellbeing of present and future generations throughout climate decision-making.

Context

Young people face the combined effects of climate change, rising living costs, insecure employment and inadequate and unaffordable housing. At the same time, they will experience climate impacts for longer. Rising temperatures, floods, wildfires, droughts and increasing pressures on food and water security are already affecting young people's prospects, their right to an adequate standard of living, and their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Short political cycles cannot justify transferring the consequences and costs of delayed climate action to current and future generations.

b. Reduce overconsumption and advance resource justice

Demands

The EU and its Member States should:

- establish a legally binding, science-based EU material-footprint reduction target;
- ensure the forthcoming Circular Economy Act addresses absolute resource-use reduction and planetary boundaries;
- promote resource justice internationally, recognising the different consumption levels and development needs of countries;
- pursue a sufficiency-based approach to resource use that recognises the development needs and resource rights of countries in the Global South
- reduce excessive consumption of fossil fuels, biomass, metals and non-metallic minerals;
- ensure circular-economy policies reduce absolute environmental pressures rather than relying only on increased circular material use.implement laws and policies at all levels that guarantee every young person's right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- address pollution as a systemic driver and consequence of unsustainable production, consumption and resource use, including through stronger prevention and reduction measures;

- ensure that policies on resource use, land use and extraction address their impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems and contribute to their protection and restoration;

Context

Material extraction is a major driver of biodiversity loss, water stress, climate impacts and pollution. Europe's material footprint remains significantly above globally sustainable levels, while resource consumption is distributed highly unequally between and within countries. Reducing excessive resource consumption in wealthier economies can contribute to climate mitigation while creating greater ecological space for countries with unmet development needs.

c. Advance a wellbeing economy

Demands

The EU and its Member States should:

- complement GDP with indicators covering wellbeing, ecological stability, inequality, access to public services and youth wellbeing;
- align taxation and public expenditure with climate and social objectives;
- shift taxation away from labour and towards pollution, environmentally harmful resource extraction and excessive emissions;
- make the polluter-pays principle a cornerstone of fiscal policy;
- ensure high-income and high-wealth actors contribute fairly to financing the climate transition;
- use climate and fiscal policy to support decent employment, social protection and accessible public health, social and essential services;
- ensure the green transition creates decent, accessible and quality employment for young people. Governments should invest in green skills, vocational education, reskilling and lifelong learning, while ensuring that new green jobs provide decent working conditions and are accessible to young people regardless of socioeconomic background.

Context

Economic governance centred predominantly on GDP growth can obscure environmental degradation, inequality and declining wellbeing. Climate action requires economic governance that recognises the structural drivers of environmental degradation while ensuring that transition policies improve people's living conditions. For young people in particular, climate policy must be connected to decent employment, affordable living conditions, strong public services and long-term economic security.

d. Youth rights and meaningful participation

Demands

The EU, its Member States and the COP31 Presidency should:

- guarantee structured meaningful youth participation across UNFCCC processes, including during design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- introduce a Youth Check into the EU Better Regulation toolbox and apply it to EU climate policies and COP positions;
- provide adequate accreditation, funding, travel support and capacity-building for youth participation;
- address barriers facing marginalised young people and young people from the Global South;
- recognise youth organisations as equal partners in decision-making processes, including developing climate solutions;
- include young people in climate-finance and fiscal-policy decision-making;
- embed youth rights and intergenerational fairness in COP31 outcomes and accountability mechanisms.

Context

Young people represent a significant share of the global population but their rights and interests remain inconsistently integrated into climate governance. Financial, institutional and accessibility barriers continue to restrict meaningful participation, particularly for marginalised young people and those from the Global South. Climate decisions will shape young people's lives for decades; they must therefore have meaningful influence over their design, implementation and monitoring.

III. Policy proposals

a. Transition away from fossil fuels and mitigation

Demands

- Champion a full, fair and equitable phase-out of fossil fuels consistent with the 1.5˚C goal.
- Implement the EU's 2035 nationally determined contributions (NDC) with the objective of achieving or exceeding the upper end of its 66.25–72.5% net emissions-reduction range.
- Deliver the EU's 2040 climate target primarily through domestic emissions reductions and minimise reliance on international carbon credits.
- Strengthen the EU's disbursement of funds, such as through the EU Mitigation Work Programme, so that it supports countries' progress and implementation of actions that halt climate change, as per the Global Stocktake, including with regards to renewable-energy deployment, energy efficiency and the transition away from fossil fuels.
- Establish transparent monitoring, reporting and accountability processes for actions around mitigation and implementation.
- Ensure developing countries have access to adequate finance, technology and capacity-building to implement ambitious mitigation actions.
- Reject approaches that delay or undermine deep emissions reductions, including over-reliance on offsets and carbon credits.

Context

The EU submitted its updated NDC ahead of COP30, setting a 2035 net-emissions reduction range of 66.25–72.5% below 1990 levels, and has adopted a binding 90% net reduction target for 2040. The amended European Climate Law nevertheless permits limited use of international credits from 2036. At the same time, countries have not yet agreed on the future of the UNFCCC Mitigation Work Programme, with negotiations continuing at COP31.nCOP31 should therefore focus on credible implementation, stronger domestic delivery and adequate support for developing countries.

b. EU fossil-fuel subsidies

Demands

- Adopt a credible and time-bound EU roadmap for phasing out fossil-fuel subsidies.
- Establish binding milestones and transparent subsidy inventories.
- End public investment in new fossil-fuel projects and public funding that enables further fossil-fuel expansion.
- Redirect public resources towards renewable energy, electrification, grids, storage, energy efficiency and resilience.
- Protect low-income households, workers and affected communities through targeted social measures throughout the phase-out.

Context

Fossil-fuel support remains substantial across the EU despite international commitments to phase out inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies. The Commission's implementation planning foresees further work on the EU energy and climate governance framework, including fossil-fuel subsidy phase-out. Continued public support for fossil-fuel expansion risks creating additional lock-in and undermining EU credibility at COP31.

c. Climate finance

Demands

- Turn the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap into an accountable implementation pathway towards scaling climate finance to at least the set target of USD 1.3 trillion annually by 2035.
- Strengthen implementation of the NCQG, including the USD 300 billion annual goal by 2035.
- Meet developed-country obligations under Article 9, including Article 9.1, of the Paris Agreement on providing financial resources to assist developing country Parties, through clear and predictable public-finance commitments.
- Prioritise public, grant-based and highly concessional finance for adaptation, loss and damages, and just transitions.
- Ensure private finance remains additional and does not substitute developed countries' public-finance obligations.
- Ensure Article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement with regards to making finance flows consistent with pathways towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development complementary to Article 9 obligations rather than risk weakening it.

- Redirect financial flows away from fossil-fuel expansion towards low-emission and climate-resilient development.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability by clearly distinguishing grants, concessional loans, non-concessional finance and mobilised private finance in climate-finance reporting.
- Support fair international taxation, including through negotiations on a UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, as a means of mobilising additional predictable public finance.

Context

COP30 did not reopen the NCQG but launched a two-year climate-finance work programme that includes Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement, in the context of Article 9 as a whole. Differences remain between developing countries seeking greater climate finance support to developed countries' public-finance obligations and favouring a broader finance agenda. The NCQG calls for developed countries to take the lead in mobilising at least USD 300 billion annually by 2035 alongside the broader USD 1.3 trillion finance objective. COP31 must turn these processes into accessible, predictable finance rather than creating greater debt or excessive reliance on uncertain private flows.

d. Loss and Damage

Demands

- Provide new, additional and predictable finance to the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD).
- Make multi-year financial commitments for affected countries and communities.
- Prioritise grants over loans to avoid worsening debt burdens.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability around the scale, source and accessibility of contributions.
- Ensure affected communities, young people and Indigenous Peoples participate meaningfully in governance and funding decisions.

Context

The Fund for responding to Loss and Damage, dedicated to developing countries and vulnerable communities affected by climate change, has entered its operational phase, including its first funding requests under the Barbados Implementation Modalities.. However, available funding remains far below what developing countries need to address climate-related losses and damages. COP31 should therefore focus on mobilising more predictable and sustained funding and ensuring that affected countries and communities can access it easily.

e. Article 6: Carbon Markets

Demands

- Prioritise deep domestic emissions reductions over international offsets.
- Keep international-credit use under EU climate targets well below the legal ceiling.
- Prevent double counting and require credible additionality.

- Establish strong permanence and reversal safeguards for removals.
- Guarantee transparent authorisations, methodologies, reporting and registries.
- Protect human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- Strengthen meaningful civil-society, Indigenous Peoples' and youth oversight.
- Use COP31 and the 2027 work programme to identify integrity gaps ahead of the 2028 Article 6 review.

Context

The core Article 6 rules of the Paris Agreement were finalised at COP29, with COP30 adopting further implementation decisions on reporting, reviews, governance and the Article 6.4 mechanism. The EU's amended Climate Law now permits limited use of international credits from 2036 onwards. COP31 should therefore focus on high-integrity implementation and ensure that carbon markets remain supplementary to rapid domestic decarbonisation rather than delaying fossil-fuel phase-out.

f. Global Stocktake and UAE Dialogue

Demands

- Turn the UAE Dialogue on implementing the global stocktake outcomes into a practical implementation and accountability process.
- Advance implementation of the transition away from fossil fuels, renewable-energy and energy-efficiency commitments.
- Connect Global Stocktake implementation with adequate public climate finance and other means of implementation.
- Support clear agenda items, transparent processes, ministerial engagement and effective follow-up mechanisms.
- Guarantee meaningful participation of civil society, Indigenous Peoples and young people.
- Embed intergenerational fairness in implementation and preparations for the second Global Stocktake.

Context

COP30 agreed a broad scope for the UAE Dialogue covering the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake, with particular attention to finance. Discussions at its first inaugural meeting in Bonn in 2026 continued to reveal differences over the relative emphasis on fossil-fuel transition, finance and implementation support. COP31 also marks the beginning of the second Global Stocktake process. Stronger implementation signals therefore need to be paired with credible means of implementation and accountability.

g. Global Goal on Adaptation

Demands

- Urgently increase predictable and grant-based adaptation finance.
- Ensure the GGA indicator framework measures access, effectiveness and inclusion.
- Clarify implementation of the commitment to scale adaptation finance.

- Improve the accessibility, quality and transparency of adaptation funding.
- Ensure adaptation support reaches local communities, young people and Indigenous Peoples.
- Integrate human rights, gender equality and intergenerational fairness throughout adaptation policy.

Context

COP30 adopted 59 GGA indicators and called for efforts to at least triple adaptation finance for developing countries by 2035, while leaving important questions concerning finance, methodology and governance unresolved. At 2026 June Climate Meetings in Bonn (SB64), Parties were unable to reach agreement on the GGA and the issue was carried forward to COP31. Antalya must therefore deliver a usable, adequately supported and rights-based adaptation framework.

h. Just Transition Work Programme

Demands

- Operationalise the global just transition mechanism agreed at COP30.
- Agree on clear functions, governance arrangements, modalities and timelines.
- Ensure the mechanism coordinates technical assistance, capacity-building, finance and international cooperation rather than becoming a dialogue-only process.
- Provide predictable public finance for just transitions in vulnerable countries and regions.
- Preserve protections for human rights, labour rights, gender equality, Indigenous Peoples' rights and intergenerational equity.
- Guarantee structured roles for workers, young people, cities, regions, Indigenous Peoples and affected communities.
- Guarantee institutionalised participation rights for workers, young people, Indigenous Peoples, cities, regions and affected communities, ensuring they are recognised as co-developers of the mechanism and its governance arrangements, rather than merely being consulted.
- Address the social and environmental impacts of critical mineral extraction and global value chains by requiring human rights and environmental due diligence across supply chains, promoting equitable benefit-sharing and embedding circular economy principles, ensuring that the costs of Europe's transition are not shifted onto vulnerable communities elsewhere.
- Ensure that just transition pathways explicitly support a transition away from fossil fuels in line with the 1.5°C temperature limit, while safeguarding the rights, livelihoods and well-being of affected workers and communities.
- Support fair taxation and stronger domestic resource mobilisation as complementary sources of just-transition finance.

Context

COP30 agreed to establish a global just transition mechanism. At SB64, Parties advanced discussions on its purpose, functions, coordination, governance and links to finance, while important details remained unresolved. COP31 must complete its

operationalisation in a way that delivers practical support and preserves the rights-based elements of the COP30 decision.

i. Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

Demands

- Maintain CBAM as a climate instrument rather than a protectionist trade measure.
- Ensure implementation is transparent and avoids arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination.
- Base any changes to CBAM on transparent evidence and assessments of environmental and distributional impacts.
- Prevent amendments from weakening its environmental integrity or unnecessarily delaying carbon pricing on imports.
- Keep the phase-out of free EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) allocations aligned with the CBAM phase-in.
- Monitor and address impacts on workers, consumers and developing-country trading partners.
- Strengthen cooperation and support for industrial decarbonisation in vulnerable partner countries.

Context

CBAM entered its definitive phase on 1 January 2026. At the same time, concerns about the distributional and trade impacts of unilateral climate measures remain prominent internationally, particularly among developing countries. COP30 established annual climate-and-trade dialogues for 2026–2028, providing a space to address questions of fairness, transparency and cooperation. The EU should demonstrate that ambitious domestic climate measures can be combined with support for equitable global decarbonisation.