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YFoEE at climate talks in Poland People before polluters!

YOUNG
Friends of
the Earth
Europe

A strong YFoEE team of 25 people from all over Europe attended the UN climate negotiations in Warsaw, Poland to put pressure on governments to justly act on climate change and to work on mobilising young people for the climate justice movement.

This is what happened at the UN Climate Talks 2013 in Warsaw from the perspective of Young Friends of the Earth Europe.

Check out our homepage for more infos on YFoEE



www.youngfoee.org

YFoEE at Climate Talks - Special Report

European youth for climate justice | 7th - 23rd November 2013

The YFoEE delegation stayed all together at a hostel in Warsaw. Half of us had accreditation to go inside the conference building, follow the negotiations there and do actions inside to calling for climate justice. The other half stayed outside the building (which #funfact actually was the Polish National Football Stadium) and prepared as well as performed powerful actions *on the outside*.

We all met in the evenings in the so called convergence space (an open former café for activists, run by Polish youth) for meetings and informative catch-ups. We worked closely with the whole *Friends of the Earth International* delegation and cooperated a lot with fellow youth environmental groups from around the world.

From **this report** can be seen that YFoEE was a weighty part of the civil society represented on COP19.

Enjoy reading and learning about our adventures at the climate talks!

We are on facebook and twitter. Follow us to get regular updates and see what we are up to.



www.twitter.com/Young_FoEE

www.facebook.com/YoungFoEE



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Read on and enjoy following our adventures at the #COP19.



www.flickr.com/photos/youngfoee

Check out our flickr for more wonderful YFoEE pictures from Warsaw and more.

YFoEE at COY - Power Shift Central & Eastern Europe

7th - 10th November



Every year prior to the UN climate negotiations, youth from all over the world gathers to organise a Conference of Youth (COY). This year the theme was Power Shift Central and Eastern Europe.

Here is a reflection on the four days of COY from Clemence Hutin and Emma Jarvis, Push Europe coordinators who were part of our YFoEE team at the climate talks.

This is just a small part of Clemence and Emma's blogpost. Check the whole text out here:

www.pusheurope.org/blog/2013/11/11/pscee-coy9/

After travelling many hours (29 hours for Clémence!) from Norway & France we arrived in Warsaw for the very first Central & Eastern Europe Power Shift / COY9 between November 7th and November 10th. For both of us it was our first COY event and we were pretty excited.

Power Shift Central & Eastern Europe was an opportunity to meet brilliant young organizers from all over the world. We were thrilled to meet new European faces. It made us reflect: how can we connect our forces better? The age-old question. Organising a European Power Shift in the coming months is already on the minds of some young people here.

Clémence had already met members of the Polish Youth Climate Network in Istanbul at Global Power Shift. Just being here in Warsaw and witnessing how much they have achieved in a few months was incredibly inspiring, and had her wondering how she can bring this energy back to France.

The venue, a military fort converted into an art gallery, was ideal for the event. The plenary, in the heart of the venue, had a beautiful glass ceiling. All around, rooms were used as spaces for workshops. There was always a place to reflect quietly if you needed time to chill out.

Participants at COY produced this fun video showing a race between dirty energy & clean sustainable alternatives.

Guess who won? Check it out here!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=on6eeELbcfo



Youth open letter to Christiana Figueres: Choose Youth over Coal!

Youth groups including Young Friends of the Earth Europe (YFoEE) have written an open letter to the Secretary of UNCCC Christiana Figueres urging her not to go to the (dirty) International coal & climate summit during the climate talks. She replied in a very patronising tone and chose coal over youth.

See the letter below!



From: YOUNGO - The constituency of youth non-governmental organisations under the UNFCCC

To: Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

8 November 2013

Dear Ms. Figueres

We write to invite you to attend Powershift Central and Eastern Europe - our invitation taking into account, however, our concerns regarding your engagement to **speak at the World Coal Association's international summit** this year.

As you know, we as youth organise our own convergence ahead of the Conference of the Parties every year. Previously, we called it the Conference of Youth and we welcomed you to come and share your input, advice and support. We have appreciated and enjoyed your past attendance.

We would like to invite you to attend once again. This year, we have decided to call the event Powershift Central and Eastern Europe, and your team have recently told us you are looking forward to attending. We would love you to join us on Sunday 10 November 2013 at Nowy Fort (Stefana Czarnieckiego 51, 01-541, Warsaw).

However, it is with deeply held concerns that we ask you to attend Powershift Central and Eastern Europe this year, as it disappointed us greatly to hear that you will also speak at the **World Coal Association's international summit**. Powershift Central and Eastern Europe is a space for young people to convene and determine how we can demand a safe and just future. This youthful spirit of change is not, in our view, compatible with you speaking at the World Coal Association's summit because:



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Obviously this is not the whole letter. Check out the full version here:

www.pusheurope.org/coy9/en/open-letter-conditional-invitation-pscee/



Delivering the message of Reclaim Power to the climate talks



At the opening of the UN climate negotiations (November 11th) in Warsaw, Poland, YFoEE has together with other young climate activists sent a clear message to the delegates as they were entering the National Stadium where the negotiations were held: **NO** to dirty and harmful energy, and **YES** to renewable, clean energy for people and communities! Nov 11th marked the last day of **Reclaim Power: Global Month of Actions on Energy**, focusing on community power. As part of the Global month campaign, YFoEE demands that all governments ban new dirty energy projects, end subsidies & public handouts to dirty energy companies and stop excessive energy consumption by corporations & corporate elites.

[Click here for more infos on the campaign.](#)



(c) Marco Cadena



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Young FoEE addressing governments



Civil society protesting **INSIDE** the conferece building.

Our members **Maruška** Mileta (Croatia) and **Silje** Lundberg (Norway) delivered opening statements on behalf of the **Climate Justice Now!** network at the opening sessions of the COP (Conference of Parties) and the CMP (Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol).

Check out Maruška's speech here:

www.on.fb.me/JcM16d

www.climate-justice-now.org

Klick this link to find out more about the network.

Check out Silje's speech here:

www.on.fb.me/1kxy1z4



Civil society protesting **OUTSIDE** the conferece building.



"If not us then who? If not now, then when? If not here, then where?"

Just a year later, again during climate talks, the same tragic story - a typhoon leaves thousands of dead in the Philippines. With devastating impacts, Typhoon Haiyan was one of the strongest storms ever to hit land-fall.

Yeb Sano, lead negotiator for the Philippines, made an electrifying and emotional **appeal for action on climate** during his opening statement. Delegates held a 3 minute silence in solidarity, and Mr. Sano broke down recounting how his brother was digging dead bodies out with his bare hands.

In an arrangement with the Philippines delegation to demonstrate their solidarity with those impacted by this climate disaster, youth including YFoEE accompanied Mr. Sano from the plenary hall to a side-event. Despite authorisation from the security, three young people accompanying Mr. Sano, who unfolded a sign with the names of some of the devastated Filipino towns in a gesture of solidarity, were kicked out from the UN halls on the express orders of Christiana Figueres.

Here is what Clemence, one of the banned activists and our member, responded:

I didn't realize standing in solidarity with the Philippines, in the wake of the catastrophic supertyphoon Haiyan, meant risking my badge to the UN climate talks.
...

Check out the full blogpost here:

<http://pusheurope.org/blog/2013/11/11/kicked-out-of-the-cop/>

#WeStandWithYou

Read more about our actions around the Philippines on the next page.

This is Clemence.



#WeStandWithYou - Solidarity with the Philippines!

Mr. Sano announced in his opening statement that he would be fasting during the entire negotiations until there is real climate action from developed countries' governments, who have the historical responsibility. And he did. Youth, including YFoEE, decided to support Mr. Sano and the people of the Philippines by starting a solidarity fast and wearing red dots as a symbol, which goes back to the climate talks last year in Doha. Solidarity spread fast all over the world - we joined Yeb Sano in the handover of more than 600,000 signatures (avaaz petition) in support of the Philippines.

Check out #WeStandWithYou on Twitter to see what people all over the world were doing to show their solidarity.

Climate Justice Assembly standing in solidarity.



(c) Marco Cadena



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Picture on the top: First press conference with youth announcing they will fast together with Sano.
Picture above: Second press conference and handover of the signatures.

www.foeurope.org/yfoee/ fasting-for-solidarity-cop19-silje-lundberg

Find the full blogpost here:

Silje Lundberg, from YFoE Norway, wrote a reflection on her solidarity fast:

Last year, at the climate talks in Doha, the Philippine negotiator Yeb Sano moved a whole world with his speech and his tears. «Instead of getting ready for Christmas celebrations and our midnight masses, we may be counting our dead». The Philippines had just been hit by super typhoon Bophas that ended up taking the lives of 1100 people.

...

Calling for climate justice on the streets of Warsaw

On November 16th, YFoEE was part of a **climate justice march** which had brought together thousands of climate and social activists from around the world.



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*Power to the people, not the polluters!,
System change, not climate change
- can you hear the people sing?*



(c) Kathrin Hennenberger



(c) Luka Tomac



(c) Luka Tomac

Warsaw

Connecting our struggles

Durban



Skype link-up.

Solidarity and people, that's what it's all about! We connected with our friends at groundWork/FoE South Africa to arrange a live link up between climate activists in Warsaw and the **People's climate camp** in Durban (14-17 November). We organised it in our alternative convergence space (a huuge thank-you to the Polish Youth Climate Movement for providing the space!) where we held climate justice assemblies bringing together youth, civil society and social movements.

Here is a blogpost from Megan Lewis from **groundWork**, explaining the local struggle in Durban.

"The land means the world to me in the sense that I'm here six days a week from 7 in the morning till 5 in the afternoon and when I get home it's only my farm that I think of and nothing else. So it's my livelihood and I would like to be on the land."

This is Siga Govender's last wish. Siga works on the fertile land found next to the old Durban airport in south Durban, KwaZulu Natal.

...

www.foeeurope.org/yfoee/land-grab-south-durban

Full version here.

Klick here to find out more about groundWork.

www.groundwork.org.za



People's climate camp in Durban



More actions please!



#CorporateCOP19 - Our climate to the highest bidder

Written by Emma Jarvis, Push Europe

In protest at the unprecedented level of dirty corporate sponsorship at this year's UN climate negotiations, young people inside and outside the conference centre joined forces to reclaim the negotiations. The sponsors this year were some of Europe's biggest corporations and polluters such as ArcelorMittal, BMW and Emirates, as well as Polish fossil-fuel giants PGE and Lotos Group.

ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steel and mining company, actively lobbies the EU to prevent ambitious action on climate change, and yet they participated in the building of the plenary hall and had their logo plastered all over it.

Grupa LOTOS, the second largest Polish oil company, lobbies at EU level through groups created by the fossil fuel industry to pose as grassroots organisations – such as the hilariously named "Citizens Coalition for Responsible Energy", who in 2012, put on a cocktail exhibition unashamedly promoting shale gas in the name of Europe's citizens on the day before a key vote on the issue in the European Parliament.

It is clear that these companies should not be sponsoring a conference that was set up to solve the ongoing climate crisis. In response to this, we did guerilla photo actions in the centre of Warsaw tracking down their Warsaw offices to send a clear message that dirty corporations and their lobby groups are not welcome at the UN talks. Inside the venue,



#CorporateCOP19: action outside the conference center



Lucy from Push Europe as corporate ALSTOM member



(c) Marco Cadena

STOP corporate capture of the climate talks:
action inside the conference center



PEOPLE before COAL!

During the UN climate talks, there was a dirty coal & climate summit happening at the Ministry of finance, where Christiana Figueres was a keynote speaker (she chose this over youth!). We have organised and participated in a number of actions on that day, sending a clear message that coal can play no role if we seriously want to stop climate change. The actions took place to coincide with the launch of the **People's Declaration on Coal**, and in response to the failures of governments at the talks to listen to people's concerns, over the demands and pressure of the fossil fuel industry.

Click the link to check it out!



More information on our actions about coal on the next page ...

We have even produced an action video in which we 'kicked coal out of the climate talks'. Edited by our Conrad Richardson (from YFoE Ireland).

You can find the video here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKp_U1eJaUM



Our YFoEE member Aneta Stefanova from Bulgaria shares her reasons for why we need to move away from coal.

Old decisions belong to the ancient times. Now we live in the 21st century and need alternatives. We urgently need change. Actually we are the change. We don't want more pollution, we don't want more death. We are young and want to live. We desire breathing oxygen, not poisonous particles. Let our world be greener, not greyer.

There's no such thing as clean coal. Coal is black - it makes your hands dirty. This is a fact and nobody can controvert it. Please, don't make our atmosphere dirty. Keep coal in the ground. We are young - don't kill our future. Don't destroy the future of the Earth. Keep our home clean. It's yours too.

Climate change is already happening. It's not a myth, unlike the claim that coal is cheap. Coal costs people's lives, it costs our health. The results from using this fossil fuel are asthma, lung cancer, heart disease, and strokes. Nobody wants these for their children, right?

Studies show that coal-related pollution caused between 80 000 and 115 000 premature deaths and more than 20 million asthma attacks in 2011-2012 in India alone. But India is not alone. Can you imagine how these numbers increase when it comes to the whole world?

But the saddest fact is that coal use has actually increased - coal consumption in Europe has increased by 3% in 2012 compared to 2011. (mainly caused by Spain, the United Kingdom and Germany.) It's time for change. Coal needs to change. Happily there are other options - climate-friendly options. Let's switch to wind and sun. It's time for renewable energy solutions. It's time to give the future a chance.



Kick coal out of the climate talks! - We showed corporate Alstom und PGE a red card.



(c) Luka Tomac



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Keep your false solutions!

The so called *clean* coal, nuclear power and shale gas (fracking) are some of the false solutions to climate change being put forward. Promotion of these is part of the strategy of some of the dirty corporate sponsors of the climate talks in Warsaw, and we have continuously highlighted this fact. To put our message across saying **NO** to these false solutions and **YES** to renewable and clean energy sources, we have staged actions inside and outside the climate talks venue together with other youth, civil society and Polish groups.



OUR CLIMATE -
not your
business!



Tug of war: corporate lobbyists against civil society | (c) Marco Cadena



(c) Luka Tomac

Don't nuke
our climate!



(c) Luka Tomac



(c) Conrad Richardson

Don't frack our climate!



(c) Conrad Richardson

EU, you call that leadership?!

?!?!?!?

As Young Friends of the Earth Europe, we believe that the European Union is lacking ambition and leadership in real climate action. At the climate talks, the European Youth Climate Movement, including YFoEE, organised an action calling out the EU to stop going around in circles and to actually lead the way.



(c) Conrad Richardson

EU, you call that leadership?! - Stop going round in circles!
Action inside the conference building.



(c) Conrad Richardson



(c) BUND Jugend Berlin

YFoE Germany at the 'Berlin wall of our times'



(c) BUND Jugend Berlin

Support to YFoEE from home!

Our friends at Young Friends of the Earth Germany back home were demanding action from the negotiators on climate change, and thus supporting our team in Warsaw. Calling climate change 'the Berlin Wall of our times', activists from YFoE Germany gathered at the remains of that wall in Berlin to call on the negotiators at the UN climate conference in Warsaw to overcome their wall of inaction.

#Volveremos - We will be back!



Dirty corporate influence on the negotiations, putting corporate interests before people, no ambition and continuous blocking of progress by developed countries' governments served as a tipping point when we decided to say - enough is enough!

Solidarity with developing countries and those communities most affected by climate change united most of the civil society, youth groups and social movements at the climate talks in Warsaw. YFoEE team was among the 800 accredited activists who have walked out of the negotiations in protest of the unjust process and lack of progress. **BUT**, we haven't walked out of the UN process and we promise that we will be back stronger for Lima next year and Paris in 2015! Now is the time for movement building on national levels and putting pressure on governments and dirty corporations back home in order to build a stronger and bigger global climate justice movement!

We need to give them hell!

#cop19
polluters talk,
we walk



#volveremos
we will be
back!



The FoEI family walked out ...

... together with 800 other people.



All pictures on this page (c) Luka Tomac

What did the walk-out of the climate talks mean to us?

Read what Sarah Tyrrell from YFoE Ireland says.

As youth we are vibrant. As activists we are angry. As youth activists we can be frustrated and event at times deflated. The system in which we exist can often be our biggest obstacle when attempting to challenge norms and promote new ways of thinking.

Do we tackle this obstacle head on? Yes. Are we always successful? No. But sometimes we are – even if not in the way we had hoped.

COP 19 was the perfect example of how hope can turn to despair. But with an exciting twist at the end!

As a Young Friends of the Earth Ireland Climate Champion I was given the opportunity to travel to Warsaw during the 19th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (COP19). My first experience of international negotiations brought with it mixed emotions. I knew the process would be infuriatingly tedious so I opted out of accreditation and chose to spend my time in the city, taking part in actions and looking after communications. I chose what I thought was the fun option.

During my week in Warsaw my eyes were opened to the world of international negotiations. I was right, it was infuriatingly tedious at the best of times, and while I did experience a certain amount of “highs” (usually the hour or so immediately following a successful action) I felt low most of the time despite being outside the actual talks. I couldn't quite come to grips with the insincerity of it all, with the lack of commitment by my own government, with the almost complete absence of any real compensation for countries like The Philippines.

Truth be told I felt utterly hopeless and began to question the ability of civil society to impact change at all. It was the first time in my life that I felt ashamed to be Irish, ashamed to be European and ashamed to be from the Global North.

And then there was the Walk Out. Eight hundred activists coming together to stand up for climate justice in the face of such political indifference had an effect on me which I never anticipated. I was filled with adrenaline. Like a flash of lightening the atmosphere was electric.

There was the messaging – how would we as civil society make our message clear? How would we combat the inevitable suggestion that we were giving up on the COP and on the UNFCCC? How could we ensure that international media paid attention and spread our message for us? How could we make perfectly clear our outrage with the developed countries and our solidarity with the developing countries? How could we make our demand for climate justice visible in the midst of such madness?



Personal reflection on experiences at the climate talks

From Sinead Mercier (YFoE Ireland)

David Suzuki writes that before we can hope to adequately tackle climate change we must internalise the fact that *we are the earth, and whatever we do to the earth, we do to ourselves.*

Yet *hope*, to my mind, is not enough of a driving force for the promotion of sustainable living. It has an air of sacrifice and persists in the idea that the way we live in the Global North, with an overt reliance on dirty energy, daily power showers and avocados from Peru, is normal. In reality, living within your means, within your 1.8 hectares of a planet that you share in companion with 7 billion others, is simply what is right. This to me is the meaning of climate justice, that no other human being, present or future, should suffer due to the greedy consumption of resources that you neither need nor deserve.

Our grandparents did not live the way we do now, nor do the majority of the planet's human inhabitants from whom we rob the resources for a gluttonous way of life. Hope can stunt action, leading us to believe that *doing what we can* is enough to obstruct an uncertain future where growing inequalities and climate chaos are already at hand.

My first few days inside COP19 were disheartening. I came to the COP19 to find the source of our stalled progress to clean energy and sustainability was a minority of thumb-twiddling governments and corporations lacking in innovation and foresight. Seeing at first hand the painfully slow, if not stagnant, movement of the world's government towards agreement in the face of great urgency was difficult and oftentimes surreal. At one point, I found myself in a room on Gender Day being encouraged to sing what I can only describe as a Disney song about *hopes and dreams* - as if it would be terribly rude to ask for more urgency at the COP.

What I do take away from this trip is the power of solidarity, as opposed to sympathy, that I witnessed as part of the 800 strong civil society and G77 walk out. Friends of the Earth International, their partner organisations and the truly incredible young people I met in Warsaw made me realise the strength of the collective. There is a *blessed unrest* at work - millions of people across the globe bound together by respect for the planet and a shared belief that the way we live is neither just nor right.

We are living not only on a planet in flux but a societal shift in what we believe to be *the good life*. People are beginning to realise that our economy, based on ever-increasing growth, is unsustainable from a climate, social and global justice perspective. Like Graham Barnes said, *work and quality of life are two legs of the stool; the third is future*. We cannot allow a fiction of powerlessness to allow us abdicate responsibility for the imagining of what our future will look like. Each of us as individuals have a duty not only to reduce our carbon count but to engage with our governments, private enterprises and communities and make our voices heard.

This is not to say that we should revert back to the hardship and injustice of life before the carbon-heavy modern era, or condemn the Global South to slow development. Instead I believe with David Suzuki, that the chance is at hand for *opportunity, beauty, wonder and companionship with the rest of creation*, that the human capacity for intelligence and adaptability that has brought us to this dire future will see us out of it.

Yet, practical action and change will not be driven by *hope* of avoiding catastrophe but the welcome of individual and collective responsibility to leave enough for lives after us and in the most vulnerable countries, to be lived in full and pleasant splendour.

That was a lot of text ...
Go on for more pictures!

YFoEE - inspire. mobilise. transform.



(c) Marco Cadena



(c) Luka Tomac



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Kicking coal out of the climate talks



Comms work



(c) Luka Tomac

Let's huddle!

With our friends from Eart in Brackets.



(c) Luka Tomac



(c) Bernhard Csengel

After the walk-out at the convergence space

**#volveremos
we will be back!**



(c) Marco Cadena

Supporting environmental defenders

The content and layout of this report was done by Maruška Mileta (YFoE Croatia) and Juli Okropiridse (YFoE Austria).



(c) Conrad Richardson



Sign up to the mailinglist to get our quarterly newsletter!



(c) Luka Tomac

Come, join the YFoEE network.

Get in touch!

Find our contacts at:
www.foeeurope.org/yfoee/contact-steering-group

Get involved!

www.foeeurope.org/yfoee/events

Stay informed!

newsletter: www.bit.ly/Je02Ax
website: www.youngfoee.org
facebook: www.facebook.com/YoungFoEE
twitter: www.twitter.com/Young_FoEE
flickr: www.flickr.com/youngfoee

Last year the COP took place in Doha, Qatar. Obviously YFoEE didn't all go there, but we met in Brussels and followed the climate negotiations there.

Check out the 'Qatar in Brussels' special report if you are interested.



www.foeeurope.org/yfoee/QiB-special-report

THANK YOU!

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