

COP28 Report

A year in review

Executive Summary

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Summary of UNFCCC COPs

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has been hosting the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) since 1995. COPs form a critical part of the global decision-making process on climate change, where countries all over the world negotiate and make pledges relating to the climate and environment.



Since then, COP has produced significant outcomes, most notably the Paris Agreement in 2015. Several years ago, all parties agreed to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times, which was a landmark agreement. This involved each country designing their own nationally determined contributions (NDCs) which outline their climate action plans. Other outcomes include the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which sets out emissions targets.

COPs present a crucial channel for the fight against climate change, and enable civil society and NGOs to convince key decision-makers around the world to act sufficiently.

GCE's past attendance at COP

GCE's presence at UNFCCC COP meetings has been consistent and growing with each year. At COP26 in Glasgow, GCE members acted as collaborators on three side events with one member in attendance at the conference.





With the creation of the COP27 team in 2022, the first designated team at GCE working specifically on COPs, GCE sent its first delegation of eight members to COP27 in-person at Sharm El-Sheikh with the support of its partners and Member Organisations, as well as the members networking and applying to various opportunities for badge acquisition. Over the duration of COP27, GCE members engaged in multiple on-site and virtual side events and acted as primary contributors to

the [statement](#) "EU: Let's Phase Out Fossil Fuels" published by European Youth NGOs at COP27.

In order to maintain a consistent engagement in the UNFCCC process, GCE scaled-up the COP28 team in 2023 to oversee GCE's presence and ensure the organisation of activities, bilaterals, and partnerships at the conference.



SB58: The Bonn Conference

The Bonn Climate Change Conference is an instrumental aspect to COP that occurs every June in Bonn, Germany. Last year's conference, otherwise known as SB58 (the 58th sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) set the scene for the negotiations that continued at COP28.

In the weeks prior to SB58, GCE co-authored and endorsed the '[European Youth Demands towards SB58 and COP28](#)' which outlined the joint priorities and demands for European youth at the conference. Two GCE members were in attendance and unpacked the outcomes of the conference in GCE's podcast episode titled '[Climate Negotiations: Evaluating SB58 and Setting Expectations for COP28](#)' wherein the topics of COP28

agenda items, conflicts of interest, and the anticipated future of the UNFCCC climate conferences were discussed.

The conference was hindered by the challenges surrounding setting the agenda, with negotiators failing to agree on it until the very end of the two-week session. The main area of contention was about the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP), agreed at COP27 to 'urgently scale up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade', which did not make it beyond the provisional agenda. This is in part because the Like-Minded Developing Countries wanted to add an additional agenda item on 'urgently scaling up financial support from developed country Parties' arguing that the inclusion of the MWP on the agenda could not be accepted without the new financial support item.

The GCE delegation on the ground contributed to YOUNGO's efforts of lobbying the negotiators to include the MWP in the agenda, as well as to address the finance issue appropriately.



Photo credits: YOUNGO

At COP28, delegates were expected to deliver a successful Global Stocktake, a decision to phase-out fossil fuels, operationalise the Loss & Damage Fund, as well as scale-up the needed funding for it, among others.

Virtual Events Before COP28

This year, the GCE team hosted a number of virtual events and trainings in order to prepare young climate activists for the COP28 conference. These events focused on introducing young people to key concepts within the climate negotiations context, building key capacities to help them tackle climate change, and honing existing skills and knowledge using virtual webinars and workshops.

Climate Justice Action Accelerator: The "[Climate Justice Action Accelerator](#)" featuring speakers Cherop Soy, Jana Jandal Alrifai, and Saoirse Exton, aimed to educate and empower young individuals on climate justice in preparation for COP28. With 360+ registrants, the event attracted a diverse audience eager to contribute to the discourse on climate justice. Highlights included engaging panel discussions exploring the intersectionality of climate justice, interactive sessions fostering dialogue and idea exchange, and UN representation from speakers offering firsthand perspectives on global climate justice initiatives. Outcomes included enhanced awareness of climate justice issues, empowerment of participants to advocate for change, and the fostering of networks for future collaboration and action.

Systems Thinking Workshop: Together with Professor Steve Kennedy from Erasmus University, the COP28 team offered an interactive workshop on the topic of systems thinking. The speaker introduced the participants to the theory of systems thinking and how it can help us understand and combat climate change related issues. During the interactive aspect of the workshop, participants developed their own diagrams depicting the relationships between various elements of the socio-ecological system(s) that are influencing climate change.

COP28 Thematic Priority Areas Consultation: A key element of this process of preparation was an open consultation with key stakeholders and interested individuals. The team hosted a structured public consultation to give young Europeans and interested parties the opportunity to give feedback and provide reflections on GCE's strategy in an effort to make it more robust, impactful, and representative of the youth that we represent. This event was a 90-minute virtual consultation. The first 15 minutes covered an introduction to GCE and the proposed strategic priorities ahead of COP28, followed by a 35-minute section where other regional youth groups and key stakeholders gave their feedback.

Consultation Mandate:

- **Identify Key Priorities:** Gather input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders to identify and prioritise the key objectives and initiatives for COP28, with a focus on accelerating climate action and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- **Enhance Stakeholder Engagement:** Foster collaboration and inclusivity by engaging with governments, civil society, academia, industry, and other stakeholders to ensure diverse perspectives are considered in shaping COP28 strategies.

- **Generate Innovative Solutions:** Encourage the development of innovative and evidence-based strategies, policies, and actions that can contribute to ambitious climate targets.
- **Ensure Transparency:** Maintain transparency throughout the consultation process by sharing information, soliciting feedback, and making relevant documents publicly accessible.
- **Facilitate Accountability:** Establish mechanisms to track progress and hold stakeholders accountable for commitments made during the consultation.

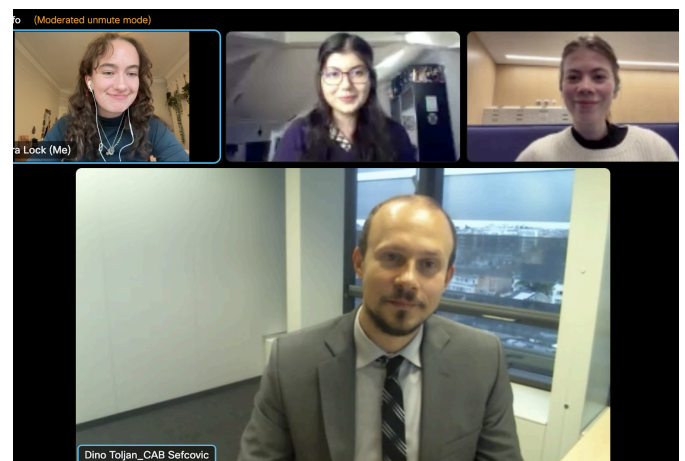
Each group consulted was prompted to discuss how each of the themes affected their lives, their experiences, and their perspectives.

Advocacy Webinar: Hosted directly before COP28 on 22 November, this event aimed to give young people an understanding of how negotiations can be influenced, what levels of engagement exist at COP, and what lobbying for climate action can look like in-practice. Featuring speakers from Fastenaktion, CAN Europe, and the private sector, GCE co-organised this event with FIMCAP. This webinar was [recorded](#) for the use of participants who could not attend.

COP Pub Quiz: Co-organised with ClimaTalk, the virtual COP pub quiz brought together environmentally conscious minds for an evening of trivia! This collaboration was intended to combine the thrill of a pub quiz with the importance of raising awareness about COP28 directly before the conference ensued. With roughly 30 participants vying for the top three spots, the six rounds of the pub quiz covered general pop culture knowledge, the history of COPs, climate science, film trivia, a music round, and solutions to the climate crisis.

Bilateral Meetings before COP28

From August to November, the Strategy team organised over a dozen bilateral meetings with key EU decision-makers, members of the European Parliament, National COP delegations, and civil society allies. The team used meetings with EU decision-makers to present GCE's thematic policy priorities and encourage them to adopt an ambitious position at COP28. Ahead of the European Parliament COP28 Resolution, the team spoke with individual MEPs and party blocks, presenting



to the Left Group members' meeting and at the Greens' youth consultation. The COP28 Strategy team additionally organised bilaterals with representatives of EU agencies, committees, and the European Commission. Bilaterals were conducted with a number of national COP delegations to ensure that our priorities were heard by those representing the EU at COP.

The team met with other civil society organisations throughout this process, including CAN-Europe, Youth Negotiators' Academy, and our member organisations. Priority was given to coordinating our advocacy and organising collaborations for COP28 itself. Furthermore consistent communication with GCE's MOs was maintained to ensure their perspectives were streamlined into our COP advocacy.

The EESC Youth Delegate to COP Programme

The [EESC Youth Delegate to COP Programme](#) is an initiative organised by the European Economic and Social Committee together with GCE and the European Youth Forum. Now on its second mandate, the EESC Youth Delegate Programme has concluded its first year with youth delegate Diandra Ni Bhuachalla.

The mission of the programme is as follows: "the youth delegate will be a full member of the EESC delegation, being invited to participate in EESC's side-events and having the opportunity to participate in any event attended by the other members of the EESC delegation. They will also have bilateral meetings with different CSOs and representatives, participate in some side events as speakers and follow debates on-site and online."

As members of this programme's Youth Task Force, GCE representatives attended quarterly meetings with other young people to advise the youth delegate and contribute to this mandate. Beyond the scheduled meetings, the team collaborated and engaged regularly with the youth delegate, assisting her in the development of her work associated with her mandate.

Furthermore, GCE contributed to the organisation of the official COP28 side event "[Beyond Growth: Sufficiency for a Sustainable and Equitable Future](#)" and delivered closing remarks during the event. The side event was aimed at addressing overconsumption, inequitable resource use, and the implications in governance, social justice and culture to foster sustainable and equitable policies for human well-being.

Other Opportunities & Collaborations

RCOY Eastern Europe: On the 23rd of September the Project Lead on COP28 Strategy Laura Lock represented GCE at the Eastern European Regional Conference of Youth in Warsaw. The Regional Conference of Youth serves as a synthesis mechanism to collect

key policy points from each region in order to generate a 'Global Youth Statement.' Joining a coalition of activists from the region, Laura and organising team member Vladislav Malashevskyy delivered a workshop on 'The ABCs of Climate Agreements,' covering both the theoretical foundations needed to engage with international climate negotiations and a practical interactive workshop designed to empower young people with the skills to talk to high level representatives and negotiators.



NEYCA: As one of the founders of the informal platform named the Network of European Youth NGOs for Climate Action, GCE consistently engaged in monthly meetings wherein members of European youth would gather to discuss COP strategies, areas of alignment, and prospective bilaterals. Opportunities were disseminated throughout the group during COP28, resulting in a variety of engaging bilateral and multilateral opportunities as well as the finalisation of a [position paper](#) the group wrote for COP28.

CCSF: On the 15th of October, Project Officer on COP28 Strategy Pranjal Mathur represented GCE at the Cambridge Climate and Sustainability Forum. Pranjal joined Theodore Tallent, Shailaja Fennell, and Liam Saddington to discuss the Climate Politics landscape and highlight the work that GCE broadly and the COP team specifically was working on ahead of COP28. Focusing on the policy and political nexus, Pranjal explained some of the key issues in the run up to negotiations with a particular focus on climate finance and the need for holistic policy surrounding the intersection of climate change and biodiversity.



Interview on the Loss & Damage Fund: The COP28 team [published](#) an interview on the GCE website with two young climate negotiators involved in the Loss & Damage negotiations. Together with Hyacinthe Niyitegeka and Christian Fernández Dávila, the key challenges for implementing the Loss & Damages Fund were explored in a dialogue led by the Project Lead on Organisation & Logistics, Lara Schade.



Children & Youth Pavilion Steering

Committee: GCE played a crucial role on this year's Children & Youth Pavilion in the capacity of a member of the Steering Committee. COP28 Coordinator Namir Chowdhury and Project Lead on COP28 Organisation & Logistics Lara Schade played leading roles in the Programme and Communications working groups respectively. The C&YP is an important space that platforms young people at COP by bringing them together, exchanging ideas, and mobilising youth across the world. The events and initiatives at the C&YP empower young people by showcasing powerful work by young leaders and spearheading youth engagement at COP. Through the C&YP, GCE held a number of events and organised sessions to facilitate young people to network.

COP28 Thematic Policy Priorities

Throughout their preparatory period, the Strategy Team conducted meetings internally with other working groups, MOs, team members, and the Board to determine key policy priorities. These were further discussed through a process of public consultations with young activists from around the world, as well as in bilateral meetings with national delegations and EU bodies.

To this end, the COP28 thematic policy priorities cover three key policy areas;

- (1) Implementing debt relief in response to loss and damage;
- (2) Considering the interdependence between biodiversity and the climate crisis; and
- (3) Just energy transition: phasing-out fossil fuels.

These priorities are underlined by a critical need to equitably reduce resource consumption, phase out fossil fuels and develop solutions that centre systemic justice. These areas were highlighted as a result of their alignment with the coalition's work and their importance to the regional and international climate agenda.

The full strategy with detailed policy demands can be found [here](#).

The team adopted a dualistic approach, on the one hand working with EU negotiators, the Commission and Parliament to bring youth perspectives into the negotiating space and present key ideas, demands and policy perspectives. Simultaneously, with the recognition of the overwhelming difficulties of entering the COP space as a young person, this policy branch worked in tandem with an ongoing branch of education, capacity building and communications.

To this end, the team organised a number of capacity building workshops, recorded podcasts to summarise the outcomes of SB58 and COP28 in an accessible way, coordinated with other EU youth groups to synthesise key demands, and engaged with regional mechanisms such as the RCOY, the EESC youth delegate and the Network of European Youth NGOs for Climate Action.

Endorsing the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

In accordance with the aforementioned thematic priority areas that were developed prior to COP28, the COP28 team took the initiative to prepare a proposal for the GCE endorsement of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation treaty. After receiving internal approval, the COP28 team [endorsed](#) the treaty on behalf of Generation Climate Europe.

Engagement at COP28

Seven members of Generation Climate Europe attended COP28 in-person at Expo City Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Two members of GCE attended the conference remotely, using virtual badges to follow the negotiations.

In-Person: Lara Schade, Laura Lock, Marian Ignat, Namir Chowdhury, Rachael Parker-Allen, Sophia Wiegand, Zofia Borowczyk.

Virtual: Clarissa Salmon, Penny Kapusuzoglu.



COP28 Side Events

This year, GCE highlighted its members and partnerships with events held at various pavilions in the Blue Zone. Hosted with several partners in different spaces, the ambitious approach to events-hosting that the team at COP28 took covered a variety of key climate topics.

→ One Health and Fossil Free Futures: What-if Scenario was hosted in collaboration with YOUNGO Health and the Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network. This event was a creative workshop that took place on the 1st of December at the



Commonwealth Pavillion. Speakers and participants alike shared perspectives, experiences and ideas around the intersections of climate change and health crisis. During the event participants were encouraged to brainstorm collective visions for a safer, healthier world. Much of the discussion oriented around the need for holistic and intersectional health policies that are contextualised and phenomenological. Combining creative storytelling, interactive activities and

informational insights the workshop brought together a diversity of youth at the climate health nexus.

- Green Skills for Innovative Youth Climate Action was organised at the Commonwealth Pavilion on 2 December in coordination with the Commonwealth Youth Climate Network. This event was structured as a 'fishbowl' discussion where attendees identified opportunities and challenges on the scaling of green skills for youth, with a focus on youth engagement and empowerment through education to promote green skills.



- Developing Skills through the Climate Youth Negotiator Programme was co-organised with the Climate Youth Negotiator Programme and Youth and Environment Europe at the Children & Youth Pavilion on 2 December. Recognising that the capacity building gap remains one of the biggest obstacles to youth engagement in UNFCCC structures, GCE collaborated with the Climate Youth Negotiators programme to organise an in depth Q&A with two youth negotiators to share skills, build ideas and highlight key ways to overcome critical barriers. This event sought to leverage the experiences of young negotiators to share the insights needed to engage with COP28 Negotiations as a young person. From how to draft an intervention and organise



bilaterals to where to find key information, the capacity building for youth session will empower young attendees to critically engage with negotiations.

- Europe Regional Networking Session was a Children & Youth Pavilion event that GCE co-organised with Youth and Environment Europe on 3 December. This session was an informal space where European youth NGOs and individuals came together to share opportunities, network among each other, and talk about common challenges and goals.



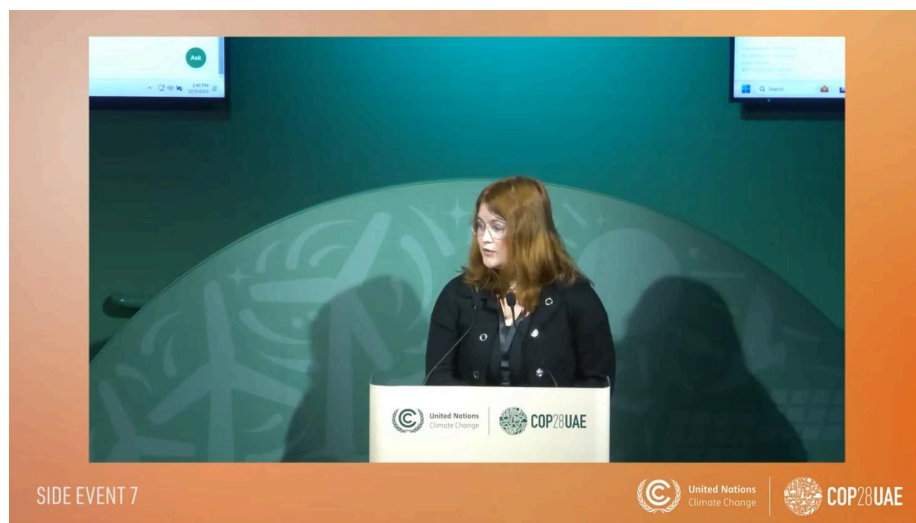
- Joint Youth Voices Towards Climate Justice was a session underscoring collaboration between the Global North and Global South. This event was hosted on 5 December at the Children & Youth Pavilion with a variety of co-organisers, including Youth and Environment Europe, YES-Europe, Global Youth Coalition, IAAS, WAT-GP, and ODIF. This event outlined a climate justice scenario illustrating how joint youth action can be applied in coordinated efforts across different countries and regions.



- The Climate Simulator, hosted with Climate Interactive on 6 December, was a session of interactive exploration for multiple young people where they used the

Climate Simulator to devise their own climate scenarios to reach net zero by assessing a number of variables. The event culminated in groups presenting their proposed solutions and discussing the effectiveness of the prospective scenarios.

→ Beyond Growth: Sufficiency for a Sustainable and Equitable Future was an official UNFCCC side event, organised with the European Economic and Social Committee



and the European Youth Forum on 9 December. The concept of 'sufficiency' to address inequitable resource use and climate change was explored by the speakers, with focuses on the practical applications of sufficiency in governance, social justice, and culture to foster sustainable and equitable policies for human well-being. The event aimed to encourage a debate with policymakers and civil society actors on how alternative economic models can benefit both the planet and people. The livestream has been saved at [this link](#).

Bilaterals at COP28

Executive Vice-President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič: In collaboration with Network of European Youth NGOs for Climate Action GCE participated in a high-level bilateral with EVP Šefčovič. The GCE team in particular highlighted the growing relevance of the Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty and called for commission support on this matter, asked the EU to take initiative to act on the flagrant Conflicts of Interests present in Dubai and across the delegations and drew attention to the limitations of excluding biodiversity discussions from climate negotiations. Other youth organisations highlighted other key regional issues with an outcoming promise to continue working together throughout the year in order to feed into Commission activities consistently.



EU Heads of Delegation Bilateral Meeting: In collaboration with YOUNGO and other key stakeholders GCE participated in multiple bilateral meetings with the EU Heads of Delegation. Key issues that were focused on here were the conflicts of interest arising from significant fossil fuel influence over COP28 negotiations and the need to build more robust and consistent mechanisms for youth participation. Ongoing work is looking at building year-round partnerships between EU institutions and youth organisations to embed youth input in policy design as well as implementation.

COP28 Loss and Damage: GCE followed negotiations throughout COP. Questions and criticisms that arise were followed up in bilateral meetings. This included following closely how much money European countries were pledging to the Loss and Damage fund, and if it was 'new' money rather than reallocated climate funds. Towards the end of the negotiations, GCE joined with other youth organisations in a peaceful protest, joining hands outside the negotiation meeting rooms to encourage states to 'hold the line' on phasing out fossil fuels.

What Next?

The COP28 team embarked on its final deliverable with the web event "[Unpacking COP28 and its outcomes](#)" targeted at GCE Member Organisations, members, and anyone interested in the specifics of what happened at COP28. Following this, an ongoing podcast series was developed to further explore the outcomes of COP28 and how that may feed into COP29.

After two productive COP27 and COP28 cycles, the GCE COP team looks forward to Baku 2024 to continue its work in advocating for European young people's priorities.

The COP team will be establishing its thematic priorities through consultations of grassroots young people in order to meaningfully represent young people's voices, before engaging with negotiators to communicate those priorities. The team will also be curating its events calendar and continuing to work with its initiatives and collaborations such as NEYCA and the C&YP as we approach COP29. Key initiatives include co-organising Western Europe's first ever RCoY to bring together young people all across the region.

The fight against climate change has developed and achieved key successes, particularly in recent years such as the commencement of the L&D Fund and the commitment to transition away from fossil fuels. However, **much more action is required**, and young people are at the heart of calls for greater ambition in climate plans. GCE's COP team is determined to play its part.