



WEBINAR

ENRICH

ENVIRONMENT, RIGHTS, CHILDREN

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CLIMATE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN EUROPE

INSIGHTS ON PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE
FROM THE J&E ENRICH PROJECT

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CLIMATE RIGHTS, CLIMATE CITIZENS WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO CHILDREN

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Climate change and its impacts on children in Europe

- Europe is the **fastest warming continent** in the world, and Europe is **not prepared** (EEA, 2024)
- Rising temperatures increase heat-related illnesses, disproportionately affecting children
- Air pollution linked to climate change exacerbates respiratory diseases
- Climate-induced disasters (storms, flooding, wildfires) disrupt education and mental well-being
- Sea level rise in most of the coastal areas
- Forced migration, displacement, conflicts, economic burden
- Children in marginalised communities suffer the most

Climate Rights & Climate Citizenship:

- Climate rights refer to legal, social, and ethical entitlements related to environmental protection and sustainability.
- Climate citizenship emphasizes the role of individuals as rights-holders, including children, in climate governance.
- Children are agents, active citizens (rights-holders), not just passive beneficiaries or victims of climate policies.

Children as climate citizens

Active > Long-term

Local > Global

Right(s)-based

Versatile > cross-cutting



Brussels, 18 March 2019. Credit: Youth for Climate Belgium/Facebook



Climate-related rights in legal frameworks

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and General Comments No. 12, 26, (27)
- European Convention on Human Rights – Right to life (Article 2), Right to private and family life (Article 8)
- Paris Agreement and Aarhus Convention – Public participation & access to environmental justice
- SDGs: rights and responsibilities, SDG16: access to justice for all
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights – Articles 24 (Children’s Rights) & 37 (Environmental Protection)
- EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child – Child participation in political and democratic life



Implementing regional climate frameworks at national level

- **Transposition into national law:** EU directives (e.g., parts of the Green Deal) must be implemented through national legislation.
- **National Action Plans:** Countries to develop child-focused climate policies based on EU and international standards.
- **National human rights institutions & ombudspersons:** Monitor compliance and advocate for stronger protections.
- **Climate litigation & judicial interpretation:** National courts apply regional frameworks to enforce climate rights for children.



Duty-bearers and accountability for climate rights

- **Governments & EU Institutions** must enforce climate regulations and provide child-friendly policies
- **Corporate responsibility** for contributing to climate change and violation of rights
- **Justice systems:** National and European/EU courts to ensure accountability of duty bearers
- **NGOs & civil society:** advocacy, legal challenges, empowerment of children, transnational and intergenerational cooperation
- **J&E ENRICH project**