

MANIFEST

We left Brussels on the 15th November to go by train to Warsaw to join the struggle for an ambitious and fair agreement in the international climate negotiations. More than 700 activists made the journey and showed commitment and willingness to take action. That's also what we expect from our politicians. The Belgian climate movement has woken up, and will not rest until a fair, ambitious and binding agreement is signed and the promises are fulfilled.

We demand a fair agreement, both socially and environmentally. Climate and social justice are intrinsically linked and must be addressed together. Any policy that ignores either will fail in the long term.

The train brought together many individuals and organisations – social and environmental NGOs, trade unions, and political parties – united under one banner. The vision of a socially just and sustainable society goes beyond geographical and ideological boundaries.

The time is up. Climate science and our demands are very clear. We need to be ambitious. Every moment that is lost means not only a delay in reaching a climate agreement, but also victims in the Philippines, Pakistan and elsewhere in the world. We are all jointly responsible for this suffering.

It is still possible to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C or less. But this will require political courage and decisiveness, and to take action now. Global emissions must peak before 2015. Belgium must play a leading role in the international negotiations by setting ambitious goals, with a clear path to reach them. We ask our politicians to work towards emission reductions of 60% by 2030, and 95% by 2050. These emissions should be made within Belgium itself, without the use of flexible and market mechanisms. We are against the expansion of the European emissions trading system. The people in the South are the most vulnerable to the effects of global warming, even though they are the least responsible for it. Solidarity with them means first and foremost that we recognise our responsibility, and take this responsibility by reducing emissions in our own country.

Moreover, Belgium must be more ambitious in its promises for climate finance. Belgium must contribute money now to the climate fund, and set up a plan with indicative milestones to increase this amount until 2020. Belgium must realise the commitment made in Doha of providing at least 150 million euro for the period 2013-2015. For both trajectories, emission reductions and climate finance, we demand transparent monitoring and communication so that people can follow the progress. We will keep a close watch to ensure our governments are taking their responsibility.

In addition to these short-term objectives, we need a fundamental change in the economic system. The transformation to a low-carbon economy should be an improvement for all workers and their families. The right to decent work should be respected. New jobs must be created, as well as the conversion of existing or lost jobs. It is crucial that those who will be most affected by this transition occupy a central position in the whole process. We want a just transition for the population as a whole, and not a green capitalism to benefit the richest 1%.

We are very concerned about the strong presence of corporations at COP19. We demand that decision-making is done in the interest of all, and is not hampered by private interests and the profit motive. We demand a social dialogue and transparent decision-making, with space for participatory and bottom-up initiatives. The whole of civil society needs to be involved in the preparation and monitoring of objectives. We are ready and willing to be partners and actors in the transition to a sustainable society. We need to act now.

