

# Climate Alarm

## **Grandparents for Climate and partner senior citizens' organisations declare a climate alarm**

In 2015, the international community signed a binding climate agreement in Paris, with the aim of keeping global warming well below 2°C by the end of the century, and preferably below 1.5°C. All nations that signed the agreement ten years ago committed themselves to pursuing ambitious climate policies and proactively reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

However, as concerned older citizens, together with the scientific community, we must conclude that insufficient measures are being taken to achieve the agreed objectives.

Ten years after the Paris Climate Agreement, the situation has only become more critical. Forest fires, floods, droughts and heatwaves are affecting us more frequently and more severely, causing damage to all life on the planet and resulting in many human casualties. We have reached a point where the climate crisis and the dramatic decline in biodiversity (the extinction of many life forms) must be counted among the greatest threats to the survival of humankind as a species.

It is time to sound the alarm. We are declaring a climate alarm to remind politicians, business leaders and citizens in Belgium and Flanders of their responsibility towards people, nature, the Earth and future generations. Humanity does not stand above nature.

It is high time to be good ancestors and to take the necessary action to ensure that the planet remains liveable for future generations.

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## **The role of Belgium and Flanders**

Belgium has committed itself at national, European and international level to limiting its greenhouse gas emissions and protecting its citizens from the consequences of the climate crisis. Efforts have already been made to reduce emissions. Between 1990 and 2022, emissions in Belgium fell by 28%, but this is far from sufficient to meet short- and long-term targets.

In the short term, Belgium must achieve the following objectives:

- By 2030, reduce emissions from sectors covered by the European Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) (such as buildings, transport, agriculture, small-scale industry and waste management) by 47% compared to 2005.
- By 2030, increase natural carbon sequestration within the territory to 1.35 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e.
- By 2030, reduce emissions from ETS sectors, i.e. industry and energy production, by 62% compared to 2005.

In the long term, the European Union has committed itself to achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

According to Belgium's own transition barometer, regardless of the calculation method used, the country is currently not on track to meet all of the above objectives. Moreover, natural carbon sequestration within Belgium is declining.

## What do we want?

Grandparents for Climate advocates a sustainable society that respects the planet's carrying capacity. Continuing on the same path is no longer an option. That is why we are sounding the alarm and calling on policymakers to ensure that Belgium and Flanders work together to curb the climate crisis by developing an ambitious plan for the transition to a green economy. This green transition must be just, protecting the most vulnerable against the consequences of the climate crisis, both here and in the Global South.

In short, we call on the federal and Flemish governments to respect the Paris Agreement and to comply with the 2023 ruling in the Climate Case.

The vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions in Belgium come from five sectors: industry, transport, building heating, energy production and agriculture. On this basis, we have formulated a number of policy recommendations that can accelerate the transition to a sustainable society.

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## Policy recommendations

### **1. Make public transport the most attractive option by investing massively in trains, buses and trams. Charge air travel users the real ecological costs.**

Domestic transport accounts for 23% of total emissions in Belgium. Almost all of these emissions come from road transport (96%), more than half of which is due to passenger cars. Public transport must therefore be made an attractive and affordable option for everyone. Trains should also become more attractive than flying, especially at the European level, and the long-advocated modal shift of freight transport from road to rail and inland waterways must be accelerated.

### **2. Invest in renovating the housing stock, with special attention to social housing and buildings where vulnerable citizens live.**

Seventeen percent of total emissions in Belgium come from buildings, most of which are residential. As the climate crisis causes more extreme weather conditions, insulating and renovating homes becomes even more important, with particular attention to vulnerable citizens.

### **3. Stop soil sealing and the degradation of Flemish forests. Encourage the growth of existing and new forests and nature reserves. Invest in trees and greenery in residential areas. Take ocean protection seriously.**

Belgium's natural carbon sequestration is declining year after year. This is unacceptable. Trees, water bodies and wet grasslands are essential public infrastructure. They absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and provide cooling in urban areas during increasingly hot summers. They are vital for our health and for

biodiversity. Trees, forests and nature reserves must be protected and allowed to grow. Oceans and seas must be better protected, as they account for the largest share of global CO<sub>2</sub> storage.

#### **4. End support for fossil fuels, develop a long-overdue programme for energy conservation, and invest in a rapid, ambitious and just transition to renewable energy.**

Energy generation is responsible for 18% of emissions in Belgium. Although emissions from the energy production sector were 38% lower in 2022 than in 1990, the transition to renewable energy is proceeding too slowly. At the current pace, only 60% of electricity will come from renewable sources by 2050. This remains far below the required 80% (including nuclear) or 100%.

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### **The climate alarm will be declared on 21 November 2025**

During the event **klimaatalarm.be** (21 November 2025), the following speakers will address:

- Bernard Hubeau, Co-Chair, Grandparents for Climate
- Magda De Meyer, Chair, Flemish Council for Older People
- Mieke Van Nuland, Chair, OKRA
- Leona Detiège, Chair, S-plus
- Mieke Vogels, Chair, GroenPlus

They will address this text to:

- Flemish Climate Minister **Melissa Depraetere**
- Federal Climate Minister **Jean-Luc Crucke**

More information about the event and the initiative can be found at **klimaatalarm.be**.  
For reactions and questions, please contact [\*\*klimaatalarm@gvhk.be\*\*](mailto:klimaatalarm@gvhk.be).

Klimaatalarm.be is part of the **GoedeVoorouder.be** campaign by Grandparents for Climate.

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