

# National Climate Protection

Final report of the LCOY Online 2021

Keywords: *conference, networking, climate protection, politics, economy*

## Executive Summary

From May 28th to 30th 2021, LCOY Germany took place for the third time - once again in digital form. Around 400 young people as well as representatives from politics, society, business and science came together and discussed the issue of "national climate protection" in a variety of workshops and several discussion rounds.

The participants of the LCOY demand that politics, society and business create concrete framework conditions and incentives for effective and socially acceptable climate protection. Furthermore, they urge a commitment to the 1.5 degree target and a stronger consideration of the needs of future generations as well as of those people who are already suffering from the consequences of climate change.

In order to achieve effective climate protection, the young generation advocates regulatory measures such as reduced meat consumption to secure the food supply and the preservation of biodiversity, among others. At the same time, they demand openness to technology for innovative climate protection. However, this should not be used as an excuse for renouncing immediate climate protection.

## Key Facts

- 3rd Local Conference Of Youth in Germany
- 400 young participants from all over Germany
- Three-day conference
- Over 60 hours of programme contributions and livestream
- Over 100 guests from politics, science, business and society
- 35 committed people from the organisation team
- 5000 hours of voluntary preparatory work
- Broad thematic spectrum from climate activism and innovative technologies to climate change and security policy
- Politicians from all democratic parties
- Support from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

## Quotes

*"Children can't play on mountains of debt? - It's even worse to play on a broken planet"*  
(Rasmus Andresen, MEP)

*"Climate justice is political justice"* (Tori Tsui, climate activist)

*"We are far from where we need to be!"* (Cosima Cassel, British Embassy)

"Climate neutrality should not remain something abstract. People should talk about it, discuss it." (Jonas Schäfer, GermanZero)

"It is important to create a personal framing of the topic of climate change" (Dr. Olaf Kramer, University of Tübingen)

"Get out of the bubble logic and into the worlds in which you are foreign" (Ulf Poschardt, CEO and Editor-in-Chief WELT)

"We have to create positive images for a future fit for grandchildren" (Alexander Carius, Managing Director of the climate think tank adelphi)

"Regulation is very conducive to innovation" (Vanessa Pinter, senior associate at startup investor Digital+ Partners)

"My mother used to say 'Turn off the light behind you!' That has a lot to do with the climate. I think that has quite a lot to do with being considerate of the things that are happening around you." (Shary Reeves, patron)

"1.5 degrees is the best medicine we have" (Theresa Krüger, youth delegate Federal Ministry of Health)

"It annoys me that people always say we are all in the same boat. Because that's not true, because there are people who don't have one and then there are people who collect boats." (Michael Neuhaus, national spokesperson for Linksjugend/solid)

"There is no point in hypocritically pretending that we live in an environmentally conscious way. Our children, at the latest, will no longer buy it." (One participant)

## **Outline**

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## **What is an LCOY?**

The German Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) took place from May 28th to 30th 2021 for the third time and is thereby one of 29 LCOYs worldwide in 2021. LCOYs are national versions of the Conference of Youth (COY), which annually takes place prior to the global UN climate negotiations (COP).

LCOY Germany enables young people to learn and experience together. It offers a platform for networking and exchanging views, both, among young people and with decision-makers from different levels of society. By doing so, the LCOY serves as an important linkage between young people and representatives from politics and business.

The conference is politically neutral, but recognises the climate crisis as a central challenge of our time and for the young generation in particular. . Accordingly, the aim is to bring together guests, participants and team members, organisations and parties from diverse social groups, as long as they recognise democratic principles as well as human-made climate change. The conference intends to get people from across society involved, who share different views and living realities.

### **"What kind of economy does the climate need?"**

*Final report of the LCOY online 2020*

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## **LCOY Online 2021 Report**

From May 28th to 30th 2021, Germany's third Local Conference of the Youth (LCOY) took place, LCOY online 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was once again held in digital form with the theme "National Climate Protection".

The conference started on Friday afternoon with a livestream on Youtube. It was opened with a welcoming speech by Svenja Schulze, current Federal Minister of the Environment in Germany. (see attachment). Followed by several presentations, discussion rounds and an interview with patron Shary Reeves, the livestream on Friday culminated in the first panel discussion.

During the following two days, more than 30 workshops were offered on the platform "Discord". Each of the issues dealt with in the workshops was linked to one of the four main subfields "business", "politics", "science" and "society". The workshops focused on imparting knowledge and enabling the participants to develop personal skills by showing them individual possibilities for action, among others. Speakers and participants exchanged ideas in lectures, discussion rounds and creative workshops. In addition to that the participants were able to talk to and discuss with influential politicians from different German parties in 7 "Politics 1 vs. 1" rounds.

Parallel to this, the livestream programme started again on Saturday afternoon, this time with a welcoming speech by the Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia, Armin Laschet. During the rest of the day, the livestream again offered several discussion rounds and panel discussions, supplemented by broadcasts of selected politics 1 vs. 1 rounds. All of the panel discussions were professionally moderated.

On both days, the livestream was complemented by several short interviews with committed individuals in the climate scene (e.g. Hannah Schartmann, G7 youth delegate) as well as by showing recordings of the LCOY video format "5 questions to". The view audience was led through the livestream by a trio of LCOY moderators. By sharing their thoughts and questions in the chat, the audience of the livestream was able to actively participate in the livestream programme and the panel discussions. All in all, the livestream was watched by more than 1000 people each day and is now permanently available on the YouTube channel of LCOY Germany.

On the Discord server, there were several channels and formats offered which the participants could use for networking with each other as well as with the experts from the different workshops. These channels were especially used in the evenings. Even throughout the different workshops and seminars, the participants and programme contributors exchanged their ideas with each other, so that it was possible to create a platform for networking and exchange for young people during the conference.

The LCOY programme offered a high level of diversity throughout the conference. On the one hand, this was reflected by the diversity of issues dealt with, such as climate activism and climate communication as well as innovative technologies or security policy in the context of climate change, for instance. On the other hand, the conference also tried to pay attention to a balanced selection of guests in terms of gender as well as the inclusion of

minorities and the Most Affected People and Areas (MAPA) in order to adequately represent the climate crisis as a global problem that affects people all over the world. In addition, the LCOY equally included all established political parties in Germany, that are in line with the LCOY's political principle.

Around 400 young people from all 16 federal states and abroad registered for the programme items. Thus, voices and perspectives from all over the federal territory, and beyond, came together at the conference.

The LCOY online 2021 was organised by a voluntary organising team of 35 young people from all over Germany who invested over 5000 hours of preparation time. They were kindly supported by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety as well as by the BUNDjugend and the climate delegation.

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## **Programme LCOY online 2021**

Below, the programme is divided into three sections: livestream, knowledge transfer and individual action opportunities.

### **Livestream**

In her welcome address on Friday, Federal Environment Minister Svenja Schulze emphasised the efforts Germany had already made in climate protection. The welcome address was followed by various contributions from science, politics, business and society. An expert panel consisting of Brigitte Knopf (Secretary General, Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change), Ingrid Nestle (Member of the German Bundestag, The Greens) and Karl-Heinz Paqué (Chairman, Friedrich Naumann Foundation) discussed intensively and insightfully the best possible variant of CO<sub>2</sub> pricing. Ulrike Niemeier (Senior Scientist, Max Planck Institute for Meteorology) and Dr. Franz May (Head of CO<sub>2</sub> Storage at the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources) also exchanged views on geoengineering, highlighting the possibilities of Carbon Capture Use and Storage (CCUS) and Solar Radiation Management (SRM) in Germany and around the world. Likewise, the discussion round on the question "Only climate hysteria and science denial?" with Ulf Poschardt (Editor-in-Chief, WELT), Line Nideggen (Speaker, Fridays for Future) and Prof. Dr. Monika Taddicken (Professor of Communication Sciences), moderated by Johannes Büchs, opened up exciting perspectives and wrestled welcome compromises from both sides. In the preceding interview with patron Shary Reeves, it also became clear to the participants why each individual as well as global thinking is relevant in tackling climate change.

Saturday started again with a greeting, this time by Armin Laschet, who underlined the importance and achievements of the federal states and North Rhine-Westphalia. Afterwards, several "Politics 1 vs. 1" rounds were broadcast. In these rounds, two politicians from different parties faced each other, asked the viewers questions and explored their similarities and differences. The viewers experienced varied debates, not least through their own questions, and offered politicians an opportunity to enter into an exchange with the young

population. The broadcast was rounded off by two further panel discussions. On the one hand, the impact of the climate crisis on Germany's security was discussed by Dr Susanne Dröge (Senior Fellow, German Institute for International and Security Affairs), Alexander Carius (Managing Director of adelphi) and Dr Hinrich Thölken (Commissioner for Climate and Energy Foreign Policy, German Federal Foreign Office). On the other hand, a panel consisting of Prof. Frank Best (Professor of Business Administration, HTWG Konstanz), Dr. Ralph Obermayer (Policy Reference IG Metall), Vanessa Pinter (Senior Associate, Digital+ Partners) and Bernd Weber (Managing Director EPICO), moderated by business journalist Patrick Bernau (Head of Business Department, FAZS), discussed ways to successfully transform German industry towards climate neutrality. The Saturday was rounded off with an exchange on "Science meets Politics" with the guests Lorenz Gösta Beuting (Member of Parliament, Die Linke), Klaus Mindrup (Member of Parliament, SPD) and Prof. Dr. Miranda Schreurs (Professor for Environmental and Climate Policy, TUM) as well as an interview with Deputy British Ambassador Robbie Bulloch on the importance of the next Conference of the Parties.

On both days, the livestream was complemented by several talks with committed individuals. For example, the LCOY was pleased to welcome Ansgar Lehmann (Media Campaigner, change.org), Hannah Schartmann (G7 Youth Delegate) and Theresa Krüger (Youth Delegate, Federal Ministry of Health). Between the real-time broadcasts, videos from the LCOY series "5 Questions to" were aired, for example with Anton Hofreiter (Member of the German Bundestag and parliamentary group leader, The Greens) and Sahra Wagenknecht (Member of the German Bundestag, The Left Party) as interview guests. In addition, the viewers were informed about possibilities of engagement and the LCOY Germany before the respective conference day was reviewed and concluded in the evening.

## **Knowledge transfer**

In view of the main theme "National Climate Protection", the energy turnaround, the expansion of the electricity grid and ways of storing energy were the topics of several programme items. Among other things, the climate delegation, together with the Citizens' Dialogue on the Electricity Grid, invited participants to an interactive quiz.

In the IN4climate workshop, Karen Perrey (Covestro) and Christoph Reißfelder (HeidelbergCement), two representatives of DAX companies, met with Dr. Anna Leipprand (Wuppertal Institute). Together they explored the question of what challenges industry faces on the way to the 1.5°C target. Classic misunderstandings in the context of the climate crisis were also discussed and clarified. For example, representatives of Race to Zero and the British Embassy explained what is behind the "net zero" target of some countries.

Agriculture and mobility were also discussed and presented. Klaus Bonhoff (Head of Department at the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs) discussed climate neutrality and passenger transport with the conference participants. In addition, the agricultural turnaround, sustainable agriculture and the role of ecosystems and land use on the path to climate neutrality in 2050 were the focus of several workshops.

The workshop in which Rasmus Andresen MEP discussed the connection between financial and economic policy and climate justice together in plenary was also popular with participants.

## **Individual possibilities for action**

One of the main themes of the conference was the individual perspective. In this context, participants looked at climate protection and sustainability in everyday life, political participation and activism. Various workshops dealt, for example, with starting a climate petition, networking local sustainability movements and sustainable travel. There was also great interest in offers on sustainable career opportunities and preparation for fields of work that may not yet exist. The participants were able to listen to reports on experiences from government and private sector fields of activity. The workshops on climate communication and "storytelling on Instagram" also met with a positive response from the participants. The same was true for the contributions on social entrepreneurship, consumption and nutrition or recycling and repair. The conference was rounded off by the so-called Market of Opportunities, where participants could get to know well-known initiatives and organisations such as Greenpeace, GermanZero or the Foundation of German Business in more detail. The complete version of the programme is attached.

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## **Voices of the LCOY**

In the discussion rounds and workshops, the participants of the LCOY online 2021 were given the opportunity to formulate their own demands and views on the basis of presentations and exchanges with other participants or programme contributors.

The predominant demand of the young people at the political level was to create framework conditions and incentives for effective and socially acceptable climate protection, to commit to the 1.5 degree target and to show consideration for future generations so that they too can find a world worth living in.

The Climate Change Act 2019 and the measures taken by the government so far have not been sufficient. Based on the observation of how much commitment has been put into, for example, vaccine development and dealing with the Corona crisis in recent months, some participants called for an end to excuses and a similar level of effort to be invested in climate protection. In this respect, the handling of the pandemic had shown "what is possible".

On the level of financial policy, too, climate protection "should not always fail because of money issues". It is necessary to reorientate oneself on the basis of scientific findings and to invest more in climate protection measures, even if this means taking on debts in the present.

Another wish of many young people was to strive for climate protection "with everyone". More people should be reached and sensitised to the climate crisis in order to involve the entire population in the "climate neutrality" project. Providing information alone is not enough. In order to win the so-called "critical mass" of society for climate protection, people must be made to understand the issue emotionally. For the networking and cooperation of diverse actors, it is necessary that people with different views are willing to develop understanding and compassion for each other, to break down prejudices, to leave their own homogeneous "opinion bubble" and to identify common goals.

In the workshops on climate communication, the participants discussed how important it is in the climate debate to strive for constructive, positive rhetoric in the media and in dialogue. Solution-oriented, fact-based approaches should be emphasised and the focus should be shifted from prohibitions and restrictions to the advantages of sustainable, effective climate protection. After all, this is a prerequisite for long-term economic stability and a globally just and healthier society.

With regard to globally effective climate protection and climate justice, it is essential to engage with the experiences of activists from other countries and to overcome time and language barriers. Especially indigenous people and MAPA (most affected people and areas), as in the so-called "global south", must be listened to and their demands addressed. The goal is to strive for and expand a supportive partnership at eye level and sustainable development aid under the premise of global climate goals. Explicitly, solidarity with the global South and the prevention of environmental degradation in severely affected areas were of concern to the participants of the climate conference. As well as the mental and physical health of people affected by climate change and the safety and freedom of climate activists in countries around the world. "We have a responsibility to those who contribute the least to global warming, but who will be hit the hardest," said one participant.

In the workshop on "Education and Sustainable Development", there was a consensus that sustainability should already be dealt with at school level in a wide range of subject areas. Be it global, power-political or economic contexts, biological, geological or literary-cultural and artistic approaches. Topics such as paper and resource consumption, sustainable nutrition and electricity use should also find space in everyday school life. It was suggested that teachers should be offered further training on climate protection and sustainability to ensure that teaching content is always based on the latest scientific knowledge. In addition, the participants understood the promotion of empathy, a sense of responsibility and the understanding of higher-level, global connections as elementary components of holistic education.

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## **Tangible measures**

In addition to these fundamental aspects, the participants of the LCOY online 2021 also addressed sector-specific and tangible measures and demands in connection with climate protection.

The participants called for "finally tackling the agricultural turnaround" and initially cushioning climate protection measures financially so that farmers, for example, have to fear fewer losses when they consider solutions in favour of climate protection. The participants were particularly concerned about food security and the preservation of biodiversity. They called for reducing the use of pesticides and insecticides, increasing the transparency of production methods, as well as reducing waste, the use of additives and meat consumption. Furthermore, animal husbandry that is more just to the environment and humane to animals should be enforced and regional agriculture should be strengthened. Information and

education are identified as the decisive parameters of the topics "nutrition and consumer behaviour". The topic of methane should also be given more attention in the discourse.

With regard to production and transport, well-defined positions emerged. The so-called Due Diligence Act should be sharpened in order to explicitly anchor climate protection along the supply chain. Organisations, companies and countries should start acting consistently instead of greenwashing their actions. "There is no point in hypocritically pretending that we live in an environmentally conscious way. Our children, at the latest, will no longer buy it," said one participant. It is not only the government that has to increase its efforts. Large corporations too, should become aware of their responsibility and take advantage of their opportunities to shape the future by "pulling levers" at a higher level.

In the area of mobility, public transport should be made more affordable, further expanded and the production of green hydrogen should be pushed forward quickly so that the latter becomes cheaper. Besides framing a desire for better sustainable travel, ideas for more climate-friendly tourism were collected. The increase in the cost of air travel and booking options for international connections were addressed and positively highlighted. One position was to avoid and shift traffic. Ideas on the delivery of goods, the digitalisation of services and the establishment of so-called micro depots were discussed. Furthermore, the keywords car sharing, global energy trade and the use of renewable energies came up.

There was great candor and motivation to use newly established knowledge and to try out innovative concepts for more climate and environmental protection. Demands for inventing and attempting to implement different plastic alternatives and recycling ideas, taking stronger action against plastic pollution and raising awareness of resource consumption were phrased.

Consumption and ownership were also two central topics. Participants urged for tax incentives for vegan alternatives and tax raise for animal products. One demand was to place distinct and well-defined notices on products in the supermarket that inform about the origin and emissions balance of the goods. Foodsharing concepts should also be expanded and food waste significantly reduced. As far as consumer goods and possessions are concerned, the participants wanted to see an end to frivolous throwing away. Reparation is "a question of mindset", was one comment.

Altogether, there was a consensus among the participants that the climate must be protected as effectively as possible and must not be displaced by other issues in the public discourse. It must be the goal of politics, economy and society to guarantee all people and living beings a safe, fear-free and peaceful existence in an intact environment today and tomorrow. Consequently, the subject of most discussions on climate protection was less the "if" and more the "how".

The basis of many demands was the desire for an appreciative approach to everything "that the earth gives us". As was the general desire to preserve and rebuild what nourishes us. The hope of young people for a change in values and a change in one's consciousness were phrased. Latter especially concerning being close to nature, a better public spirit and sufficiency. The desire "for people to become aware of their humanity" and for climate change to be "no longer a matter of opinion" in the future.

*Note: When aggregating the voices of the LCOY, care was taken to include as many voices of the participants as possible and to avoid subjective preselection in order to truthfully reflect the voices of the conference in terms of content and proportion.*

## **Interview answers/opinions of the participants**

### ***That's what I wish for the future:***

- That more attention is paid to the youth.
- Decision-makers who care at least as much about the common good as they do about their own.
- To feel less paralysing fear when looking into the future, because we actually care effectively.

### ***We need effective climate protection because...***

- Everyone has the right to an intact environment.
- Society does not develop in a "climate-friendly" way by itself.
- Otherwise our lives will become harder, tougher and more unjust.
- We can still turn the tide and create a world in which future generations also have the chance of a good life.

## **International cooperation of LCOY Germany**

In addition to its commitment at the national level, LCOY Germany also works internationally with other LCOYs and young people around the world to hold up the Paris Climate Agreement.

LCOY Germany is in close contact with YOUNGO, the Children and Youth constituency of the UNFCCC, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. YOUNGO represents the global youth climate organisations at the international climate negotiations, the annual Conference of the Parties ("COP"). YOUNGO organises the registration of the individual LCOYs and the exchange among them.

At the same time, LCOY Germany is also in contact with other **LCOYs worldwide**. LCOY Germany contributed several videos to the programme of LCOY Japan or exchanged experiences and best practices in organising a conference with LCOY Namibia. Likewise, LCOY Germany, together with LCOY Italy and LCOY Austria is organising a joint bicycle tour called "Climate Rally " in autumn to the Youth Summit in Milan. The contact with the other 29 (2020) global LCOYs contributes strongly to our learning effect concerning working practices and climate activism in its essence. Recent contacts include the LCOYs in Chad, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Poland, Nepal and Singapore. For workshops at our conferences we are also in contact with international climate justice activists, e.g. from the Philippines, New Zealand and Kenya. Those activists shared their experiences with the team and participants and engaged in exchange with each other.

LCOY Germany also works internationally for the **final report**. LCOY Germany took part in a workshop organised by YOUNGO for exchange among LCOYs from all over the world. Mutual agreement was reached on the content of the respective final reports of the individual conferences. Likewise, all LCOYs shared their ways of reaching local and national decision-makers with the rest of the workshop participants and collected best practices together - including how to establish close contact with government institutions. LCOY Germany was particularly able to contribute to this exchange with its experience from the preparation of the final report of the LCOY online 2020 and thus contributed to an insightful workshop and successful international cooperation among the LCOYs. In addition, all LCOYs permanently exchange their respective final reports via lcoy.earth and enable a central platform for mutual inspiration and orientation for their own final reports

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## **General conclusion**

Thanks to the motivated participants, exciting guests and a committed organisational team, the third LCOY was a success.

Based on the formats offered, the desire for faster action by political decision-makers, a socially responsible climate policy and the adoption of a post-materialistic attitude emerged. The participants show a great sense of responsibility towards their own and future generations. With regard to their environment, they attach particular importance to climate protection - under the premise of social justice.

The big goal remains to make everyone aware of climate change: People from politics, society and the economy. The aim is to make the relevance of the climate crisis clear and to encourage exchange and the implementation of existing ideas.