

ECO-UNESCO's Submission to the Environment Committee



Background on ECO-UNESCO

ECO-UNESCO is Ireland's environmental and youth organisation. ECO-UNESCO was founded in 1986.

ECO-UNESCO's mission is to promote the personal development of young people and raise environmental awareness through practical environmental projects.

ECO-UNESCO's aims are:

- to raise environmental awareness, understanding and knowledge of the environment among young people
- to promote the protection and conservation of the environment
- to promote the personal development of young people through practical environmental projects and activities.
- to promote the ideals of UNESCO

Introduction

ECO-UNESCO delivers a wide range of programmes on climate change to young people and educators/youth leaders around Ireland. The workshops are often delivered as part of our 'Youth for Sustainable Development' Programme that emphasizes not only the impact of climate change on biodiversity but most importantly on human migration and food security. The young people in ECO-UNESCO's Peer Education Programme this year have created a rooftop garden as their action project to educate people on the impacts of climate change. These young people care deeply about climate change and we would urge the Irish government to set these young people an example by including targets in the Climate Bill.

Recommendation

ECO-UNESCO recommends that the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Environment, Culture and Gaeltacht include in the Climate Bill a specific 2050 target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Submission

ECO-UNESCO is asking that the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Environment, Culture and Gaeltacht include not only sector wide emissions reductions for 2020 but also targets for 2030 and 2040. This is so that Ireland can be on a trajectory for meeting the 2050 targets in line with the science, which states that emissions in developed countries should be reduced by the order of 80-95% by 2050 if we are to avoid dangerous climate change (International Panel on Climate Change, 2007). The European Council of Heads of Government has stated that there as an EU objective the need to cut emission by 80-95% by 2050. Quantifiable targets are the only way to ensure accountability. Ireland is already committed to EU and international targets for 2020 but it is essential that these are put into national legislation to assure that a domestic policy cycle is focused on achieving those targets and increasing accountability.

Leaving targets out of the climate change bill threatens to undermine the fundamental role of this critical piece of legislation.