



## **Defending the Right to a Healthy Environment: Voices for Climate and Justice**

**Organisers:** European Economic and Social Committee & European Youth Forum & Youth and Environment Europe

**Date:** Wed, 19 Nov 2025, 11:30-13:00 (GMT-3)

**Location:** Side Event Room 5

**Concept:** This event will explore the key elements of the right to a healthy environment, as recognised in international, regional and national frameworks. Particular focus will be given to the close relationship with the right to a healthy climate system.

To this end, it will highlight recent developments that are key to this subject, such as the International Court of Justice recently published Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in Respect of Climate Change, the recent Advisory Opinion from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on Climate Change, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea's 2024 Advisory Opinion on Climate Change and International Law, as well as the UNGA's decision on the right to a healthy environment. These legal decisions are already shaping the global legal discourse on the interconnection between potential human rights violations and states' obligations under climate change and environmental law.

These judicial rulings have emerged in the context of a triple planetary crisis. Therefore, the discussion will also provide an opportunity to reflect on the urgent need to rethink consumption patterns and move beyond a growth-centred economic model, in order to ensure that this right is meaningful and enforceable. If states are legally bound to ensure a healthy environment, this inevitably challenges economic systems that prioritise economic growth over ecological

goals. We will discuss what upholding this right means in terms of policies and reimagining prosperity itself toward wellbeing economies that sustain both people and the planet.

The event will bring together legal experts, policy-makers, civil society, and youth advocates to examine these developments, assess their legal and policy implications, and explore concrete pathways for different stakeholders can use in advancing the right to a healthy environment in their respective contexts.

**Objectives:**

- The state of the right to a healthy environment following recent court rulings and decisions.
- Civil society demands to continue building ambitious legal and policy frameworks
- Implications and opportunities for implementing these legal decisions within the climate and biodiversity COP-related negotiations.
- Opportunities to create ambitious narratives on the wellbeing economy based on the windows of opportunity created by these judicial decisions.

**Draft programme:**

- Moderator: Caillum Hedderman, Board member European youth forum
- Elisa Morgera, UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change and Human Rights
- Camilla Pollera, Program Associate at Center for International Environmental Law
- Samira Ben Ali, EESC Youth Delegate to COP
- Connah Snape, Board member, Youth and Environment Europe
- Cynthy Sandrina Hosea, Ministry of Climate Change, Vanuatu
- MEP Lena Schilling (Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance)