

Thousands march in Brussels to demand climate justice



?File photo. Activists march in Brussels. Since climate activist Greta Thunberg slammed climate ministers' empty words, “blah, blah, blah” has become a rallying cry on social media?

Brussels, October 11 (RHC)-- Thousands of protesters have taken to the streets in Brussels to demand bolder action in fighting climate change at the United Nations climate summit starting later this month.

Dressed as endangered fish or tigers or wearing toy polar bears on their heads, demonstrators filled the streets of Belgium's capital on Sunday, chanting slogans demanding climate justice and waving banners in multiple languages.

“Politicians die of old age, Rosa died of climate change,” said one banner referring to a 15-year-old who was swept away by Belgium’s Ourthe River in July, when Europe was battered by days of torrential rain and floods.

Thousands of people representing more than 80 organisations took part in the protest, the biggest such event in the de facto capital of the European Union since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Police estimated at least 25,000 marchers, while organisers placed the number at 70,000.

“After you’ve seen all the disasters we have seen this summer, it’s really crucial that we move now. Because everybody knows what the problem is,” Xavier De Wannemaeker, a protester with grassroots environmental movement Extinction Rebellion, told The Associated Press news agency.

Another demonstrator, Lucien Dewanaga, asked: “What do we do when we destroy the planet? We have nothing else. Human beings have to live in this world. And there is only one world.”

Environmentalists are worried the UN’s 26th climate change Conference of the Parties, commonly known as COP26, will formulate policies that will not go far enough as to significantly slash carbon emissions and slow the warming of the planet.

The 12-day summit, set to begin in Glasgow, Scotland, on October 31st, will aim to secure more ambitious commitments to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) compared with pre-industrial levels.

The youth are playing a central role in pressuring politicians to make commitments in advance of COP26. Young climate activists including 18-year-old Greta Thunberg attended a three-day Youth4Climate conference in Italy from September 28 to 30 to put forward their proposals.

Hundreds of young people led by the Swedish activist marched in Milan earlier this month hoping their demands are heard, including the phase-out of the fossil fuel industry by 2030. Since Thunberg slammed climate ministers on the first day of the youth climate summit, criticising their inaction and empty talk, “blah, blah, blah” has become a rallying cry for climate justice activists on social media.

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