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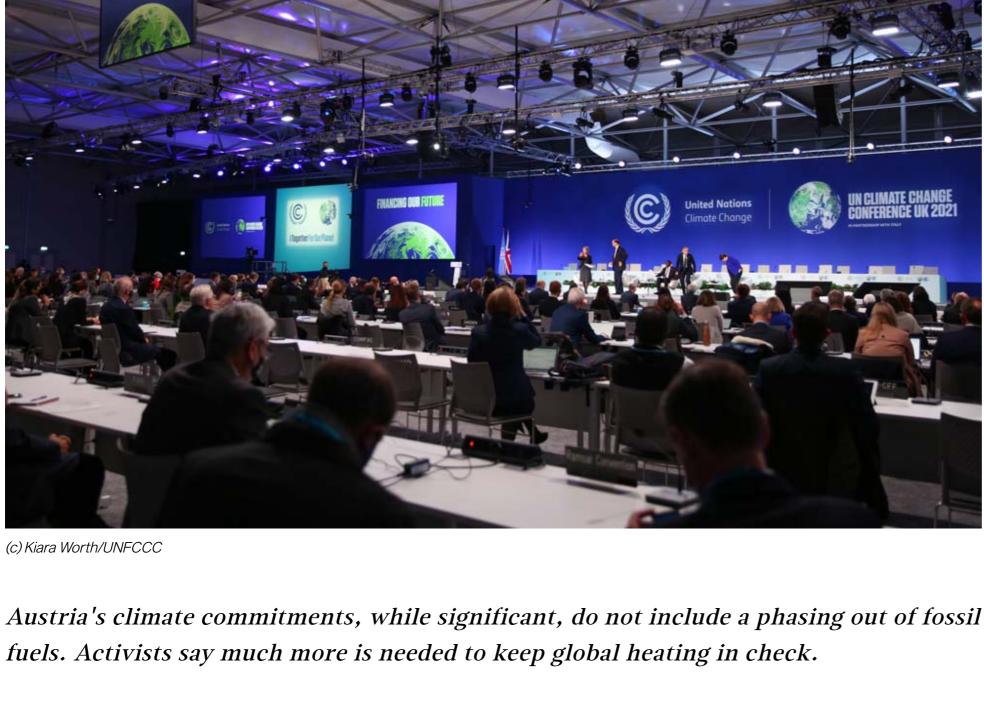
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COP26 Roundup: Austria's Climate Commitments at the UN Summit By Gregory Manni November 16, 2021

Magazine ~

RECOMMENDED



Saturday, Nov. 13 marked the end of two weeks of negotiations among world leaders at the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Glasgow (COP26). Austrian

Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg (ÖVP) and Environment Minister Leonore Gewessler (Greens) both made appearances at the landmark conference, together signing on to a few select pledges and making declarations that may eventually direct Austrian climate policy.

But activists say Austria's climate commitments will not be enough. Blah, blah, blah? The weeks of COP26 in Glasgow were packed with meetings, speeches, deals and

demanding that leaders make binding commitments to keep global warming within 1.5°C of

pre-industrial levels by ending fossil fuel extraction and delivering a promised \$100 billion

declarations inside the plenary halls, while outside, climate activists filled the streets,

According to a Nov. 9 report released by Climate Action Tracker, commitments made at this

in climate finance for developing countries.

for Future rally in Glasgow. #COP26

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year's UN climate conference, if upheld, still won't limit warming to "safe" levels. Full implementation of all pledges and targets could maintain global warming to 1.8°C—which represents real progress—but none of the measures signed in Glasgow are supported by law. UK President of COP26 Alok Sharma said in a press release Saturday: "We can now say with

credibility that we have kept 1.5 degrees alive. But, its pulse is weak and it will only survive

if we keep our promises and translate commitments into rapid action."

Many environmentalists were disappointed and angry about the lack of binding commitments. Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg had excoriated global leaders in September at the Youth4Climate summit in Italy, calling their talk just "blah blah blah." On Monday the campaigner told BBC Scotland that in COP26, leaders "even succeeded in watering down the blah, blah, which is quite an achievement."

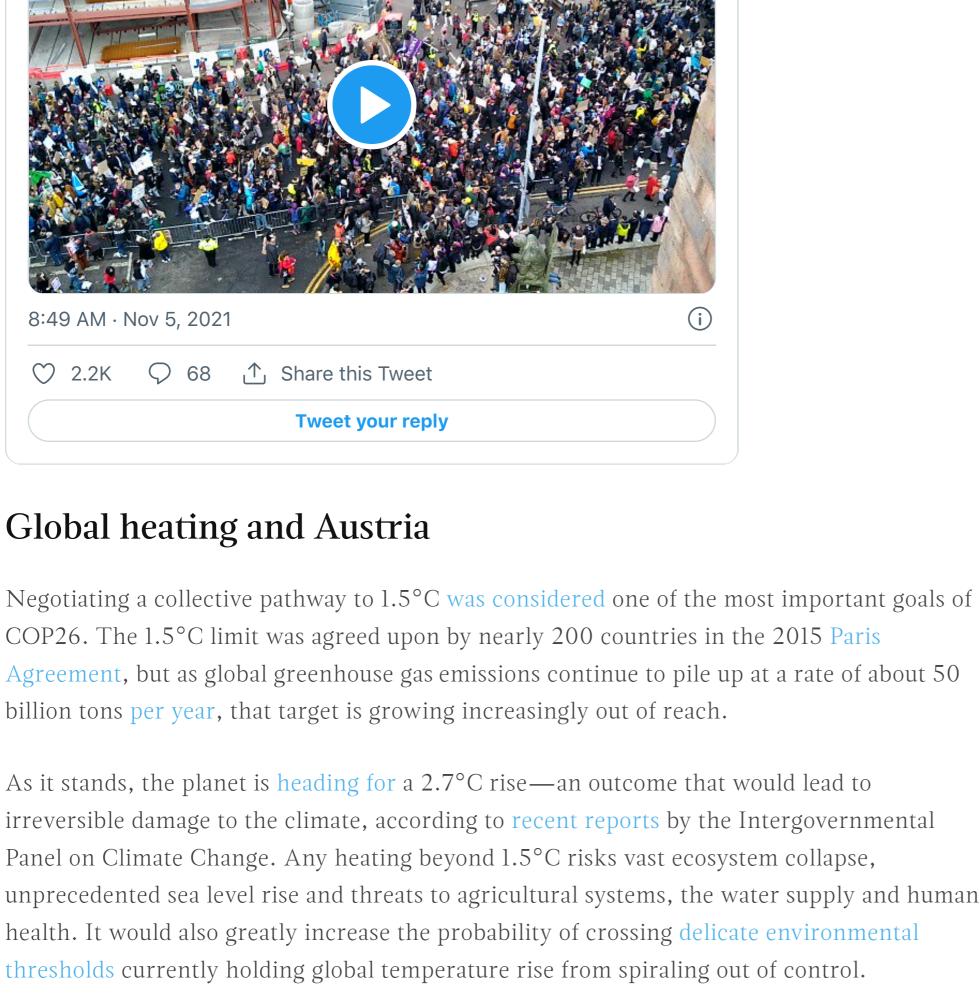
Following the climate talks on Monday, activists in Vienna gathered outside the Ministry of

Environmental Affairs to protest Austria's climate commitments, or lack thereof, criticizing

a failure of leadership in "real climate protection," and saying that Gewessler had returned

from COP26 "with empty hands." Glasgow Times 📀 @Glasgow_Times Our @MearnsColin has captured the crowd at the Fridays

@ mitchellnicole glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19697009.... **Watch on Twitter**



+4°C **Policies** & action 2030

+2.7°C

devastating effects around the world.

Austria's climate commitments

+3°C

+2°(

+1.5°(

+0°C

APA.

Global mean

temperature

targets

only

1.5°C PARIS AGREEMENT GOAL

WE ARE HERE

1.2°C Warming

PRE-INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE

Climate **Action**

in 2021

Pledges &

+2.1°C

targets Optimistic

scenario

+1.8°C +1.5°C

Projections of warming by the end of the century based on various global climate policy pathways (c) 2009-2021 by Climate Analytics and NewClimate Institute

As of 2021, human industrial activity has warmed the planet by about 1.2°C, and it's having

frequent heat spikes, a loss of snow cover and an increase in both dry spells and heavy rain,

Final decisions on the Glasgow Climate Pact spilled into Saturday evening due to deliberation

over official language surrounding the phase-out of coal as well as fossil fuel subsidies—

language which was ultimately weakened at the demand of India and China, according to

Of the COP26 final declaration, President Alexander Van der Bellen said in an ORF

according to Vienna's Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics. Just this past

July, record-breaking rainfall and flash floods slammed nearly every Austrian state.

Austria has already experienced climate shifts in the past few decades, including more

Policies & action

2030 targets only

Pledges & targets

Optimistic scenario

Real world action based on current policies

Full implementation of 2030 NDC targets*

long-term targets and 2030 NDC targets*

implementation of all announced targets

including net zero targets, LTSs and NDCs*

* If 2030 NDC targets are weaker than projected emissions levels under policies & action, we use levels from policy & action

CAT warming projections

Global temperature

increase by 2100

November 2021 Update

Best case scenario and assumes full

Full implementation of submitted and binding

broadcast, "Even if important progress has been made, the overall results of the UN climate conference are clearly insufficient to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees and effectively contain the climate crisis. The international community must significantly increase its ambitions... and accelerate the phase-out from the use of climate-damaging fossil fuels."

Alluding to the weakened agreement on coal, Environment Minister Gewessler told APA,

"In the end, this is not the result the EU fought for. But it is the basis we will now continue

to build upon. We have anchored a process in this text that will have to be confronted next

year in order to improve the climate targets by 2030." It should be noted that Austria closed

down its last coal-fired power plant in April of 2020. Despite strong reactions to the Glasgow Pact, Austrian leaders only signed on to a select few

the climate talks "empty-handed."

be held responsible for many more commitments as a member of the European Union, which signed on to additional pledges. If history is a guide, the Austrian government will likely wait for directives to trickle down from the European Commission for these additional pledges before building corresponding legislation.

conference, naming initiatives planned by the ÖVP-Green government that would achieve

Austrian youth delegates to COP26 who spoke with Schallenberg after his address said that

the chancellor had "portrayed Austria as a pioneer in climate protection," but had gone to

Nonetheless, even verbal commitments have power, and if translated into law, some of

climate neutrality for Austria by 2040—measures that do not yet have legal backing.

emission-reducing pledges over the course of COP26—though the country will eventually

Austria's commitments could prove valuable in fighting the climate crisis. The following is a list of Austria's major pledges at the UN climate summit, as well as those of the EU—all of which are non-binding. At COP26, Austrian leaders committed to...

METROPOLE's analysis here. • Lead research on climate neutrality in energy intensive industries, like the steel, cement and chemical industry, as part of a collective clean energy initiative called Mission Innovation. Research will be co-led by Australia and unfold over the next ten years.

environmentally sustainable economic activity in its sustainable finance classification

system for companies, investors and policymakers. Austria signed the declaration alongside

• Austria urged the European Commission not to name nuclear power as an

deforestation and support Indigenous communities' protection of forested lands. Read

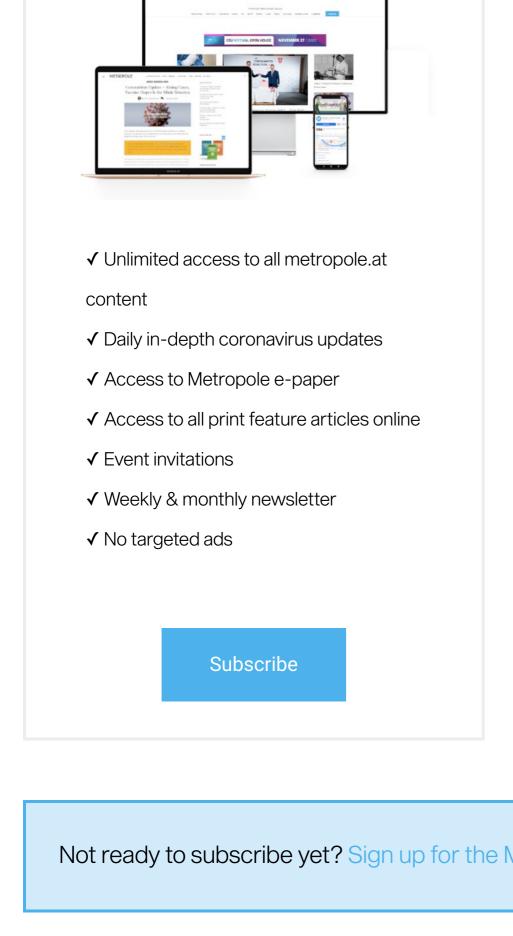
the European Investment Bank, the arm of the EU that funds policy • Financing and committing to forest protection, sustainable land management and the end of deforestation, globally and in the Congo Basin • Supporting the conditions for a just and equitable transition to international climate neutrality

through inclusive "green growth, decent work, and economic prosperity"

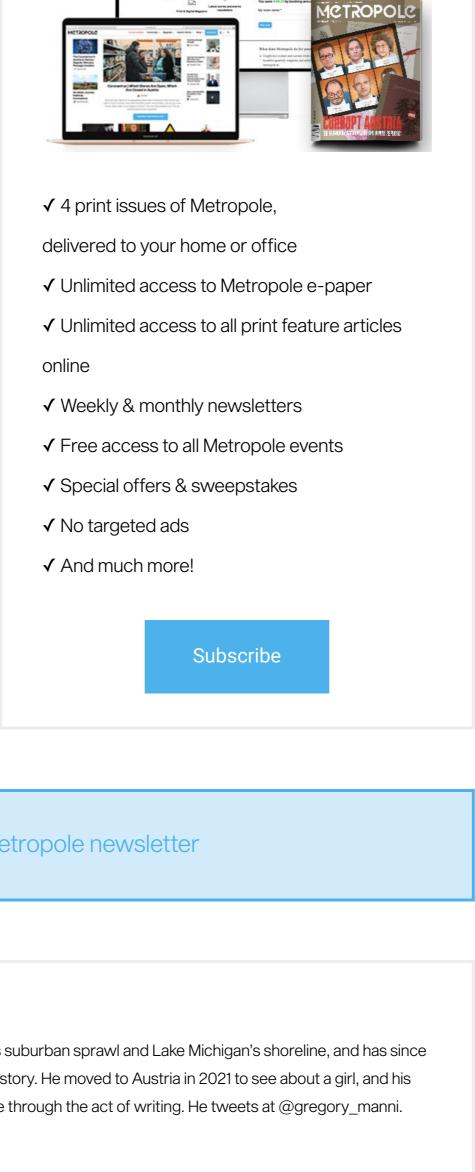
biorefineries.

• Reducing global methane emissions by at least 30% from 2020 levels by 2030

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from 2022

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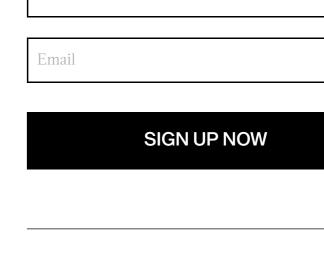
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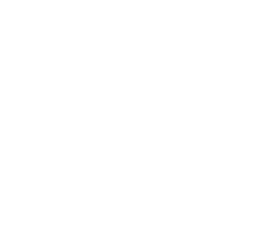
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Chancellor Schallenberg also addressed world leaders near the beginning of the UN climate

• Accelerate the transition to 100% zero-emission motor vehicles by aiming to "work towards" the complete sale of zero-emission cars and vans by 2040, making them "accessible, affordable and sustainable in all regions by 2030" and ensuring that the transition is as equitable as possible for developing nations. • End global deforestation and improve sustainable land use by 2030 at home and abroad, by "strengthening shared efforts" to accelerate forest restoration, end trade-related

Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and Portugal. Other major pledges made by the European Union include: • Making a just transition away from "unabated" coal power generation (that means technology that doesn't utilize carbon capture and storage) by the 2030s

• Ending public financing of unabated fossil fuels outside the EU by the end of 2022—signed by

The European Union notably did not sign on to the 100% zero-emission motor vehicles pledge, among other initiatives.

• Researching clean energy through the Mission Innovation initiative in the areas of power

systems, hydrogen, shipping, urban transitions, CO2 removal, net zero industries and

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