

# KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz

## GREENPEACE

Joint press release of KlimaSeniorinnen Switzerland and Greenpeace Switzerland

## KlimaSeniorinnen judgment: The Committee of Ministers sends the Swiss government back to the drawing board

Zurich, 7 March 2025. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe [decided this week](#) that Switzerland is not yet complying with the requirements of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruling in the case of the KlimaSeniorinnen. Switzerland has yet to prove that it is doing enough to align its policy with a maximum global warming limit of 1.5°C.

«The Swiss Federal Council is not getting away with its arguments by the Committee of Ministers. Switzerland must improve its climate policy to remedy the violation of our human rights. We call on the Federal Council and Parliament to take global warming seriously and to finally take decisive action against the climate crisis», said Rosmarie Wydler-Wälti, Co-President of KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz.

At its [1521st \(Human Rights\) meeting of the Ministers' Deputies](#) in Strasbourg this week, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which monitors the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), examined, among other things, the implementation of the ECtHR's landmark judgment in the case of the KlimaSeniorinnen.

The Committee of Ministers concluded that the climate strategy presented by Switzerland in its action report is insufficient to remedy the human rights violations identified by the ECtHR's judgement. The Committee, therefore, did not comply with the Swiss Federal Council's request to close the case. Rather, Switzerland has to return to the drawing board.

The Committee of Ministers emphasises that climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our times and that the inadequacy of past State action to combat climate change globally aggravated the risks of adverse consequences and the ensuing threats for the enjoyment of human rights;

The Committee of Ministers calls on Switzerland to declare the foundations of its climate strategy by September 2025. This includes quantifying the emissions planned with the climate strategy utilising a national CO2 budget.

In this context, [the Committee of Ministers notes](#) that a broad coalition of non-governmental organisations, in their communications, have a significantly lower evaluation of the remaining carbon budget, which, according to them, would be exhausted by 2032 if Switzerland pursues its current emissions trajectory.

In addition, the Swiss Federal Council must keep the Committee of Ministers informed about the adaptation measures taken and planned for the concrete protection of people in vulnerable situations because of climate change- for example, during heatwaves. It must also provide concrete examples of the effective involvement of the population in the development of climate protection measures.

### **What does the carbon budget mean exactly?**

To avoid devastating consequences for human rights now and in the future, global warming must not exceed 1.5°C. To achieve this, greenhouse gas emissions worldwide must be reduced very rapidly. This is because the remaining global amount of CO<sub>2</sub> the atmosphere can absorb without warming above 1.5°C is very small. Scientists refer to this as the carbon budget. To ensure that this budget is not exceeded, which is necessary to protect human rights, Switzerland must prove that its climate strategy effectively respects the global carbon budget and thus the 1.5°C limit. This was the ruling of the ECtHR in April 2024 (see Box).

However, Switzerland has so far failed to provide the Committee of Ministers with this evidence. Rather, [scientific calculations](#) clearly show that Switzerland's current climate strategy is using far too much of the global CO<sub>2</sub> budget available to meet the 1.5°C limit. If Switzerland continues as planned, it will have used up its maximum remaining budget in just seven years. Switzerland's climate policy is therefore not compatible with compliance with the 1.5°C limit – and is therefore not in line with human rights.

The groundbreaking KlimaSeniorinnen judgment is not only relevant for Switzerland, but for every other country that wants to guarantee the human rights of people in the face of the climate crisis. The consequences of global warming are already violating human rights and are acutely threatened by the worsening climate crisis. Every country must fulfil its responsibility and not claim more of the remaining budget than it is fairly entitled to.

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### **What has happened so far**

In its judgment of 9 April 2024 in the case of the KlimaSeniorinnen, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that states have a duty to protect affected citizens from the adverse effects of climate change on their lives, health, well-being and quality of life. States have an obligation to enact laws and implement measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow down climate change. To protect human rights, each country must reduce its emissions in line with the remaining global carbon budget in order to limit the temperature increase to a maximum of 1.5°C. In its decision, the ECtHR ruled that Switzerland's climate policy is insufficient to meet the 1.5°C limit and therefore violates human rights.

Six months after the judgment, the [Swiss Federal Council informed](#) the Committee of Ministers that Switzerland had implemented the ruling and requested the closure of the case. In mid-January, the [KlimaSeniorinnen](#), a broad [coalition of non-governmental organisations](#) and the [Swiss human rights institution](#), meanwhile pointed out in their communications to the Committee of Ministers that the Swiss climate policy is far from meeting the requirements for a climate policy that is in line with human rights as set out in the ECtHR ruling. If every State were to act as Switzerland has, the global temperature would rise by up to 3°C, with serious consequences for present and future generations.

[Here](#) are more documents relating to the judgment.

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## Contacts

- Cordelia Bähr, Lawyer of Senior Women for Climate Protection  
Switzerland: [baehr@ettwein.ch](mailto:baehr@ettwein.ch), +41 78 801 70 34
- Rosmarie Wydler-Wälti, co-president of Senior Women for Climate Protection  
Switzerland: [rosmariewydler@sunrise.ch](mailto:rosmariewydler@sunrise.ch), +41 61 302 96 35 (for interviews in German)
- Anne Mahrer, co-president of Senior Women for Climate Protection  
Switzerland: [anne.mahrer@bluewin.ch](mailto:anne.mahrer@bluewin.ch), +41 79 249 72 17 (for interviews in French)
- Elisabeth Stern, member of the board of Senior Women for Climate Protection  
Switzerland: [elisabeth.stern@bluewin.ch](mailto:elisabeth.stern@bluewin.ch), +41 79 351 22 00
- Pia Hollenstein, member of the board of Senior Women for Climate Protection  
Switzerland: [mail@piahollenstein.ch](mailto:mail@piahollenstein.ch), +41 79 740 04 50
- Norma Bargetzi, member of the board of Senior Women for Climate Protection  
Switzerland: [normaba@bluewin.ch](mailto:normaba@bluewin.ch), +41 79 352 98 89 (for interviews in Italian)
- Georg Klingler, Project Coordinator and Climate Campaigner Greenpeace  
Switzerland: [georg.klingler@greenpeace.org](mailto:georg.klingler@greenpeace.org), +41 79 785 07 38