



NEWSLETTER WEEK 1

Hey guys,

Welcome to a new semester.

Your EGO is back.

Now, for the past semester, we have written a few newsletters, and in the process, always tried to retain a healthy balance between naïve hope and existential dread. But as we enter this new year, is there really anything to complain about? After all, January's over, the days are getting lighter... You can hear spring in the birdsong outside your window... You're back with your friends, all your classes are interesting... Middelburg seems windier and rainier than ever, Corona is more a fact of life than something to get through, and sure, classes are not yet stressful per se, but you know they will eventually be, so what you feel isn't exactly stress, but a sort of preliminary, so to say, prestress, and...

Oh well.

That is to say, we're happy to have you back. We have an exciting semester ahead of us, and just can't wait to see you all.

Happy Spring Semester, everyone!



New Board

As we have written in our last newsletter, our board has changed somewhat over the winter. Two weeks ago, we had our last transition meeting and said goodbye to [Lisa and Emilia](#) - you can find their farewell post on instagram.

But who are taking their places?

We are delighted to announce the new members of the Green Office, [Clara and Julia](#)!

You can expect to meet them at our upcoming events, and a post introducing them is on its way.



Upcoming

As the UCR restarts, so does life at the Green Office. We already have a couple of events to promote, so here it goes:

Next Friday (February 11), the ZB Library is hosting a **Clothing Exchange** as part of its **Circular Economy Week**. You can already donate clothes by leaving them in the boxes outside of the Green Office.



On the same day, UCR, along with HZ and Scalda will join the 16th Warmetruiendag or **Warm Sweater Day**. The idea is to turn off the heating for one day, thus cutting carbon emissions and raising awareness about climate action. You can sign up as a participant on the official [website](#) - and if you send us a picture with your heater off, you can get a head start on your **Ecowarrior**

Points. So grab your favourite oversized sweater and take a day for a cooler world!

And finally, as you all know, over the winter break the Green Office was host to over two hundred plants checked in to our **Plant Hotel**. For those of you who haven't picked up their plants yet, we have a new date: come by the office **this Sunday** (February 6) between 2 and 5 for a tearful reuniting with your babies.



Climate News

Now to the heavy stuff.

We begin with **Chile** where 150 people are working on a **new constitution**, which would include a systemic response to a '**climate and ecological emergency**'. At the centre of the debate is **lithium**, a crucial component of batteries. As the world is trying to move away from fossil fuels, demand for lithium, of which Chile is the second-largest producer in the world, has skyrocketed. However, independent research has found evidence of a correlation between increased lithium mining and droughts in the area. The Constitutional Convention therefore has to answer questions, all nations around the world face: How should mining - which plays a key role in the country's economy and its rise as one of Latin America's richest nation - be regulated? How will the voice of local communities be taken into account? **Should nature and future generations have rights?** And can we mitigate our carbon footprints without damaging nature in another way? Read the full story [here](#).



Moving on to Australia and a [global heritage in danger](#). Last Friday, the [Guardian](#) published an article on coral bleaching at the Great Barrier Reef, citing a report by the U.S. agency National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Noaa). The report found that temperatures over the coral reef this December have been the highest on record, with 'minimum temperatures higher than the previous maximums', possibly leading to a [mass coral bleaching event](#).

On the same day, the Australian government announced a [\\$1 billion pledge](#) to protect and restore the Great Barrier Reef. According to the announcement, this would be the greatest ever investment in this natural wonder, however, conservationists have called it cynical. The degradation of the coral reef has been [linked to the effects of climate change](#), and the current government has done little to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and continues to support fossil fuel projects. Furthermore, its pledge comes just days before it has to hand in a report upon which the Unesco will decide whether or not to place the Great Barrier Reef on its 'in danger' list.

And finally: [judges turning on oil companies](#)? Last Thursday, a U.S. federal court ruled to [cancel oil and gas leases](#) in the Gulf of Mexico, citing climate change. According to the ruling, the Interior Department has acted 'arbitrarily and capriciously' in auctioning over 80 million acres - the largest ever oil and gas lease sale in the U.S. - and had to conduct a new [environmental analysis on the impacts](#) the sale would have.

The decision is among a small, but growing number of cases in which federal

judges call for taking environmental effects into account. However, some caution against putting too much faith into rulings like these: even if environmental analyses are conducted before future oil and gas lease sales, the government can still legally decide to go ahead with the auction. For now, it's the Biden administration's turn to decide whether to appeal - and even if it doesn't, the decision can be attacked by a number of actors; among them are the oil companies who have purchased the leases and who are already citing [geopolitical uncertainties and rising energy prices](#) to argue for further drilling in the Gulf. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

And that's it for today. Have a lovely semester,

Your Eleanor Green Office

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