



NEWSLETTER AUTUMN BREAK

Hey guys,

And just like that, autumn break is here! We hope you're all enjoying it to the fullest - taking long walks in the coloured woods of Zeeland and equally long lie-ins in your rooms; going home for a healthy dose of regression; or discovering new cities with your friends. However you choose to spend your time, we hope it takes you far enough from zooms and moodles - or for that matter, newsletters. :) Still, whenever you decide to open your mailboxes and read this letter, just know: **the Green Office wishes you a wonderful week!**



Special Edition

This week we have prepared a special Fall Break edition for you. Since we don't have any UCR events coming up in the next two weeks, we are instead focusing on **the single most important event of climate action: COP26**. The newsletter will provide you with an outline of the summit, and explain why it is a make-or-break point for our world.

So what is COP26?

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- *First of all, what does COP26 stand for? As per usual, behind the buzzing acronym is something long and borish: the **26th Conference of the Parties**, 'Parties' here meaning the countries that are party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.*

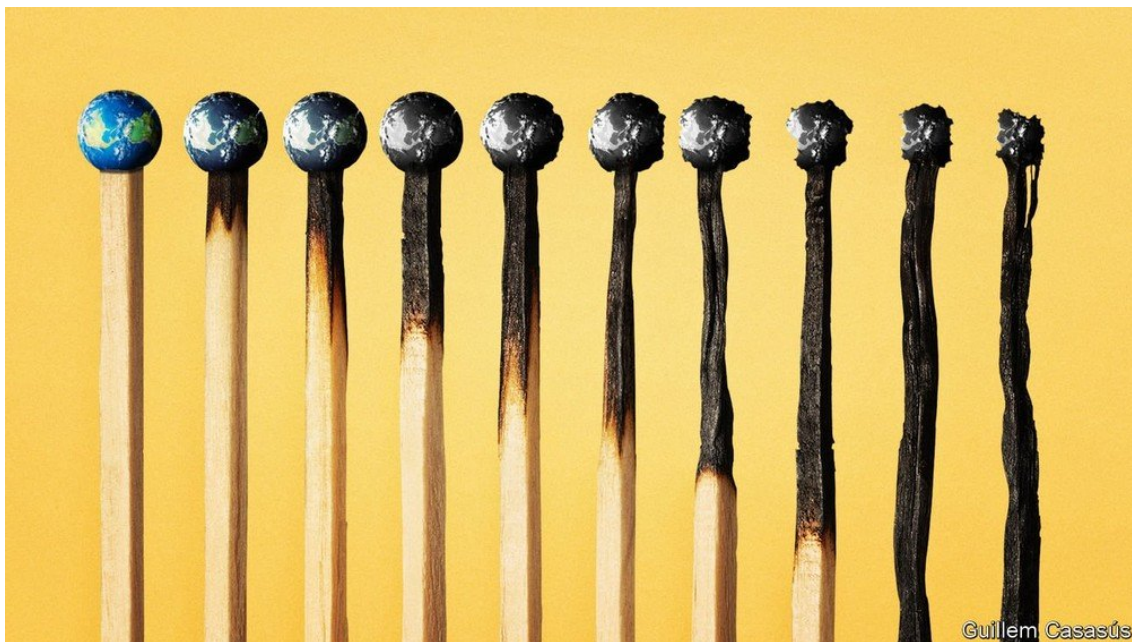
- *Which countries are we talking about?* The UNFCCC was signed by 154 states at the Earth Summit in 1992. The **number of parties is currently 197**, including all member states of the UN, the EU as a supranational union, and some non-UN states.
- *When and where is COP26 taking place?* The summit which was postponed a year because of COVID-19 is held in **Glasgow, UK**. It is scheduled to start on **October 31** (so, next Sunday) and end on **November 12**, however, it is likely to be extended until the end of week 2.



- *The summit is between states, but who's actually taking part?* The COP starts with a **world leaders summit**. This, naturally, draws a lot of publicity, however, it is important to note that the leaders are not the main characters of the story: after the first day they leave Glasgow, handing over the negotiations to representatives, such as **climate ministers**.
- *How does COP26 relate to the Paris agreement?* As you may know, in 2015 countries have signed a treaty, promising to keep global

temperature 'well below' 2°C above pre-industrial levels and 'pursue efforts' to it to 1.5 °C by cutting their emissions. This was the **Paris agreement**. But while the agreement was lauded as a landmark achievement in the fight against climate change, when it came to country-specific roadmaps to cutting emissions, **every country failed to present an adequate goal**. Therefore, a so-called 'ratchet mechanism' was introduced: after the Paris agreement, the parties would be meeting **every 5 years** to revise their plans and signal their continued dedication to the cause. And this is exactly what's happening now.

- *Does 0.5°C really matter?* There is a lot of talk about the difference between 1.5°C and 2°C warming, but does half a degree really matter? Short answer: **yes, it does matter**. A lot. You can check out [this interactive summary](#) of how the future looks like under different degrees of global warming. Furthermore, the current national targets are likely to lead to over 3°C warming, which is a disastrous outlook.



- *So is everything lost?* While global climate action at the moment falls short of fulfilling the Paris agreement, the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) still claimed this summer that 1.5°C is attainable, however, it requires **urgent and drastic action**. And this is where COP26 comes in. At this decisive point in human history, governments are

required to force each other to **face the crisis**, to finally make **adequate resolutions**, and to **live up** to those resolutions once the summit is over.

- *What are key questions of the summit?* Apart from adjusting national goals to cut emissions, there are **three crucial questions** regarding COP26.
 - Firstly, will **China** attend? China is currently by far the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases on the planet - however, at this point it is still not clear whether President Xi will attend the summit.
 - Secondly, what about **poorer countries**? Climate goals often place unequal burden on developing economies, even though they are responsible for only a fraction of global emissions. To solve the problem, it was agreed that financial help would be provided for these countries. However, the targets have not been met in this case either - and developing countries now need reassurances to be able to commit to ambitious plans.
 - Thirdly, can the problem of **carbon trading** be solved? With the scheme of carbon trading (introduced in 1997), countries could trade with their emission allowances. This system was supposed to help cut emissions, and finance poorer countries, however, it has proved to be open to abuse, and inadequate in a world where every country needs to cut their emissions drastically.



What we will do next Week

As members of the Green Office, we have the amazing opportunity to **travel to Glasgow** and be present for the first week of the summit! We will be joining events and protests, speaking to other activists and sharing our experiences. If you'd like to see where we are and what we are doing, just keep an eye on our social media accounts - we will do our best to report back from the field. :)

And that was our special autumn break edition! Thank you for reading, and enjoy your well-deserved break,

Your Eleanor Green Office

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