

Press Release, 5 December 2009

Walking for the Climate: Activists Reach Copenhagen

Greenpeace volunteers end their 2000 kilometre hike to the Climate Summit and meet up with official observers attending the conference

Copenhagen, 5.12.2009 – The Greenpeace activists who had walked 2000 kilometres to the UN Climate Change Conference arrived in Copenhagen today. The volunteers had set out from Constance on 7 September. Their route took them right across Germany, through national parks and ecologically invaluable forest regions. Their campaign was intended to draw attention to the climate change conference well in advance of the event and to call upon the German chancellor to press for a binding and effective agreement in Copenhagen, capable of protecting the world's climate and its ancient forests.

“We have travelled a very long way with a view to stopping climate change and protecting ancient forests. Now Ms Merkel must go even further in Copenhagen, and put seven billion euros on the table to help developing countries prevent climate change,” says Achim Gresser, spokesman for the activists. “As Copenhagen approaches, Merkel must at last adopt the role of a leader and bring the European Union on course for the mitigation of global warming.” So far the EU is prepared to reduce its CO₂ output by 20 percent – compared with 1990 levels. However, the consensus among scientists is that to put a stop to global warming, developed countries will have to reduce their emissions by at least 40 percent by the year 2020.

In Copenhagen, the activists are meeting up with the 30 members of Greenpeace attending the climate summit as official observers. Furthermore, they are due to meet one of the German delegates, and on 12 December the activists will be taking part in a major demonstration being staged by a number of NGOs.

“The route that we took means that, first and foremost, we have brought the general population along to the climate conference with us. We received support from the parliamentary groups of the SPD, Die Linke and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen en route, but also from individual MPs from the CDU/CSU,” says Sarah Heithausen after three months' hiking. Mayors along their route also pledged their support and joined the Alliance of the Mermaids – another appeal to the chancellor to help protect the climate – with their towns and municipalities. In addition, more than 10,000 people wrote letters to the chancellor spelling out their expectations towards the climate conference.

The activists' route took them through Switzerland, Austria and Sweden, but also through the unique beech forests of the Steigerwald National Park, the Kellerwald-Edersee National Park, the Hainich National Park, Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reservation, the Müritz National Park and the Jasmund National Park.

Greenpeace is calling on developed countries to provide developing countries with 110 billion euros a year to help them implement measures to mitigate global warming, and at the same time to put a stop to the destruction of ancient forests in the Amazon region, the Congo Basin and in Indonesia by 2015.

Editors please note: The activists are available for interviews in Copenhagen, please call 0176-93175146. Internet: www.urwaldpostamt.de

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