

Case of the Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland will be the first climate case to be heard in public at the European Court of Human Rights ECtHR

Zurich, 10 February 2023. On 29 March 2023, the case of the Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland will be the first ever climate case to be heard in public before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg. The hearing before the Grand Chamber is an important basis for the decision-making of the 17 judges. The proceedings will clarify for Switzerland, and as a precedent for all Council of Europe states, whether and what human rights obligations exist to mitigate climate change.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has published an overview (in [English](#) and [French](#)) of the three climate cases pending before the Court that will be heard in public by the Grand Chamber. The first case will be the Swiss climate case "Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz and Others v. Switzerland" (no. 53600/20) on Wednesday, 29 March 2023, from 9:15 to approx. 11:30.

The Court also recently published [a press release](#) on the status of other climate change cases before the ECtHR.

The hearing before the European Court of Human Rights, chaired by the President of the Grand Chamber, [Siofra O'Leary](#), is open to the public. Information on access for media professionals and the interested public can be found under [this link](#).

[All relevant documents](#) submitted by both parties as well as by third parties to the Grand Chamber for the proceedings are available on the website of the Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland:

- Submission of the Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland ([Observations on the facts, admissibility and the merits](#))
- Submission of the Swiss Government (statement in [French](#) (original) and [English](#) (unofficial translation) - as well as statement on the facts in [French](#) (original) and [English](#) (unofficial translation))
- [Third party interventions](#) by 23 third parties.

Media briefing

On Tuesday, 7 March 2023, at 2pm, the Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland, their legal team and Greenpeace Switzerland will hold a media briefing - online, in German and French. The official invitation including further information will follow.

Background to the complaint against Switzerland

In November 2020, the Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland and four individual plaintiffs filed a complaint with the ECtHR against Switzerland for not doing enough to curb catastrophic climate change. In 2017, the Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) did not respond to a corresponding request for an end to Switzerland's failures to act on climate protection. This decision was later upheld by both the Federal Administrative Court and the Federal Supreme Court.

The final judgement of the ECtHR can have far-reaching consequences, not only in Europe but worldwide, as it can create an important benchmark regarding the human rights obligations of states in connection with climate change.

Climate change is leading to more frequent and intense heat extremes that directly threaten older women's right to life and health. Of all climate change-related deaths, heat-related mortality is by far the most common cause of death in Europe among people over the age of 65. From 1991 to 2018, for example, around 30 percent of heat-related deaths in Switzerland could be attributed to climate change (see [Observations on the facts, admissibility and the merits](#), page 3 ff). What is particularly fatal in this context is the fact that mortality increases exponentially with rising temperatures.

Given the urgent need for action to mitigate risk, the Senior Women for Climate Protection ask the Court to order Switzerland urgently to adopt legislative and administrative measures to do its share to prevent a global temperature increase of more than 1.5°C, including concrete emission reduction targets (see [Requests to the Court](#)). Likewise, emissions generated abroad, which are primarily due to our consumption, must be reduced and avoided. Furthermore, the Swiss financial centre should be regulated in such a way that substantially fewer climate-damaging financial transactions can be processed through it.

Contacts

- Cordelia Bähr, Lawyer of Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland: baehr@ettwein.ch, +41 78 801 70 34
- Rosmarie Wydler-Wälti, co-president of Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland: 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, +41 79 249 72 17 (for interviews in French)
- Pia Hollenstein, member of the board of Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland: mail@piahollenstein.ch, +41 79 740 04 50 (for interviews in English)
- Norma Bargetzi, member of the board of Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland: 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, +41 79 785 07 38