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Massive demonstration in Switzerland: To the streets to defend the climate More than 60 thousand people overflow the Swiss capital

Three Climate Strike activists explained in unison that "we are often told that the aspirations we have to change this system are completely unrealistic and that change is impossible." However, they note, humanity has never had to face a challenge of the magnitude of climate change.



Saturday, September 30, was climate defense time. Only two weeks after a massive union mobilization that on September 16 demanded an increase in wages and decent pensions. Swiss society is angry, protesting and demanding social and climate justice.

More than 60,000 protesters flooded the streets of the Swiss capital to demand that the authorities swiftly implement measures for real climate justice. The Swiss Climate

Alliance, the main organizer of the demonstration, confirmed that figure, which exceeded the most optimistic previous expectations.



The earth suffers, the Alps transpire, global warming destroys the planet. Photo Segio Ferrari

The Alliance brings together more than a hundred organizations of very diverse profiles and identities but that find in the fight against global warming and the demand for climate justice the point of consensus and common action.

A society that makes the "climate drama" its own

The Alps perspire and fade. The study of a commission of the Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences that was just published last Thursday further triggered media alarms. This study reveals that in the last two years the Swiss glaciers have lost 10% of their volume, a loss similar to that suffered in 30 years, between 1960 and 1990.



The Alps perspire. Swiss glaciers have lost 10% of their volume in the last two years. The same figure as in 30 years, between 1960 and 1990. Photo Sergio Ferrari

This Saturday's demonstration, one of the largest in recent years, was held in terms of diversity. Young people predominated, although there was no lack of adults, the elderly and children. The presence of women was significant (and perhaps majority), however, there was no lack of men of different generations. The LGBTQ+ movement was also actively present.

In the kilometer and a half of the tour through the streets of the capital, members and militants of environmental, religious, solidarity with the South organizations, trade unions, progressive political forces, extra-parliamentary political organizations, as well as NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) that work in favor of the environment, human rights and development cooperation met. The participation of sectors of citizens not necessarily enrolled in specific organizations was also notorious.



Planet above economic profits. Photo Sergio Ferrari

In a press release the Swiss Climate Alliance expresses its satisfaction and underlines that "anger at the lack of action on climate policy and the devastating and deadly consequences of the climate crisis ... It has mobilized groups of all ages and from all walks of life. From religious communities to climate activists in the South, everyone came together to demand an end to the destruction of the environment – the result of an exploitative economic model – and that the Paris climate goals are finally respected."

Denounce the political class

The Alliance also underlines the "total failure this week" of the Council of States (Chamber of Senators) in terms of the revision of the CO2 Law. According to the senators, less than half of the outstanding greenhouse gas emission reductions will have to be made in Switzerland. Most of it will be achieved by buying "certificates" (or rights to pollute) abroad, applying the compensation system already widely criticized and delegitimized by environmental experts, scientists and representatives of international NGOs. In view of the upcoming legislative elections to be held on October 22, the Alliance insists that it is necessary "a Parliament that takes the climate crisis seriously."

The massive demonstration concluded in the capital's Federal Square, which is located in front of the seat of Parliament. Speakers from various sectors described the dramatic climate situation, Switzerland's co-responsibility for global warming and the inertia of its authorities.



Unity in diversity for the climate. Photo Sergio Ferrari

Three Climate Strike activists explained in unison that "we are often told that the aspirations we have to change this system are completely unrealistic and that change is impossible." However, they note, humanity has never had to face a challenge of the magnitude of climate change. "All human responses and reactions are possible to a problem that is literally existential" for peoples. "There is still hope," they concluded.

Sergio Ferrari, from Bern, Switzerland, for La Pluma, September 30, 2023

Edited by [María Piedad Ossaba](#)

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