

Newsletter October 2026

Final sprint – on the home straight towards the International Environmental Council!



Dear friends,

It's just a few days away now, and we're looking forward to seeing you at the International Environmental Conference from 23–25 October in Stuttgart, Germany. From Friday to Sunday, we're in for a fantastic programme, kicking off on Friday with an opening rally and an introductory evening for the many international participants. On Saturday evening, there'll be a fantastic cultural festival. A DJ from Peru will be spinning records, whilst a Turkish dance group, a choir and many other artists will create an international atmosphere and foster solidarity across borders. A potluck buffet will provide culinary delights. A tip: when you come, why not introduce the participants to your favourite dish and bring along something tasty!

The core of the conference will consist of lectures, keynote speeches and discussions organised into three thematic blocks on Saturday and Sunday. The first block will focus on the threat to our way of life posed by the escalating global environmental crisis, wars and fascism. How can we ward off the consequences of the environmental catastrophe? What concrete solutions are there? What experiences have we gained in fighting back against the attacks by international corporations and governments on the environment and our living conditions? Finally, in the third block, we want to discuss the possibilities, forms and goals of a socially transformative environmental struggle. And we must agree on how and in what ways we wish to continue working together internationally.

The environmental consultation will conclude on Sunday afternoon with a press conference. The invitation is attached.

The large number of international participants – whether attending in person or online – shows just how pressing the environmental issue is for people all over the world. We will hear from fishermen from Peru, whose livelihoods are threatened by the drastic intensification of the El Niño weather phenomenon. Miners from Africa will report on the overexploitation of natural resources and the impact on workers' health, and a professor from Nepal will speak about the causes and devastating

consequences of the rock and glacier collapse in Nepal, which claimed over 7,000 lives and caused immense destruction of material assets.

So far, around 150 people have registered to attend in person, but we still have room for many more. So, make up your minds and come to Stuttgart! The isolationist policies of 'Fortress Europe' and the German government's reactionary immigration policy have made it difficult, if not impossible, for many foreign participants to obtain a visa to enter Germany. They and their German partner groups have fought tenaciously for every permit, but some have also been thwarted by bureaucracy and barriers. We protest vigorously against this! For those who cannot or do not wish to travel, we recommend taking part online. Please register!

You can find all the information you need about the programme and registration on our website: <https://umweltstrategiekonferenz.org/>

Without the fantastic support of numerous volunteers from many countries, it would have been impossible for us, as the coordinating group, to make all the preparations so far and, hopefully, to make the Environmental Council a great success. We would like to express our thanks to them all right now.

Story from a letter to the editor

The governments of France and Germany have just decided to water down the EU's planned 2035 ban on internal combustion engines in passenger cars. With deliberate intent and in the interests of the automotive industry's profits, they are steering us further towards an environmental catastrophe.

The VW Group is planning to cut up to 100,000 jobs, whilst Mercedes intends to relocate its plants to Eastern Europe and retain only small, skeleton operations in Germany. Alternatively, automotive workers are to be put to work in arms production.

We stand in solidarity with the struggle of those employed in the automotive industry to defend every job. If employment in the automotive sector is curtailed, the alternative is not war production, but the improvement and expansion of local and long-distance public transport on a zero-emission basis.

And now, following this foreword, the main topic: three letters to the editor in the *Gäubote*, a small newspaper in southern Germany, provide a good reflection of the debate and the differing viewpoints amongst automotive workers. The three letters to the editor can be found in Appendix 2.

Brief description of international participants

We present the numerous international participants in Appendix 3.

Directions to the rally and environmental advice

Address for environmental advice: ABZ Guest House, Stuttgart, Bruckwiesenweg 10, 70327 Stuttgart, Germany

Directions by public transport:

From Stuttgart Central Station, take the S-Bahn line S1 towards Plochingen (3 stops) to the Bahnhof Untertürkheim stop; from there, it is about a 5-minute walk along the railway embankment; the red house can be seen from Karl-Benz-Platz.

From the ABZ to Stuttgart city centre, rally venue Schlossplatz:

Head back to Untertürkheim station, take line 1 towards Böblingen to the Hauptbahnhof stop. From there, walk up Königstraße to Schlossplatz. The rally is in front of the Commerzbank.

Should the S-Bahn be out of service, we recommend taking tram line U4 from the main station to the terminus at Untertürkheim station. From there, follow the same route as for the S-Bahn. The tram journey takes a little longer.

Travelling by car:

Take the B10/B14 to the Untertürkheim exit, then turn onto Bruckwiesenweg. Look for parking spaces there straight away, or try Albert-Dulk-Weg. (You're more likely to find a space there at the weekend)

We advise against driving into Stuttgart city centre. Firstly, there are many road-works, and the car parks around Schlossplatz are expensive and usually full on Friday evenings.

Invitation to the press conference

To mark the conclusion of our environmental consultation, a press conference will take place on Sunday 25 October at 5.00 pm at the Arbeiterbildungszentrum. We have attached the invitation to this as Appendix 1. Please also use this invitation to promote the event in your home towns!

Appendix 1

Internationaler Umweltratschlag IEC 2026 International Environmental Council IEC 2026

Co-ordinating Group

Website <https://umweltstrategiekonferenz.org/>

Email post@umweltstrategiekonferenz.org

Berlin, 19 October 2026



Invitation to a press conference

Environmental emergency! It's high time to take action!

To mark **the conclusion of the 2026 International Environmental Council, taking place from 23 to 25 October 2026 in Stuttgart** at the Arbeiterbildungszentrum Süd, Bruckwiesenweg 10, 70327 Stuttgart-Untertürkheim, the spokespersons of the Coordination Group will hold a **press conference at 5.00 pm**. We warmly invite you to attend, either in person or online.

People from around 30 countries across four continents – both in person and online – will be taking part in the Environmental Council. Environmental activists from all walks of life will be represented, including Peruvian fishermen, miners from the Congo, automotive workers from Germany, and local politicians from

Yemen, Mauritania and the Aartal region in Germany, trade unionists from Brazil and many more people from their respective communities across Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe.

We will exchange views on the consequences and impacts of the global climate catastrophe in our respective countries and regions. We intend to discuss experiences in the struggle against the consequences and impacts of the worsening environmental crisis, as well as measures to address these consequences. And we will hold a discussion on ways to wage a socially transformative environmental struggle, as we believe that this social order, which is driven solely by profit, offers no future for humanity or nature.

Further information on the International Environmental Council can be found on our website: <https://umweltstrategiekonferenz.org/>

The links to the online stream of the press conference are:

<https://eu01web.zoom.us/j/61351304835?pwd=cyUFbKbvXtSyV5nRZf0DxDGdOYyZQN.1>

and mobile speed dial

+496950500952,,61351304835#,,, *437264# Germany

We look forward to seeing you there!

On behalf of the speakers' group, Mirjam Gärtner and Matthias Müller

Responsible under press law: Umweltgewerkschaft e.V., Bremerstr. 42, 10551 Berlin

Appendix 2

Excerpt from a letter to the editor

1

“We need a new form of socialism”

Re: Demonstrations by workers in the automotive and supplier industries.

The 22 September edition of the ‘Gäubote’ featured three articles on the rallies held by workers in the automotive and supplier industries in conjunction with the IGM. It is difficult to assess everything here. However, fundamentally different opinions are evident, and

here is my take on the matter as an IGM member for 56 years, having always been employed by Mercedes.

Regarding Matthias Schiermeyer’s commentary: he writes that the IGM “finds itself very

forced onto the defensive”, and *that those in the boardrooms hold the upper hand. IG Metall is walking a fine line*. In this, I see a mindset on the part of the author that portrays our colleagues as the guilty parties and scapegoats, whilst the millionaire board members are in the right. He is vastly mistaken.

I, too, took part in rallies at Mercedes – not out of desperation or even weakness, but because there is a powerful and strong workers’ and trade union movement that is now taking proactive action against capitalism. Those at the top need us, but we do not need them. And this capitalist system is historically past its sell-by date.

In the *Gäubote* article ‘175,000 employees mobilised’, this strength is confirmed on page 9, and a key statement from the VDA (German Association of the Automotive Industry) reads: production in Germany ‘is not a law of nature’. And I believe that this economic and political system is not a law of nature. We need a new form of socialism; a system in which we fight for a just world in harmony with people, nature and work.

Why do I think this? Because I use my head, think for myself and act accordingly. The way of thinking, one’s own convictions and one’s actions – that is a law of nature. Which side are you on: with the monopolies and job destroyers, or with the labour and trade union movement? The latest ‘Gäubote’ article on page 22 (‘Don’t just offload the burden onto employees’) gets it right in its very first sentence: ‘Ready to strike, permanent employment instead of relocations’ – that was one of the demands at Monday’s rally. **K.-J. H., G.**

2

'In the past, our cars sold even without a purchase incentive'

Re: Letter to the editor 'We need a new socialism' by K.-J. H.,
'Gäubote' of 25 September.

When workers demonstrate for their jobs today, is capitalism, of all things, to blame? For years, politicians and the EU have been intervening in the car market. Stricter CO₂ fleet targets are pushing manufacturers towards electric powertrains, whilst the state subsidises their purchase with taxpayers' money. Why does a car need to be subsidised at all?

In the past, our cars sold well even without a purchase incentive. Expensive energy, high taxes and ever-changing regulations are driving up production costs even further. , they must be able to decide for themselves what to build and where to produce it economically.

If buyers stay away, it affects factories, suppliers and workers. The problem extends

far beyond the car industry: for me, this loss of industrial jobs is part of Germany's creeping deindustrialisation.

Politicians bear a significant share of the blame for this. And where were the trade unions

when this course was set? Fighting for decent wages is the right thing to do. But did they warn of job losses early enough? IG Metall has explicitly supported the shift towards electric mobility and new purchase incentives. The author of the letter to the editor writes that he has been employed by Mercedes for 56 years. That is precisely why I cannot understand his call for a 'new socialism'. At Daimler, I have seen the prosperity that the social market economy has created.

To call for even more state intervention after years of political interference is the last straw. We need affordable production and the freedom to build and buy the cars that are in demand. **E. K., K.**

3

"Things are likely to get even worse"

Re: Letter to the editor 'Our cars used to sell even without a purchase incentive' by E. K., 'Gäubote', 28 September.

Mr K. responds to the letter to the editor from K.-J. H., who is calling for a new form of socialism in light of developments in the automotive industry. Neither of them,

however, bases their arguments on the actual facts. The need for the automotive industry to transform and the demand for clean propulsion have been clear since the 1980s. Mercedes has therefore been working on fuel cells, which, however, were not economical enough in operation and were consequently not introduced. One may lament the fact that the German automotive industry is reacting far too late to the challenges of climate policy, but this does not call for a new form of socialism. The trade unions, too, are well aware of global trends and the changes that will be necessary. Yet they, too, are sticking to 'business as usual', even though it is now clear that the era of e-mobility has begun.

Either you're on board, or you'll end up on the sidelines. *When* Mr K. *criticises* politicians for *being* 'destroyers' and singles out the EU in particular for its climate targets, he is completely wrong.

He should rather be turning his criticism towards the governments of the Merkel era, which endorsed and subsidised the economy's 'business as usual' approach, rather than setting out and demanding what the future holds, namely climate neutrality.

Neither the car industry nor politicians nor the trade unions can claim they knew nothing about developments in China. They simply failed to react and remained stuck in the 'success trap'. Incidentally, they also ignored the fact that burning coal, oil and gas damages the climate – something that has been known since the 1970s.

Anyone who still clings to this view today must be recognised as committing a rather serious environmental crime, one that is increasingly undermining the conditions necessary for human life and causing enormous damage through heatwaves and floods. However, one must suspect that even today, politics, business and indeed our society are acting according to the motto: 'Change is so difficult, a little crime is surely acceptable.' It won't be that bad, after all. However, if we carry on like this, things will probably get even worse. **R. E., G.**

Appendix 3

Brief description of international participants

Pakistan – CCP Muhamad

“Our organisation, the CCP, is actively engaged in grassroots political work amongst workers, farmers and students, promoting solidarity amongst workers, political education and mobilisation against imperialism. We represent working-class students, workers, young people and trade unions, and our efforts are aimed at strengthening class consciousness, resisting imperialist domination and contributing to the broader struggle for social and economic justice.”

Yemen – Irtefa

Amin Ahmed Salam is a Yemeni environmental activist and chair of the organisation ‘Al-Irtifa’a for the Environment and Humanitarian Development’. As deputy head of the Clean-up Fund and general secretary of the Environmental Workers’ Union, she works under extreme conditions (war, climate change, the situation facing women). She wishes to report on the disaster at the rubbish tip in besieged Taiz, which is poisoning the groundwater and has led to mass displacement.

International Miners’ Conference

The International Miners’ Conference (IMC) regards environmental issues and the struggle to preserve nature as inextricably linked to miners’ labour struggles and actively campaigns for an alliance under the slogan ‘Miners and environmental activists together!’. It is not the miners who are responsible for environmental destruction caused by mining, but international mining corporations which engage in profit-driven, destructive exploitation of people and nature. They are represented by miners from the Congo, Peru, Colombia, Kazakhstan and India (exact numbers to be confirmed).

Uganda – Climate activist – Patience

Patience is a leading activist from Uganda campaigning for environmental and climate protection, against the ‘East African Crude Oil Pipeline’, and for human rights, particularly women’s rights in Uganda. We met her in Baku at COP29 in 2024. She is active in several international campaigns.

Togo – ONG DYVOSO – Samuel

ONG DYVOSO (Organisation Non Gouvernementale Dynamique des Volontaires Sociaux) from Togo. It is a combination of an environmental initiative and an educational initiative. Their activities include: recycling paper into school furniture, reforestation and raising awareness about reforestation, sustainable agriculture, food security, tutoring and homework support, and organising ‘Camps Chantier’, where young people from all over the world work alongside local communities to organise environmental protection and educational initiatives. Samuel is a member of the coordination group.

Nigeria – GECCI – Abdulhamid Tahir Amid

GECCI works to combat climate change by restoring ecosystems, empowering young people and women, promoting environmental education and driving forward initiatives for sustainable livelihoods. Activities include tree-planting campaigns, waste management programmes, the promotion of climate policy measures and community-based nature conservation across Nigeria.

Malawi – Movement for Environmental Action – Mathews Malata

The Malawian non-governmental organisation Movement for Environmental Action (MEA) is primarily dedicated to practical environmental protection, political advocacy and community mobilisation, landscape restoration campaigns, policy position papers, the ‘Green Schools Green Initiative’ and broader environmental protection campaigns. In particular, the MEA recently submitted a petition for climate justice to the Malawian Parliament in collaboration with other local organisations, including the ‘Clean Cities Project’. Tree-planting campaigns, waste clearance and protest marches (Climate Justice March).

Uganda – Joseph Masembe – Little Hands Go Green

Little Hands Go Green in Uganda is the largest children’s environmental movement in East Africa. Joseph is a lawyer, environmental activist and the organisation’s founder. Raising awareness and children’s activities. Tree-planting and orchard campaigns: a key focus is on planting mainly fruit trees in schools and residential areas. The movement is active in several countries and organises cross-border initiatives (Germany – Uganda).

Peru – Canto Vivo – Javier

Canto Vivo was founded back in 1994 and has been collaborating with the environmental trade union for many years. It is known for combining tree-planting with the promotion of small-scale farming. Canto Vivo carries out ‘ ‘ educational work and

awareness-raising. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they organised ‘Gardens of Solidarity’ to help ensure food supplies.

Venezuela – National Eco-Socialist Front for Life (FRENESVI) – Jose Manuel Perez Hurtado

The Eco-Socialist Movement calls for social change in Venezuela that prioritises the well-being of people and nature over economic profits. Nature should no longer be regarded merely as a resource or property. They campaign for the protection of the rainforest and the indigenous population, and oppose the ‘Arco Minero’ project, a special economic zone for mining corporations. “The Caura National Park is a success story for the Venezuelan environmental movement” (the third-largest national park in the world).

USA – Wisdom Keepers – Summer Joy Gonzalez

6 per cent of the world’s population are members of indigenous peoples. They are particularly affected by poverty and environmental destruction. Yet they are often at the forefront of the fight for the environment. They protect around 80 per cent of the world’s remaining biodiversity within their territories. Nature should no longer be viewed merely as a resource or a possession; instead, humankind should live in harmony with nature. A key concern, alongside environmental protection, is to revive the deeper spiritual connection between humankind and nature, which has been destroyed by the modern way of life.

Chile – El Canelo de Nos – Alejandro Salinas

Their aim is to build a sustainable, democratic, just and healthy society in harmony with nature. They carry out educational work, promote organic farming methods and solar technology such as solar ovens, and run their own radio station.

Turkey – Poland Ecology Collective

The Poland Ecology Collective (Polen Ekoloji Kolektifi) is a Marxist-ecological organisation and movement founded in 2019. The network regards the struggle for environmental protection as an inseparable part of the struggle against capitalism and for social liberation. They run campaigns against the exploitation of gold miners, against environmentally damaging opencast mining, and in favour of food sovereignty.

France – Pass Net Zero – Claude Martinet

Pass Net Zero (PNZ) is an environmental NGO registered in France which, in collaboration with universities in the region, is committed to developing nature-based solutions for carbon sequestration, biological remediation, and the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to its consequences in southern Africa. Its work focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, securing access to emission allowances, and training the next generation of environmental scientists through master's and PhD scholarships. Key partners include universities in Malawi, Botswana and Namibia.

Sweden – Växjös Gnista newspaper

The magazine Växjös Gnista deals extensively with the global environmental and climate crisis and sees a socialist perspective as the solution. It publishes reports on the Swedish and international environmental movements.

Cyprus – Union of Cypriots – Eran

The Union of Cypriots advocates an end to all foreign military presence and a united, democratic Cyprus free from all forms of imperialism. The movement takes the view that nature knows no political or military boundaries. It calls on the authorities on both sides to work together as one island in the face of acute environmental crises.

Portugal – Climáximo – Daniela

Climáximo is a collective for climate justice and anti-capitalism based in Lisbon, Portugal. They view climate policy and its consequences as a *“one-sided war waged by governments and corporations against humanity”*. They carry out acts of civil disobedience such as road blockades, protests and other disruptive actions. Climáximo sees civil disobedience as the lever to destabilise the system.

Brazil – CSP-Conlutas

Conlutas is a militant Brazilian trade union with approximately 2 million members, primarily based in the São Paulo region. It is highly militant and strives for a socialist society. For CSP-Conlutas, the protection of the Amazon and the fight against climate change are inextricably linked to the expropriation of large corporations and large landowners. Their slogan is, in essence: *‘There is no green survival under capitalism – the alternative is eco-socialism or barbarism.’* The trade union calls for a transformation of industry towards sustainable jobs, without this being carried out at the expense of workers.

Turkey – South-East Turkey Environmental Platform – Recep

Recep writes: “I have documented the resistance against the Ilisu Dam, which flooded the ancient city of Hasankeyf, in a book entitled ‘The Fairies of Hasankeyf’ (Hasankeyf Perileri). In it, I particularly highlight the important role played by women in this resistance. I will be taking part in this event to report on how we were able to strengthen our resistance by building an international solidarity network, what challenges and obstacles we had to overcome, and what lessons we learnt in the process.”

Sri Lanka – Frontline Socialist Party Sri Lanka – Lahiru Weerasekara

Due to the catastrophic changes in monsoon rains and cyclones, Sri Lanka is one of the hardest-hit countries in the world. The frequency of severe flooding has doubled over the last 20 years. At the same time, there are catastrophic droughts. Added to this are destructive large-scale projects. One major project was prevented in 2025 through mass protests. The FLSP organises the environmental struggle in Sri Lanka with the aim of achieving socialism. It is active in organising mass protests, citizens’ councils, and aid and solidarity networks.

Mali – CGLTE-OA – Massa Kone

We know Massa Kone from Baku and Belém. CGLTE-OA: He is the official spokesperson for the Global Alliance for the Struggle for Land, Water and Peasant Seeds in West Africa. The Global Alliance for the Struggle for Land, Water and Peasant Seeds in West Africa – CGLTE-OA – is represented in 16 West African countries. The alliance campaigns for land and water rights, farmers’ self-determination, seed sovereignty, climate justice and social justice. It is the organiser of the 2026 World Social Forum. The event was held under the global slogan ‘Another World is Possible’. The meeting went ahead successfully despite attempts by the Malian government to prevent it. The resolution makes it clear that ‘Another World is Possible’. Resistance is being organised against the EU’s ‘greenwashed’ plundering of West Africa’s natural resources and to protect farmers’ seeds from international corporations. One form of protest is the climate caravans.

Mauritania – Councillor – Rouguyatou

A councillor for the municipality of Sebkha in Nouakchott, who campaigns for the promotion of sustainable waste management, raising public awareness of environmental issues and supporting local environmental protection initiatives, particularly in the areas of wastewater management, combating pollution and adapting to climate change.

Afghanistan – Spontaneous Movement of Afghan Women (SMAW)

80 per cent of households in Afghanistan depend on agriculture. When droughts destroy the harvests, poor families are forced to sell their daughters into early marriage in exchange for a dowry or to put their children to work in hazardous conditions instead of sending them to school. Women, who are primarily responsible for collecting water and fuel, now walk for up to six hours a day across barren land, exposing themselves to violence and exhaustion, just to find a muddy puddle. The environmental crisis is not gender-neutral. Afghan women are a shining example of refusing to be subjugated. They write: “The fight for climate justice must not be separated from peace and women’s rights! This conference will therefore be an opportunity for marginalised Afghan women to raise their voices on the international stage and defend their rights under the misogynistic Taliban regime.”