

JUNE NEWSLETTER

This month's newsletter brings you three stories where youth-led environmental action intersects with the European Green Deal and the UN 2030 Agenda. From award-winning journalism in Slovenia to climate-resilient classrooms in Spain, and circular economy inspiration in Serbia – these examples show how local efforts are helping shape a sustainable Europe.

MONTHLY DIGEST



Source: Canva

Slovenian youth reporters win big with stories that matter

This year's Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) competition once again spotlighted the power of youth journalism – and Slovenian students stood at the top of the podium, winning two major international awards.

First place in photo story (ages 15–18):

“From Waste to Paper”

By: Students from Srednja trgovinska i aranžerska šola Ljubljana

This project documents the transformation of discarded materials into new, aesthetic forms of paper – not only showcasing practical recycling techniques but also sending a powerful educational message about sustainable design. Through compelling imagery, the students captured the beauty of resource recovery, demonstrating that waste is not the end of a product's life, but the beginning of something new.

First place in article writing:

“Hitting the Brakes on Fossil Fuels”

By: Students from Šolski center Celje – Srednja šola za gradbeništvo in varovanje okolja

This cross-border collaboration with peers from Turkey, Germany, and Spain produced a strong piece on the global transition away from fossil fuels. The article combined data, case studies, and local insights into a well-structured narrative that called for international unity in environmental action. Their teamwork highlighted one of the central messages of the European Green Deal: no one can solve the climate crisis alone.

These achievements are part of a broader Slovenian commitment to youth environmental education, coordinated by the Eco-Schools program under the Foundation for Environmental Education. The results show how young voices – when supported and heard – can influence public awareness, policy, and behavior.

In Spain, sustainability becomes a daily habit at schools

Across Spain, sustainability is no longer just a school subject – it's becoming a way of life. A series of local projects shows how students, teachers, and communities are making climate action part of their everyday environment.

Greener, cooler, fairer school yards

Solar Energy in Vallecas

In Vallecas, Madrid, one of the city's most climate-vulnerable neighborhoods, parent cooperatives have taken the lead by installing solar panels on school rooftops. Their initiative:

In several Spanish regions, schools are redesigning their schoolyards into “natural patios”: spaces with trees, shaded areas, and edible gardens. These redesigned areas are not only reducing urban heat but also improving inclusion, learning outcomes, and biodiversity – directly linking environmental and social sustainability.



Source: Canva

- Helps classrooms stay cooler during extreme heatwaves.
- Reduces energy bills for already under-resourced schools.
- Shows children how clean energy works in real time.

The Largest Photovoltaic Park in the Basque Country

In another major development, the Basque region has approved what will be Spain’s largest solar power plant, with over 231,000 panels and a total capacity of 125.9 MW. Once operational, it will power tens of thousands of homes and generate new opportunities in the green economy – training technicians, attracting investment, and helping Spain meet its renewable energy targets under REPowerEU.

These school- and region-level actions exemplify how climate resilience, education, and innovation are advancing the EU Green Deal and UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 7, 11, 13).

Source: El Español – Enclave ODS & Invertia



Source: Canva

From Brussels to Niš – How EU Green Week sparked local action in Serbia

Held between 3–5 June, the EU Green Week 2025 in Brussels highlighted the theme: “Circular Solutions for a Competitive EU”.

This annual flagship event brought together policymakers, researchers, young people, and innovators to discuss how circular economy models can transform European industries, reduce environmental footprints, and create meaningful green jobs.

While Brussels hosted policy forums and exhibitions, the Green Week message resonated far beyond EU institutions – including in Serbia.

Ecologic Expo Niš: A Serbian platform organizations dealing with environmental sustainability

In Serbia, the city of Niš hosted the Ecologic Expo, an event showcasing sustainability-focused companies, solutions providers, and municipal actors. While the event wasn't primarily youth-focused, it offered an important platform for:

- **Green tech companies demonstrating energy-efficient solutions, recycling systems, and sustainable packaging innovations.**
- **Municipal utility services and universities sharing practices related to water purification, waste management, and urban greenery.**
- **Cross-sector networking between business leaders, environmental professionals, and government representatives interested in aligning Serbia with EU Green Deal targets.**

Although direct youth engagement was limited, the Expo served as an example of how EU-level environmental priorities – such as circular economy, carbon reduction, and sustainable innovation – are finding traction in Serbia.

This alignment is key for countries in the EU accession process, as it helps translate Brussels policies into practical, local action and offers opportunities for young professionals, students, and green entrepreneurs to get involved in shaping the ecological future of their communities.

What's Next?

As the summer progresses, we'll be keeping an eye on:

- **National Youth Climate Labs being launched in several EU countries.**
- **A new round of calls for the 2026 Young Reporters for the Environment contest.**

- The role of youth at the UN Climate Summit (COP30) preparations. You can contribute too – by reporting on your own environmental actions, starting a green project at your school, or simply by staying informed and getting involved.
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If you have come this far means that you are really interested in these topics, if you wish to contribute to our coverage, don't hesitate to contact us at team@greenovate.online

Best regards,

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