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Discussion

Proposer: Green Youth of Serbia (decided on: 17.11.2026)

Title: **One Basin, Many Borders: Geopolitics and Environmental Justice**

Environmental challenges do not stop at national borders. Rivers, forests and ecosystems connect countries and communities across the region, while political decisions, economic interests and regulatory frameworks often remain divided along national lines. Effective environmental protection therefore requires cross-border cooperation, transparent decision-making and accountability from both public and private actors.

At the same time, international investment and geopolitical competition increasingly shape the region's environmental and economic landscape. Investments from different global actors, including China, the European Union and Gulf countries, can have significant implications for environmental standards, public oversight and the distribution of economic benefits and ecological risks.

Environmental harm also affects communities unequally. Rural populations, low-income households and marginalised groups often face greater exposure to pollution and environmental degradation, while having fewer resources to protect their interests or influence decisions.

This session will examine the relationship between geopolitics, cross-border environmental governance and social justice. Participants will explore the conditions needed to ensure responsible investment and effective regional cooperation, while identifying ways to make environmental policies more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the communities most affected.