



## ***GLAP IX: Hiking for Climate***

July 2020

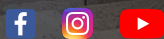
Epirus, Greece

Conferences | Hiking | Networking | Natural Distancing

5 Days - 3 Thematics - 5 Hikes

### **The Global Land Paths IX 2020**

Invites actors beyond borders to an active, interactive, 5-day Conference about bottom-up Climate Action!





## **Foreword**

The year 2020 kicked off with Climate Action being at the top of the agenda across local, national and international political scenes all around the globe. The sudden emergency of CoVid-19 pandemic, however, froze many significant efforts to fight climate change and its tremendous impacts. During the past year, CoVid-19 has made its way to replace the headlines in the news, the agendas in parliaments, conferences and boards, while national lockdowns constrained meaningful actions on-the-ground. The limitations imposed by the pandemic on an international conference such as the Global Land Paths that is organized every year on the mountains of Greece, almost jeopardized the overall organization of GLAP's 9th edition.

As organizers of GLAP IX, we carefully reviewed practicalities and restraints as resulted by Greece's national safety directions and by the lockdown

measures of the countries where attendees and speakers would come from. In an effort to avoid cancelling the conference, we became inventive working with the new realities. In the end, we dealt with the calculated difficulties and we proudly materialized GLAP IX: Hiking for Climate.

The GLAP IX: Hiking for Climate evolved towards a different direction than how it did in the past years. Most of the speeches were transferred into the virtual space, and for the attendees and speakers that joined physically a lot of outdoor activities like hiking, rafting, outdoor yoga and meditation sessions were incorporated into the programme. The "natural distancing" in conferencing –a newly introduced term by the director of Land Beyond, Mr. Nicos Yiannis– was broadly used. Additionally, our partner "Evropaiki Ekfrasi" granted three students from refugee centers and one from a general high-school to follow the full programme of the GLAP IX conference.

Initially the pandemic was regarded as a command that separated people from people and from their goals. However, eventually CoVid-19 served all of us an opportunity to work together in new ways for the benefit of humanity. This is a great lesson of solidarity and altruism for everyone, which actually are the most important elements for effective climate action in the future.

**Fani Tsaroucha**  
Youth Climate Ambassador  
GLAP coordinator

## **GLAP IX: Hiking for Climate**

*Climate Action. From individual and local to governmental and global*

During the proceedings of the 9th annual Global Land Paths conference, people from many places around the world gathered –most of them virtually– in the facilities of the Land Beyond, in Vitsa, Greece to discuss multilayered Climate Action. The GLAP IX formed a conference community of people across different generations, backgrounds, professional sectors, and countries. Particularly, there was presence from Greece, Italy, Paraguay-Brazil, Ghana, Afghanistan, Iran, Belgium, the Netherlands, Australia, U.S.A., Germany and Switzerland. The conference intended to serve as an inclusive space that welcomes individuals and groups having various relationships with climate change and being engaged to different levels of Climate Action. Climate refugees, politicians, scientists, military veterans, activists, students and civil society, all shared their experiences, approaches and visions for tackling effectively climate change.

The idea of the Global Land Paths event to combine conferencing with physical activities and closeness with nature “aligned” with the particular conditions that CoVid-19 pandemic commanded. The remote virtual participation and outdoor conference installments in the nature spaces of Vitsa delivered successfully the newly introduced –by the director of GLAP– concept of “natural distancing”. The organizers of GLAP IX, 2020, were determined to materialize the conference at those difficult times by keeping the measures that promoted safety during the CoVid-19 pandemic.



Through a history of 9 years, GLAP has approached several sociopolitical issues. The past five years, GLAP has been consistently engaging with the topic of climate change from the perspective of its political governance. This year's discussions complemented and continued past discussions on climate change towards the direction of multilayered Climate Action. Corresponding to the different scales of climate action, the GLAP team grouped speakers and their stories into three separate thematics.

The first thematic concerned the governance of climate. Many aspects of climate governance were reviewed and several questions were attempted to be answered. Does European federalism foster climate democracy across European member countries? How do global Youth and activists push political spaces for better implemented climate democracy and justice? What does a UNFCCC climate scientist predict for the world's future in the scenario of massive political climate inaction? What are the implications of climate change on the world's peace and security?

The second thematic was about on the ground individual efforts to tackle climate change. Four actors, among who three were Youth, talked about their experience with climate action either it was coming as a major change of lifestyle, an entrepreneurship idea, or engagement with local communities.

Lastly, somewhere between the organized governmental climate-strategies and uncoordinated individual actions, the third thematic attempted to reflect on the role of Civil Society to fill gaps and offer specialized solutions for tackling climate change.



## Day 1

For the first thematic, a politician and passionate advocate of European federalism talked about how a stronger sense of federalism and collaboration could elevate joint political action in Europe to combat climate change. A think-tank specialized on the climate-related policies of the United Nations brought to the fore the latest and most relevant emerging topics across international UN spaces. A Geoscientist and UNFCCC advisor alerted GLAP's audience about the spatio-temporal impact of political climate inaction. Last but not least, a veteran from the US Marine raised a highly uncharted aspect of peace and security conflicts, namely climate change.

The first speaker of the conference was Mr. Virgilio Dastoli, a pioneer and passionate advocate of European Federalism. Mr. Dastoli explained how European Federalism could deliver as a political system that optimizes climate governance. According to Mr. Dastoli's views, a transformed European Federation could contrast the current political atmosphere of Europe and implement the EU Green Deal through enhanced participatory relationships across a united and fair institutional system in solidarity and coherence.

The talk of Mr. Dastoli was followed by activist communities that represent the

Center for United Nations Constitutional Research (CUNCR). The Climate Defenders (CDs) and the Youth Climate Ambassadors (YCAAs) formed an inclusive panel that introduced us to topics such as innovative youth-led forest governance, the democratization of the environmental movement through intersectionality, they gave some perspective on redefining the climate movement in the post-CoVid era and they reminded us of the value of unity and togetherness in all human endeavors. Intersectionality was also a point raised by CUNCR's board member prof. Richard Sam Deese, who during his talk on the lost right to "common lands" showcased an example of narrow sighted environmental views that perpetuate oppression. Mr. Deese together with the director of CUNCR, Dr. Sharei, took it further to the principle work of CUNCR, which is the research on how the UN could serve the world forming a federal democratic world government addressing global problems, such as the climate change.

The third speaker of the conference, Mr. Antonis Velegrakis is a geoscientist specialized in coastal management, professor at the university of the Aegean and a UNFCCC advisor. Mr. Velegrakis depicted in an alarming way the spatial and chronological variation of climate change's impacts and elaborated on the implications that a

global practice of inaction is projected to have on the world.

The fourth and last speaker of the conference was Mr. Oliver Leighton Barrett, veteran from the U.S. Marine and the UN peacekeeping operations. Mr. Barrett now specializes on Environmental Security and the risks of Climate change on peace and security and with his intervention he helped us see beyond what is obvious when we examine geopolitical conflicts and look at them through the lens of environmental and climate catastrophes and natural resources competition.



## Day 2

For the second thematic, four individuals engaged on activism, civil society, entrepreneurship and sustainable living shared with the conference community their stories. Their stories were good examples of how even small actions can go a long way, having substantial impact and create movements.

Dr. Tasos Anestis was the first speaker who shared his personal story with us about him and his young family leaving the bubbly life of the city for the tough but beautiful life of a remote mountainous Greek village. Dr. Anestis explained to us how moving to the village was a concrete political act of sustainable living. His professional domain in Biological sciences and environmentalism is closely related to nature therefore, for his case, teleworking and new technologies helped him materialize successfully his decision to move away from the city without compromising his career.

The second speaker, Mr. Desmond Alugnoa, is a student and a co-founder of the Green Africa Youth Organization. An enthusiastic advocate of Youth and minority empowerment himself, Mr. Alugnoa talked about power distribution across actors within decision making spaces within the field

of Environmental Politics. In his speech he stressed that despite the past efforts there is still a long road for Youth and minority voices to be actively represented and heard across influential fora on natural resources management and climate change.

The third speaker, Ms. Fani Tsaroucha is an Environmental scientist and an activist of the Youth Climate Ambassador community initiated by the CUNCR representing Greece. Ms. Tsaroucha, with her work, has contributed to designing and building a global Youth-led local-led programme that plants trees in public lands, mostly of the Global South, for carbon offsetting.

Last speaker of Day 2, Mr. Tim de Rooij came all the way from the Netherlands to capaign his startup business against plastic pollution. Mr. De Rooij started from a successful campaign across his country, raising awareness on "cigarette butt" pollution and continued with his currently growing startup called "Plastic Playgrounds" that creates a circuit of beach clean-up that support a new sport, named "Beachathon".

### Day 3

The third day of the GLAP IX conference was devoted to Civil Society. At a time that Civil Society in Greece was facing serious criticism,



administrational mess, public mistrust and legislative constrains, the objective was to stress the specialized value of CSOs' in nature conservation and climate change.

Our single speaker for that day, Mr. Kyriazis, brought out the situation in the location where the conference was held, in the National Park of North Pindos. Mr Kyriazis is a forester of the Park. After he reflected on the pressures that climate change imposes on the local ecosystems, he further highlighted the value and specialized knowledge that CSOs bring as collaborative partners to the conservation work of such a high end governmental entity as the National Park.