



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 13, 2024

Swiss Parliament Says “No” to ECHR Climate Ruling

In April the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that the government of Switzerland failed a group of senior females by not adequately addressing climate change, thus violating the Senior Women for Climate Protection’s (KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz) human rights. But on Wednesday, Switzerland’s Parliament voted not to act on the foreign court’s ruling because they were already doing enough to address so-called climate change.

The lower house of the Swiss parliament followed the upper house’s lead in rejecting the ECHR’s ruling that Switzerland had “had failed to comply with its duties” to protect its citizens from alleged man-made climate change. The upper house voted on June 5 by a count of 31-11 to disregard the ECHR’s ruling, and yesterday the lower house followed suit in a 111-72 vote to reject what it called the ECHR’s “judicial activism.”

The ECHR [ruling](#) in April was called “absurd” by the influential Swiss newspaper *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* (NZZ).

“Absurd verdict against Switzerland: Strasbourg pursues climate policy from the [judges’] bench,” [NZZ said at the time](#). Apparently the Swiss parliament agreed.

The ECHR issued the verdict against Switzerland without suggesting any fixes to the Swiss climate policy. Parliament’s vote seems to suggest that they believe the Alpine nation is already doing enough to address the so-called problem.

The Swiss government’s Federal Council may still choose to abide by the ECHR’s ruling when it makes its decision, which is expected in August. But it’s likely that the Federal Council will offer the court in Strasbourg a list of everything Switzerland is already doing with regard to climate change, hoping it will be enough to satisfy the judges.

“These ‘climate elder’ are just a bunch of apparently healthy “boomeuses” [female boomers], who are trying to deny our children the living conditions they have enjoyed all their lives,” [said Jean-Luc Addor](#) of the Swiss People’s Party.

But some called the vote a “betrayal” of the senior women who brought the suit in the ECHR.

“It’s really disgraceful what just happened,” Stefanie Brander, 68, [told Reuters](#). “It’s an insult and a lack of respect of our rights which were confirmed by an international court.”

“For me a red line was crossed. It is a dishonour for parliament,” [said Raphael Mahaim](#), a Green Party MP and attorney for KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz.



Flooffy/Wikimedia Commons
Switzerland's Federal Palace



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“The declaration is a betrayal of us older women — and of all those who are suffering from the real consequences of global warming today and in the future,” [said Rosmarie Wydler-Wälti](#) of KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz.

Some predicted potential problems for the Swiss government if they choose to ignore the ECHR’s April ruling.

“Members of parliament and everyone else can criticise judgments they don’t like — that’s of course legitimate in a democracy, and courts exist precisely for situations in which there is disagreement,” [said Evelyne Schmid](#), a professor of international law at the University of Lausanne. “But a parliament officially accusing the institution of ‘undue judicial activism’ sends a different, problematic message.”

Doesn’t a foreign court blatantly interfering with a sovereign nation’s internal political workings also send a “problematic message”?

This decision by Switzerland’s lower house to dismiss the ECHR’s ruling on climate change comes just after Green Parties across Europe [lost heavily](#) in European Union elections, signaling a more overarching rejection of draconian climate-change measures across the Continent.



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