

Palermo’s Earth Day Med presses COP31 on climate

Posted on April 22, 2026 by Angelica Peruzzi

PALERMO — Earth Day Med, the Mediterranean climate festival staged in Palermo, Sicily, has closed with an alliance of more than 25 climate research groups demanding that COP31, the United Nations summit in Antalya, Turkey this November, put their region at the heart of global climate action.

Now in its third year, the festival is run by Fondazione Studio Rizoma, a Palermo cultural foundation, and brings together experts, students and activists for five full days of debate and culture. Alongside the panels ran guided green walks, film screenings and an activism school. This year it ended on April 22, 2026, with the launch of a manifesto.

The manifesto was issued by the Mediterranean Alliance of Think Tanks on Climate Change, a network of independent research groups known as MATTCCh that gathers organisations from more than 10 countries on both shores of the sea. It sets out four demands.

“We are proud to have succeeded in attracting major international partners who see in the Earth day Med festival great potential for growth and for bringing the public debate on climate change in the Mediterranean region to Palermo,” Patrizia Pozzo, Fondazione Studio Rizoma co-founder and Earth Day Med coordinator told Italy Now. This milestone was achieved “by connecting institutions, environmental organizations, students, and local, national, and international activists to form a team and work on strategies for a shared ecological future”

The group wants support for renewable energy, stronger action to adapt to climate damage, a closing of the gap between financial promises and real investment, and deeper regional cooperation.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/publish-palermos-earth-day-med-presses-cop31-on-climate/

“The region has enormous potential to propose a new model of transition,” said Giulia Giordano, director of Mediterranean and global strategy at ECCO, the Italian climate think tank leading the alliance.

“Sicily unites and does not divide the region,” Giordano added.



A panel held at Earth Day Med (*Credits: Fondazione studio rizom*)

Perhaps the most significant long-term outcome of this year’s edition is a permanent Youth Council, drawn from the under-30 students, activists, researchers, and cultural operators gathered at the Teatro Garibaldi for a two-day Climate Policy Bootcamp. The council will shape the festival’s future programming and feed directly into its international advocacy. Participants spent two days working through climate justice, water access, and the gap between policy and implementation, producing a shared manifesto that will be presented to the COP31 presidency in Antalya this November. The council’s stated aim is to make youth participation a permanent feature of the festival rather than a one-off exercise, and to build a Mediterranean voice that is young, plural, and politically effective.

Why it matters now

The Mediterranean is warming faster than the global average, the manifesto notes, facing drought, water shortages and heatwaves while remaining divided by sharp economic gaps between north and south. The alliance argues the basin could instead become a testing ground for a fair shift away from fossil fuels.

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COP31 will run from November 9 to 20, 2026, with Turkey presiding and Australia leading the negotiations. The alliance wants the summit to create regional platforms linking banks and projects that need funding, and it urges richer governments to honour pledges and reform financial rules that leave poorer southern shore nations short.

For Palermo, the timing carries weight. Giordano has argued the island sits at the centre of the basin rather than at its edge, uniting the region rather than dividing it. Whether COP31 finally listens this November will show whether the Mediterranean is treated as a frontier or as common ground.

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