

## COP26 - A Reflection

Environment Energy Hub

24TH NOV 2021

Environment

We are reaching the end of COP26, and there are signs of some kind of a deal – whether or not the agreement converts to action remains to be seen.

I was very fortunate to have been selected by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law (“BIICL”) to attend the opening few days in Glasgow as an observer. We (myself, Ivano and Jean-Pierre) stayed in Edinburgh as the accommodation in Glasgow was non-existent or outrageously overpriced. The advantage was being able to enjoy a quiet Edinburgh, although where we were staying restaurants stopped taking orders from between 8.30pm and 10pm. We travelled in with free Scottish Government travel passes for 2 weeks, and received welcome packs on registration of Dettol wipes, face-mask, and Covid lateral flow tests. Each day all attendees to the Blue Zone had to provide evidence of a negative test – taken the same day.

The great pleasure of “being there” was taking in the discussion, listening to opinions, and (not so pleasurable) taking in and absorbing bucket loads of depressing information.

On the Tuesday, BIICL co-sponsored with Hausfeld (US lawyers) an event at Glasgow University where Mary Robinson and Vanessa Nakate delivered an inspiring double-act keynote address – *“Mobilising the Rule of Law in Climate Change”*. The programme is available here. A video of the debate will soon be available on the BIICL website. The post event discussion continued off-campus – another enormous benefit of “being there”.

The other highlights for me from our few days in the Blue Zone were (1) listening to John Kerry speaking on behalf of the US – I was hiding behind a delegates’ sign for the Alpine Convention, (2) standing under the huge revolving Earth Globe and trying to look as if I belonged, and (3) listening to a late afternoon presentation in the Benelux Pavilion organised by the Government of Belgium and the European Investment Bank *“From climate justice to climate litigation”*.

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