



Annual Review 2020

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH EUROPE



ANNUAL REVIEW

MOBILISE! RESIST! TRANSFORM!



One of the few in-person meetings of Friends of the Earth Europe Brussels staff in 2020. © FoEE

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 Martin Galea De Giovanni, Friends of the Earth Malta - Secretary
 Luka Tomac, Friends of the Earth Croatia - Treasurer
 Akos Éger, Friends of the Earth Hungary - Member
 Alasdair Roxburgh, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland - Member
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Overcoming



JAGODA MUNIC,
Director, Friends of the
Earth Europe

May 2021



**We campaign for social
and environmental justice
at the heart of the EU.**



**We unite more than
30 national groups
and thousands of local
groups across Europe.**



**We are part
of Friends of the Earth
International,
the world's largest
grassroots environmental
network.**

Hard to believe this is the second time I'm sitting down to reflect on the year gone by, not from my desk in the Friends of Earth Europe office, but from my home. Twelve whole months (and counting) of remote-working – of not seeing colleagues, our Board, our network, allies or friends, except on screen. A year in which asking after people's health and that of their loved ones took on new meaning and trepidation.

2020 was a rollercoaster year. The pandemic knocked our plans off course. But adversity breeds creativity. We adjusted quickly in Spring – on the internal front moving to home-working, transferring events online, postponing activities; and externally – highlighting the links between disease and the destruction of nature, and issuing demands for a green and just recovery. With every twist and dive of the ongoing health crisis we have adjusted and responded again. Campaigning in the context of Covid-19 will continue to be a challenge – the current grim reality is that cases are the highest they have been in some of the poorest parts of the world least able to cope.

Throughout all this, we have overcome. Our grassroots network has shown incredible resilience, as the achievements documented in this Review pay testament to. There have been significant successes despite the circumstances, and even major victories. Friends of the Earth Netherlands' historic win in court against Shell for its pollution in the Niger Delta took 13 years, and will give us strength for years to come.

The theme of the year, and what helped us to carry on, was solidarity. Solidarity is core to who we are as the Friends of the Earth global federation. It encapsulates the empathy that motivates us, the equality we fight for, and the people power we summon to change things for the better. Friends of the Earth France took action in solidarity with workers in unsafe conditions and forced Amazon to better protect them. In Spain, Friends of the Earth took part in movements of solidarity with small and ecological farms and won more rights for them during the pandemic. In Croatia, our member brought solar power to communities in poverty. We showed our solidarity with Black Lives Matter and committed to do more for racial justice.

2020 was a year like no other, but the struggle for environmental and social justice continued. Perhaps more quietly, away from the front pages and the streets, but with no less urgency. In fact, I believe the pandemic has caused many people in power to catch-up to the severity and interconnectedness of the multiple planetary and societal crises we face. Covid-19 is more than a public health crisis; it is a systems crisis. We need to seize this moment to re-imagine our societies and put them urgently on a sustainable and healthy footing. Our in-depth work to conceive an economy within Earth's limits, and to define what a truly transformational Green Deal looks like, are important contributions to the generational task of building a better, greener future for all.

Together, we have and shall continue to overcome.

Campaign Highlights 2020

Future of Europe



Waves of Covid Solidarity

INTERNATIONAL

Our network responded with solidarity to the pandemic and life under the coronavirus. We celebrated their community action.



A Stop Amazon action at the Ministry for the Economy in Paris. © Iris, Action Climat Paris

Solidarity is a core value for Friends of the Earth. It took on new significance last year as the Covid-19 crisis showed the strength of human solidarity and compassion. The pandemic unleashed waves of solidarity and community action – including in our grassroots network. The pandemic did not affect everyone equally, and our groups came to the support of those hardest hit.

We shared [stories from across our European and global network of what life under coronavirus looked like around the world.](#)

We shared the story of South Africa's [90,000+ waste pickers](#). They collect and sort waste for reuse, repair and recycling. But Covid-19 restrictions forced some to stop work. Friends of the Earth South Africa worked with partners to help get emergency food parcels and vouchers to waste pickers and their families who had lost their income. Then, together with waste pickers' organisations and NGOs, they successfully lobbied the South African government to get waste pickers defined as 'essential' workers – allowing them to return to work. Friends of the Earth South Africa also helped waste pickers access personal protection equipment (PPE) so they can do their jobs safely.

In France, and elsewhere, the multinational corporation Amazon, attempted to capitalise on the coronavirus crisis and the closure of non-essential shops to increase its operations. Amazon workers were left unprotected – working without adequate physical distance, or proper protective equipment. Friends of the Earth France produced a mobilisation kit to help people take action in support of workers. They organised several email and Twitter actions demanding the closure of unsafe Amazon sites. [The campaign worked!](#) A French court ruled Amazon had to limit its activity to the delivery of essential products only during the coronavirus crisis.

During Spain's Covid-19 confinement, open-air markets were forced to close leaving small agroecological producers nowhere to sell their produce. They were unable to make a living. So, Spain's network of women for agroecology – [including Friends of the Earth Spain – got active in support of small producers.](#) Under the banner [#SOSCampesinado](#) (SOS small farmers), they brought together an incredible 700 organisations to [demand that the government reopen the markets and encourage local food distribution.](#) They [demanded hospitals, care homes, and school canteens purchase from local producers.](#) Dozens of local campaigns were successful in convincing municipalities to allow open-air markets and to support food sovereignty.

[Read more stories of #Covidsolidarity.](#)

Anti-racism



We issued a [solidarity statement with Black Lives Matter](#) and called for Europe to reckon with its colonial past and racist present, and act to end racism once for all.

We hosted a series of webinars in which our member groups shared how they are building anti-racism into their campaigns and ways of working. Topics included how to combine anti-racist and 'traditional' environmental campaigning, building trust with movements against police violence, and building anti-racism into educational work.

We are committed to an intersectional approach and to diversity, but we recognise that we still have a long way to go to implement this in practice. In 2021 we organised anti-racism training for our Brussels office staff.



Imagining a new economy

EUROPE

A common vision for an environmentally and socially just economy.



A visual summary of a workshop on new economies. © FoE Europe / Ale Listens and Draws.

There are more mainstream voices than ever calling-out our exploitative neoliberal, economic system and demanding transformational change. The Covid-19 pandemic made it clearer than ever that 'economics-as-usual' is broken and does not work for huge sections of our societies. We cannot continue to pursue growth no matter what, and that includes what some politicians promise as 'green growth'.

Core to the current Friends of the Earth Europe strategy is the recognition that we need to abandon the never-ending pursuit of consumption and economic growth, which is at the heart of the multiple crises facing humanity and nature.

What kind of positive economic and social system do we envision instead? In 2020, we made big progress towards answering this question. We created a common vision with our network for an environmentally and socially just economy. We held six interactive webinars with member groups and dived deep into discussions, brainstorming and new economic thinking. It culminated in a comprehensive internal paper, 'Principles for an environmentally and socially just economy'.

The seven chapters reflect our bottom-up vision for all areas of the economy – from the purpose and guiding values of the economy we want, to democracy and public services, to the financial system and the future of work, business, and trade.

This thinking is now shaping our analysis and demands, not least towards EU policy-makers. We rejected so-called 'green' or 'regenerative growth'-based failed economic solutions in the EU Green Deal. We pushed for the Green Deal to bring about a shift to an economy that cares for everyone within the Earth's limits.

We also built relationships and cooperation with the degrowth movement. We co-organised a panel debate and workshop on the theme of ['How do we deal with the European Green Deal?'](#) at the Degrowth Conference Vienna.

This work continues with a shorter public version of the vision paper coming first in 2021.

We were part of the call for a green, healthy, just recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over a million people supported the demands for the European Union to restart its economy with a bold green investment plan, via petitions with avaaz, WeMove and SumOfUs.

Our briefing 'From Fragility to Resilience' drew interconnections between the pandemic and the planetary emergency, and made specific short-term demands for EU recovery plans and Covid-19 response measures.

Although EU member states did prioritise climate in their recovery agreement, we were critical when plans ultimately fell short of the goals of the European Green Deal.

From fragility to resilience post-pandemic



“Coronavirus would be a double tragedy if we return to an unhealthy, unsustainable business-as-usual afterwards. Europe still has a chance to build back better.”

Jagoda Munic, Director
in Thomson Reuters

Campaign Highlights 2020

Climate justice and energy



Victory for victims of Shell's oil spills

NETHERLANDS

After 13 years, victims of Shell's oil pollution in the Niger Delta have finally achieved justice in court, in a historic case brought by Friends of the Earth Netherlands.



The director of Milieudefensie and chair of Friends of the Earth Europe, Donald Pols, celebrates outside the Court. © Brontsema / Milieudefensie.

It took 13 years. Finally, some justice for the people of the oil-soaked Niger Delta. Three Nigerian farmers, victims of oil pollution – supported by Milieudefensie/Friends of the Earth Netherlands – beat one of the world's most powerful transnational corporations, Shell, in court in the Hague.

As the news spread across the world, people across Nigeria celebrated with victory parties.

Finally there is hope, some justice for the Nigerian people suffering the consequences of Shell's oil.

Eric Dooh, Plaintiff

Dooh's home, Goi, was a lush, fertile, thriving village. Until two major oil spills from Shell's poorly maintained pipeline struck in 2003 and 2004, contaminating land and water. People were left destitute, but Shell denied any responsibility. So, Friends of the Earth joined with Dooh and three other farmers from nearby villages to sue Shell in its home country, the Netherlands.

It took years of gathering evidence and jumping legal hurdles. Finally, the court found that both Shell and its Nigerian subsidiary did not do all that was necessary to prevent and respond to the spill. It is the first time any survivors of Shell's pollution have won compensation and justice in the home country of the oil giant.

This case has paved the way to justice for victims of corporate crimes. The evidence shows Shell has much more cleaning up to do in Nigeria. But from now on, any Dutch company failing to adhere to human rights and environmental regulations overseas risks being taken to court, held accountable, and forced to pay compensation. Now Friends of the Earth is campaigning for stronger laws to make this avenue easier to access.

An end to EU backing for new gas projects



For years, Friends of the Earth Europe has been calling out the parade of new fossil fuel infrastructure the EU gives its backing to, and campaigning to end this source of cash for new gas pipelines and terminals that contribute to the climate crisis.

Now, after intensive advocacy in 2020, the EU is set to end backing for new fossil gas pipelines. This European Commission has removed support for new oil and fossil gas projects in its revisions to the 'TEN-E' law governing energy infrastructure - a move Friends of the Earth Europe gave a cautious welcome to. Nevertheless, the campaign continues to remove the influence of vested gas interests in the law and to end support to hydrogen from fossil fuels.

The Commission should now clarify that gas projects are incompatible with the European Green Deal and place a moratorium on funding of any of the gas projects with EU taxpayers' money.

Colin Roche, Climate and Energy campaigner in Forbes.





We know that community renewable energy has the power to both speed-up the transformation of our energy system, and make it popular - with benefits felt by people locally.

In 2020 we wanted to build on our [success in winning support for community energy in EU law](#). So, we launched a programme to equip communities with the tools they need to lead the energy transformation.

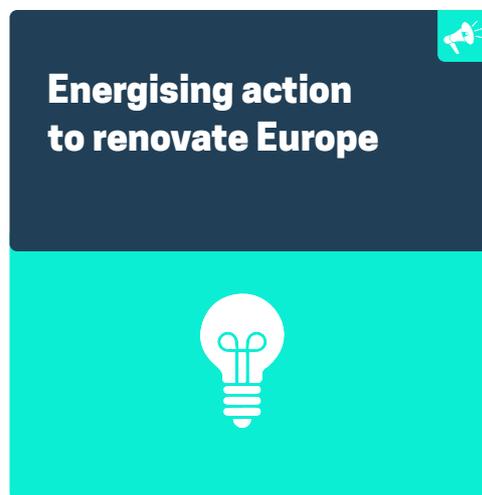
A community energy organising course online trained 20 organisers from across Europe – they’re now busy establishing energy communities in their localities. And our new handbook, published to an enthusiastic reception, is [guiding people to initiate and grow their own successful community renewable energy projects](#). The book is full of instructions, practical tips, powerful success stories and invaluable resources to build a local, community-led renewable energy revolution.

Our practical handbook for community energy organisers. © FoE Europe.

After years of neglect by politicians, action on energy poverty and Europe’s inefficient buildings looks set to take its rightful place at the centre of the EU’s Green Deal agenda – with a [new 'Renovation Wave'](#). Friends of the Earth Europe has been the leading voice in Brussels for stronger action to tackle both energy waste and energy poverty together.

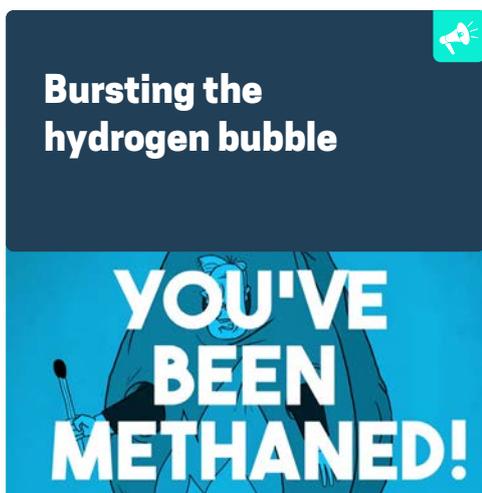
Eradicating the scourge of energy poverty has taken on new urgency as levels are suspected to be soaring during Covid-19 lockdowns. But the pandemic has opened-up the opportunity of directing green recovery funds to renovate Europe’s inefficient buildings – promising a ‘win-win-win’ for the climate, poverty action, and sustainable jobs. We will be mobilising to ensure the promises bear fruit.

To bolster the effort, an increasingly energised and broad alliance of grassroots groups, academics, NGOs and interest groups is rallying to the cause. 600 of them came together, despite the pandemic, in a massive [Right To Energy forum](#), to strengthen advocacy, and share best practice examples for tackling energy poverty.



This Renovation Wave must ensure a quick and locally supported transition in order to support those who need it most.

Martha Myers, Energy Poverty campaigner in EurActiv.



2020 saw the rise of a bubble of questionable promises around the latest climate technofix – hydrogen. In Brussels and across European capitals, hydrogen became the talk of the town – and it quickly became clear the gas industry lay behind this hype.

The European Commission [rushed out a new strategy](#) promising massive support for hydrogen. With increasing enquiries from journalists, we got to work sharpening our analysis. Our media work, [opinion pieces](#), [comical videos](#) and advocacy exposed the fossil fuel interests that lay behind the overblown promises, the impacts on the climate, and the high costs. In a few short months, energy ministers expressed more hesitation around the benefits of hydrogen. Much is still do be done to replace hype with realism and prevent crucial funds for the energy transition being wasted on false solutions like fossil- based hydrogen.

The Commission has fallen for the fossil fuel industry’s hydrogen hype.

Tara Connolly, gas campaigner in France 24.

A still from our video about how the fossil industry fakes a green and caring image. © FoE Europe.

Exposing an unknown climate action killer



A web of acronyms and obscure political processes helps corporate interests in Brussels hide their greedy methods. It's the job of Friends of the Earth to puncture that web and shine a light. And in 2020, that's just what we did for the little-known Energy Charter Treaty.

It started as an unknown issue. The trade agreement is being used by polluting energy companies to block action on the climate crisis. But by exposing scandals, we helped put the Energy Charter Treaty at the centre of controversy. Scandals like the coal company suing the Netherlands for over a billion euros for phasing out dirty coal power; or the gas company suing Slovenia for demanding an environmental impact assessment for fracking.

It's now widely accepted that the Energy Charter Treaty is not compatible with the Paris Agreement. Now the campaign is in full swing to end it.

Climate campaigners from all over Europe met in Austria at the start of the year before the pandemic. © FoE Europe.

We continued exposing the cosy relationship between fossil fuel company lobbyists and politicians. We helped to coordinate a growing coalition of groups calling for Fossil Free Politics around Europe. Social media actions targeted media events discussing climate policies that were sponsored by Shell and other fossil fuel companies. Our reports exposed the influence of the gas industry on EU energy infrastructure decisions; and exposed the concerted lobbying effort by the fossil fuel industry during Covid-19 to win concessions for energy projects and gain access to bailout funds.

#FossilFreePolitics



Youth Gathering for Climate & Social Justice

YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE EARTH EUROPE



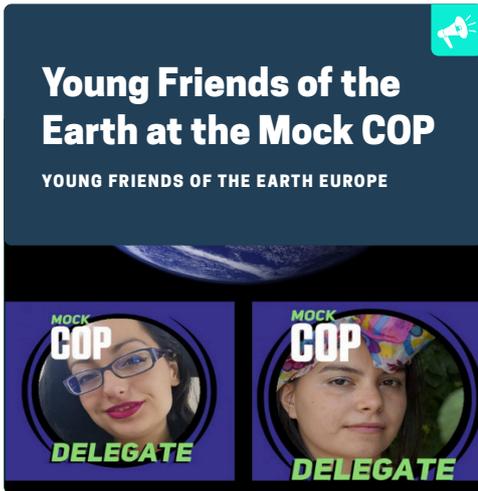
We brought activism online, with over 300 people registered for our first-ever online youth gathering.

Over the course of ten days, we ran 30 workshops and sessions on topics ranging from eco-feminism and the European Green Deal, to climate migration, the commons, and sustainable activism. Recognising that we're all sick and tired of Zoom calls, we experimented with different formats, including 'TV shows', yoga, a cinema session, speeches, and skill-shares.

The gathering was organised as part of our System:Reset project, which aims to reach young people who are under-represented in European policy-making and gather their visions for how to build a Green Deal which guarantees a sustainable and just future.

Part of the meetings, trainings and workshops that Young FoEE organised online for our SYSTEM:RESET project. © Young FoEE.





Two volunteers from Mladi Za Zemiata/Young Friends of the Earth Bulgaria were the Bulgarian national delegates at Mock COP26 – a global, youth-run virtual climate conference organised in place of the postponed COP26 in Glasgow.

330 delegates from around the world gathered for two weeks at the end of November to agree joint policy demands for a justice-led approach to the climate crisis. Together with a legal team, and prioritising voices from countries most affected by climate breakdown, the delegates drew up a [treaty](#) which they are urging governments to commit to ahead of the rescheduled COP26 in 2021.



Material from the Mock COP virtual climate conference. © Young FoEE.

Campaign Highlights 2020

Corporate power



Mounting criticism from NGOs, civil society, and national governments have managed to throw the climate-wrecking EU-Mercosur trade deal into increasing controversy over the last year.

We joined 450 organisations in a new coalition against the deal, and took part in several major protests online and on the streets. We also published [investigative reports](#) highlighting the impacts of the EU-Mercosur trade deal on human rights, the environment and food safety. And we [co-created awareness-raising videos](#) with activists around Europe and in Latin America.

The mass mobilisation is paying off – national governments including Austria have confirmed they will oppose the deal, and negotiations have been delayed further to address the lack of environmental protections in the current proposal.

Opposition to damaging trade deal mounts




A still from our video on the toxic EU-Mercosur trade deal. © FoE Europe.



We helped more than half a million people to demand a strong EU law to hold businesses accountable for their impacts on the environment and human rights. We enabled them to have their say in a public consultation by the EU on a new corporate accountability law. Our [Hold Business Accountable](#) campaign won the backing of over 150 civil society organisations across Europe. We supported these groups to reach out to citizens, and collaborated with them on inspiring tools and videos about the need to end corporate impunity.

Citizens responded en masse to demand new binding rules on companies and help end the era of corporations wrecking the planet with impunity. After the consultation ended, the [European Parliament adopted a draft report](#) on legislation to hold transnational corporations accountable for their impact overseas.

The era of European companies being allowed to wreck the planet and destroy livelihoods with impunity is coming to a close.

Jill McArdle, corporate accountability campaigner in The Guardian.

Friends of the Earth Netherlands held Shell accountable in court. © Hilde Brontsema / Miliedefensie.

Campaign Highlights 2020

Food, farming and nature



Bring Nature Back



A flashmob outside the European Parliament to demand a better CAP. © Dieter Telemans.

We called for extensive plans to save nature, both at the global and the European level. We welcomed UN commitments to increase ambition for biodiversity protection, and the EU's new 10-year-plan to tackle nature loss – but with caution. All targets for halting nature loss so far have been missed.

Internationally, we advocated for 30% Earth's surface needs to be conserved. And at the European level, our nature campaign was closely linked to our work on agriculture. We called for real reform of the Common Agriculture Policy, including for 10% of agricultural areas to be prioritized for biodiversity. At the same time we kept-up public awareness on the ecological crisis, including with a 'Bring Nature Back' viral video.

This is a welcome first step, but its good words and positive intentions need to be taken up by the rest of the Commission...to make sure nature is preserved.

Friedrich Wulf, International biodiversity campaigner in The Parliament Magazine.

Our campaign to make sure a new wave of GMOs must undergo safety checks before they can be grown in the EU - and labeled as such if they are approved - was dealt a blow when the European Commission failed to follow a key European Court of Justice ruling. [The court's decision](#) mandates that crops grown using new genetic modification techniques (such as gene drive techniques like CRISPR-Cas9) must undergo safety checks. But instead of implementing this, the Commission backed their development and expansion in its new the Farm to Fork Strategy. Throughout the year we alerted groups all over Europe about these worrying new developments, coordinated joint civil society statements at key moments, and built-up the movement for a GMO-free Europe. We continue to campaign for the ECJ's ruling to be abided by.

No to new GMOs



Mapping the decline of insects



Our Insect Atlas told the story of how the collapse in insect populations is driven by industrial farming. And it made headlines around the world.

The report showed how one third of insect populations worldwide are threatened with extinction. This is tied to the boom in pesticide use since the 1950s, and the explosion of soy monocultures required to feed factory farms.

Released with Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, it made the news in over 300 different outlets in 30 countries, and helped set the agenda for the [#SaveBeesAndFarmers](#) campaign to get the EU to phase-out pesticides by 2035.

The evidence is clear: pesticide use is wiping out insect populations and ecosystems around the world, and threatening food production."

Mute Schimpf, Anti-GMO campaigner in Associated Press.



Growing Together

YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE EARTH EUROPE



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Young Friends of the Earth Europe continued to strengthen its network of volunteer environmental justice activists, with hundreds of young people joining our online events.

Young Friends of the Earth Europe brought together over 3,300 young people through seminars, workshops, debate and actions to discuss how to build a just food system for the future, based on the principles of food sovereignty.

Together with our national member groups in five countries, we reached out to young people in rural areas and connected them with youth in towns and cities. Many of these participants were trained-up to engage in active debate, advocate to decision-makers, and practice their communications skills.

They also helped produce a [Youth Declaration on Food Sovereignty](#), which was published in collaboration with young activists from La Via Campesina and ASEED.

These activities were part of the [Growing Together](#) project which came to an end in 2020 on a high note. In total, the project reached 130,000 people including urban and rural youth. The European-level trainings reached 170 youth from 6 countries who developed specific skills and in-depth knowledge required for effective organising with rural youth on issues of food sovereignty.

We created [tools and resources on food sovereignty](#).

In January 2020, as part of the Growing Together project, 40 young activists from Friends of the Earth Austria joined the largest food sovereignty protest in Germany. © Young FoEE

Campaign Highlights 2020

Resource justice



The European Commission's new Circular Economy Action Plan turned out to be a mixed bag. It promised some bright developments, such as new laws to make products more sustainable and pledges to scale-up reusable packaging, tableware and cutlery. However, we know the EU consumes the same as if we had almost three planets' worth of resources available, yet there was no overall target to reduce resource consumption. What we got in the plan was a commitment to 'monitor' the EU's material footprint. This is the total amount of raw materials the EU economy consumes in products and services, including imports. Monitoring is a step forward but not enough. After helping push the European Parliament to back such a target, we're now working to get the European Commission to endorse it and help enshrine it in law.



Reducing the EU's resource consumption

The Von der Leyen Commission's plan for a circular economy is out of touch with the reality and urgency of the planetary emergency.

Meadhbh Bolger, Resource justice campaigner in The Guardian

A still from our video on the toxic EU-Mercosur trade deal. © FoE Europe.

20

energy organisers trained

13

years to get justice for victims of Shell's pollution in Nigeria

300

participants in the first online Youth Gathering for Climate and Social Justice

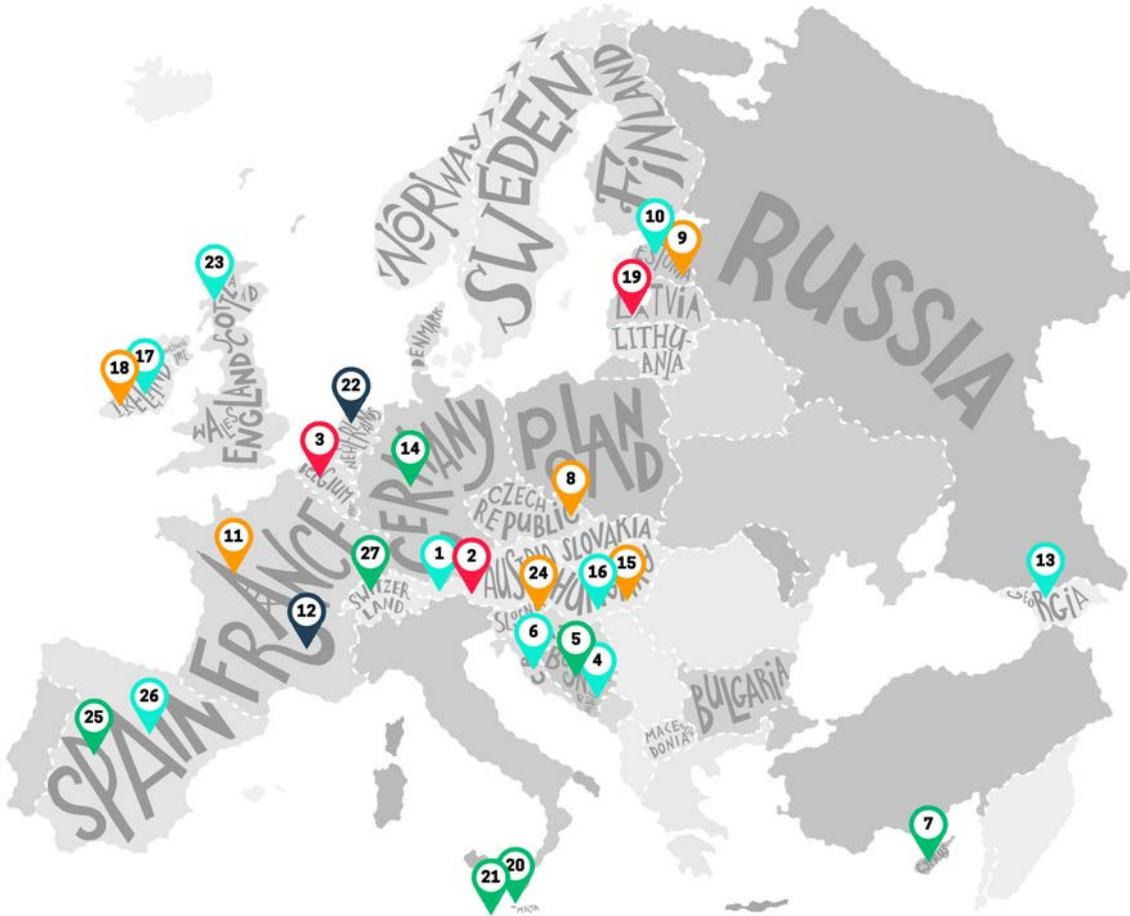
1,000,000

citizens supported demands for a green, healthy, just EU recovery deal

450

organisations joined a new coalition against the EU-Mercosur deal

Member Highlights 2020



Austria goes coal-free!



Get out of coal! Pressure to get Austria to go coal-free has worked. © Alexander W. Jandl.

AUSTRIA

After years of campaigning by Friends of the Earth Austria and other environmental groups, Austria shut down its final coal-fired power plant. This groundbreaking success is a step forward in the transition to clean energy. Friends of the Earth Austria had gone to great lengths to highlight the risks of coal-powered energy, releasing [a study to show the number of premature deaths](#) and respiratory diseases linked to coal power. They even climbed on the roof of the power plant to make their message heard!

1



Take back your trash!



This is your trash!: Delivering single-use trash back to Red Bull. © GLOBAL 2000

AUSTRIA

Friends of the Earth Austria brought the issue of single-use waste to the attention of their government. In one action, they returned 808 cans found littered in nature back to Red Bull, Austria's most polluting company, with the message "This is your trash!". The group's petition for a single-use deposit system gathered almost 35,000 supporters and was creatively delivered to the government building with a spectacular light projection. Now they are keeping the pressure on the government to agree strong new waste laws in 2021.

2



We can save water



BELGIUM (BRUSSELS AND WALLONIA)

Citizens were brought together in a virtual meeting hosted by Friends of the Earth Belgium to raise awareness about water stress in the country, and exchange ideas on how to develop greater water resilience. Through a series of workshops and conferences, participants came up with concrete ways to tackle water shortages and improve water management at the local level. They also learned about the challenges facing this vital resource on a global scale.

3 

People power not hydropower



BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Following a long campaign by Friends of the Earth Bosnia & Herzegovina and the national Coalition for the Protection of Rivers, the government voted to ban the construction of small hydropower plants across the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This vote was based on the 'Declaration on the Protection of Rivers of the Western Balkans' prepared by environmental associations in reaction to huge damage to local communities and the environment caused by small-scale hydropower projects. With around half the hydropower plants in the country located in the Federation, (as opposed to Republika Srpska, the other entity) of Bosnia & Herzegovina this vote is a huge success for local communities and activists and for a green energy transition.

4 

A protest by the national Coalition for the Protection of Rivers. © FoE Bosnia & Herzegovina.

When humans and animals coexist



BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Friends of the Earth Bosnia & Herzegovina helped protect the local brown bear population through the first-ever genetic research project into the species. Nature diversity in the region is under threat from political, economic and environmental pressures. There is an urgent need to understand and preserve species and habitats, and promote a traditional way of life in which humans and animals coexist. The research project resulted in a new plan to manage and monitor the brown bear population.

5 

Better understanding of brown bears in Bosnia. © FoE Europe / Sretko Stanković, Drinić.

Rays of hope



CROATIA

To mark Friends of the Earth Croatia's 30th birthday, the group planned a very different celebration: they provided six households with access to electricity after years living in the dark. Through the *Ray of Sun – Light of Hope* campaign with the People for People initiative, the group raised awareness of energy poverty and the crucial role of solar in tackling poverty and the climate crisis. Their crowdfunding platform exceeded its target, accumulating donations from over 500 people to provide electricity to six homes in Sisak-Moslavina, one of the poorest regions of Croatia.

6 

Solar panels on the house of Mara Stanić from the village of Čakale. © Zelena akcija.

Food sovereignty: a how-to guide



CYPRUS

Friends of the Earth Cyprus completed a successful two-year campaign on food sovereignty. They got around 800 citizens involved in a series of trainings and events on sustainable food systems. Together with policymakers, the public and rural and urban youth, Friends of the Earth Cyprus developed a series of materials on food sovereignty which they shared widely to promote the sustainable food system transformation.

7 

The perfect recipe for food sovereignty in Cyprus. © Friends of the Earth Cyprus.

Hacking a green recovery



Some of the participants in the hackathon for a green recovery. © Hnutí DUHA.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Friends of the Earth Czech Republic brought businesses, academics and activists together to boost social cohesion and contribute to a green and just post-Covid recovery. In a five-day 'hackathon', participants brainstormed innovative proposals for a green recovery investment plan that would best serve people, the climate and the economy. The event drew on the spirit of solidarity triggered by the coronavirus epidemic. [The final plan](#) proposed investments for 300,000 solar panels on family homes and a billion euro investment in sustainable landscape management.

8



Festival Y?!



The inaugural Festival Y?! © Estonian Green Movement.

ESTONIA

Friends of the Earth Estonia worked with environmental groups from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to organise 'Climate and Social Justice Festival Y?!' – four days of debates, skillshares and online activities. Nearly 100 people from across the Baltic region participated in the festival, sharing skills, networking and discussing how to create systemic change in governance, energy and the economy. The festival activities reached almost 4000 more people online, and the festival team have become Solidarity Network Y?!, offering participatory funds and capacity-building opportunities for grassroots climate movements in the Baltic states. The event was an important and rare opportunity for small progressive groups in the region to connect and build a shared view for a fair and green social transition.

9



Seeing the (green) future



ESTONIA

Estonia has long been heavily dependent on fossil fuels, but Friends of the Earth Estonia has been working tirelessly to change that. Last year, their energy experts launched a [Sustainable Energy Vision](#) for the country, co-signed by ten environmental organisations. The vision laid out a roadmap to decrease energy demand and transition to renewables. It also advocated for renewable community-owned energy schemes. The media coverage of this significant project reached over 300,000 people and is a springboard for future work on a green energy transition.

10



Clearing the air



FRANCE

Friends of the Earth France, along with 77 other organisations, won a [landmark legal appeal](#) to hold the French state responsible for air pollution. The court judged that the state must comply with regulation air pollution rates or face a major fine. This sanction is a ground-breaking step towards protecting public health and the environment from disastrous levels of pollution. Air pollution is already responsible for up to 67,000 premature deaths a year in France.

11



Justice for Amazon workers



A Stop Amazon action at the Ministry for the Economy in Paris. © Iris, Action Climat Paris.

FRANCE

Following the national mandate to close shops and limit deliveries to essential items only during the coronavirus lockdown, Friends of the Earth France launched a [successful public campaign to protect Amazon workers](#). They called for the American e-commerce giant to end deliveries of non-essentials. They worked with trade unions to pressure the Minister of Labour to crack down on the corporate monolith. After a month of campaigning, French courts ordered Amazon to limit deliveries to essential products, under threat of a major fine. Friends of the Earth France continue to fight Amazon's harmful impact on the climate, environment, employment opportunities and local businesses.

12



Shaping the climate action we need



GEORGIA

Friends of the Earth Georgia set about strengthening civil society participation in national climate policy-making. Working in a collaboration with Friends of the Earth Germany and Columbia, and Ecoaction-Ukraine they created a common vision of ambitious ‘nationally-determined contributions’ to deliver the Paris climate agreement. Their suggestions were fed into the government’s draft plans. They succeeded to mobilise more than 2000 people during a climate action week in different regions of Georgia, and reached thousands more via the media.

13



The road to sustainable transport



Protesting against the A49 motorway through the Dannenröder Forest in Germany. © Niko Martin / BUND.

GERMANY

In Germany, the destruction of the Dannenröder Forest to make way for a highway, despite decades of environmental protests, catapulted the conversation about creating a more sustainable transport infrastructure to national attention. Friends of the Earth Germany shone the spotlight on the local protests and mobilised citizens against the proposed highway. Sadly the battle was lost and the road is being built, but not before it became a symbol of the growing movement against archaic road development projects. Many more people are now calling for sustainable infrastructure planning. The struggle continues!

14



Positive affirmation after the pandemic



Some of the people who pledged for a Life-Affirming Society. © MTVSZ.

HUNGARY

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, Friends of the Earth Hungary launched a petition for a ‘Life-Affirming Society’. More than 25,000 people and 130 organisations took a pledge to live in a more sustainable way, and demanded better action on the climate from politicians. As part of the campaign, more than a thousand people participated in different online events to discuss their pledge and share ideas on how to be more sustainable as individuals and members of the community. Several celebrities and public figures also joined – even a famous cartoon cow!

15



Sparking community energy



Building support for community renewable energy projects. © MTVSZ.

HUNGARY

Friends of the Earth Hungary led big steps forward towards locally-controlled renewable energy when it won funding for six pilot community energy projects, due to launch this year. They also attracted more public support for renewable community energy thanks to a partnership with a ethically-minded celebrity to promote the pilot initiatives. Not only that, Friends of the Earth Hungary also made sure Hungary’s legal framework was more inclusive of community-led cooperatives. Their tireless advocacy work resulted in energy policy forming part of Hungary’s strategies and draft spending plans for the next five years.

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Fossil free



A tug of war between fossil fuels and renewable energy staged outside the Irish Parliament. © FoE Ireland.

IRELAND

Another major victory for a fossil free future was racked-up by Friends of the Earth Ireland and other environmental organisations, as Ireland banned future oil and gas exploration in Irish waters. The successes don’t end there – the government introduced a support scheme for microgenerators, thereby making it easier for schools to install solar panels. This comes after Friends of the Earth Ireland’s campaign for renewable and community-owned energy amassed thousands of supporters: over 16,000 emails were sent to elected representatives over the course of 2020, and even school pupils got involved promoting solar energy in schools!

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Network for the future



IRELAND

In the lead-up to Ireland's 2020 general election, Friends of the Earth Ireland launched a network of local 'One Future' climate action groups. The groups, which received training and resources to make build their effectiveness and resilience, asked election candidates to sign a pledge for 'Faster and Fairer Climate Action'. By the time of the election there were 19 active local 'One Future' groups (now there are 28!). Friends of the Earth Ireland showcased the power of the network by holding an online Lobby for Climate Action. Over 1000 people were able to meet their MPs and ask them for a stronger Climate Law.

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Some of the new One Future action groups in action. © FoE Ireland.

At last... a drink deposit system



LATVIA

Friends of the Earth Latvia won a twenty-year battle to introduce a mandatory drinks containers deposit system, which will launch in 2022. Through their intense campaigning – including shore clean-ups, legislative hearings and media debates – they gathered more than 10,000 signatures in favour of the deposit scheme, which were submitted to the national parliament. The group also produced a Baltic case study with data supporting the introduction of the system, which was widely distributed. The new scheme is predicted to significantly reduce the amount of litter from glass, cans and PET bottles.

19



Call of the wild plants



MALTA

Working with an ethnobotanist, an illustrator and local chef-farmers, Friends of the Earth Malta produced a highly popular Edible Wild Plants Foraging Guide to raise awareness and foster appreciation for the diversity of wild flowers in the Maltese archipelago. The guide, which was part of a cross-European government project to raise the voices of young people, was a huge hit with the public. Bookshops even requested the group organise foraging walks! At a time when lockdown has increased people's interest in the outdoors, the Foraging Guide was an ideal way to engage more people in the value of plants.

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Friends of the Earth Malta's pocket guide to foraging was a big hit. © FoE Malta.

X marks the farm



MALTA

Produced during the first Covid lockdown, the Malta Farm Map connects people wanting to buy local food with local farmers. The online map received almost 18,000 visits – around 3% of the total population of Malta! – and increased consumer awareness of the local food and farms available to them. On top of this, it is helping farmers increase their income without middlemen. Connecting locals with their farms also reduced farm waste and helped farmers adapt to the challenging Covid-19 situation.

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Connecting local farms with customers who want local produce in Malta. © FoE Malta.

Victory for victims of Shell's oil spills



NETHERLANDS

It took 13 years. Finally, some justice for the people of the oil-soaked Niger Delta. Three Nigerian farmers, victims of oil pollution – supported by Milieudedefensie/Friends of the Earth Netherlands – beat one of the world's most powerful transnational corporations, Shell, in court in the Hague.

This case has paved the way to justice for victims of corporate crimes. The evidence shows Shell has much more cleaning up to do in Nigeria. But from now on, any Dutch company failing to adhere to human rights and environmental regulations overseas risks being taken to court, held accountable, and forced to pay compensation. Now Friends of the Earth is campaigning for stronger laws to make this avenue easier to access.

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Celebrating outside the Court. © Hilde Brontsema/Milieudedefensie.

Workers open to transition



SCOTLAND

Friends of the Earth Scotland and allies surveyed over 1300 oil & gas workers about their industry, their working conditions and their future. With terms and conditions in oil and gas worsening, they heard from an undervalued and frustrated workforce who are open to transition. The survey found 81% would consider moving to work in another industry if the right opportunities existed. Respondents cited low morale and fears that their community will become a ‘wasteland region’ as we move away from fossil fuels. 91% of workers had never heard of a ‘just transition’. The survey received great media attention, and strengthened relationships between workers and environmental organisations. Using the findings, [the ‘Offshore’ report](#) was published with recommendations to improve working conditions in the oil and gas sector, address barriers to entry and conditions within the renewables industry, and ensure workers are able to help determine policy for the energy transition.

23



A word cloud of the most common responses in the oil and gas workers survey. © Offshore report.

We won't be silenced



SLOVENIA

When the Slovenian government stripped NGOs of their right to participate in legal procedures which assess the environmental impacts of new construction work, Friends of the Earth Slovenia took action. Together with two other organisations, they successfully filed for an official assessment of the legality of the new law. At the same time, they protested in the streets. Before too long, [the Slovenian court suspended the requirements](#) excluding NGOs from the legal procedures. This victory means that NGOs can once again take part in and speak up against proposed construction projects that would damage the environment.

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Protesting for the protection of nature in Slovenia. © Aljoša Petek/Balkan River Defence.

Spontaneous solidarity for small producers



SPAIN

In Spain, a spontaneous solidarity movement sparked to life when lockdown rules prevented people employed in local and ecological farms from working. Cue [#SOSCampesinado](#). What started as a network of female farmers, trade unions, experts and activists grew in just 15 days to a campaign of over 100 organisations. The campaign appealed to the Spanish state to support small-scale producers and recognise the value of small-scale agroecology. Throughout the pandemic, the solidarity movement has continued to grow and more than 700 groups are active in support of local markets and small producers.

25



Years of campaigning for a climate law pay off



SPAIN

In the midst of turbulent times, a final draft of a climate change law for Spain brought a glimmer of hope. For Friends of the Earth Spain and environmental activists across the country, the new law reflects years of campaigning for government policies to put environmental protection first. The law is a first step towards a sustainable future – but Friends of the Earth Spain are fighting for greater ambition in policies and will not stop until the government steps-up its game with stronger laws to tackle the climate crisis.

26



Creative climate protest during the Covid-19 pandemic. © Amigos de la Tierra.

People power for nature protection



SWITZERLAND

Despite the pandemic restrictions, Friends of the Earth Switzerland gathered over [200,000 signatures](#) in a national campaign for stricter laws on land use. Better laws would protect nature and prevent urban sprawl and unsustainable new construction. The signatures and policy demands were delivered to the federal government, which is now drafting legal proposals. The huge response revealed mass public support for laws protection of biodiversity. If the draft texts don't go far enough, Friends of the Earth Switzerland are prepared to launch a national referendum to push for improvements.

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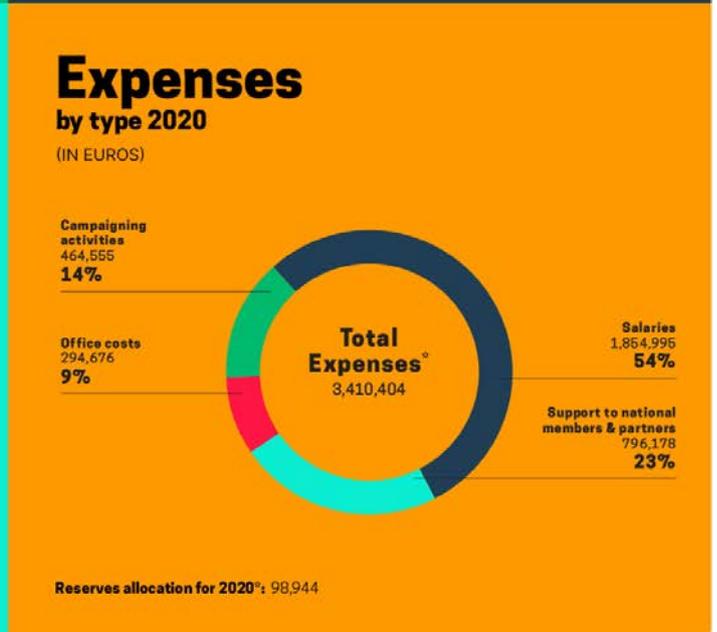
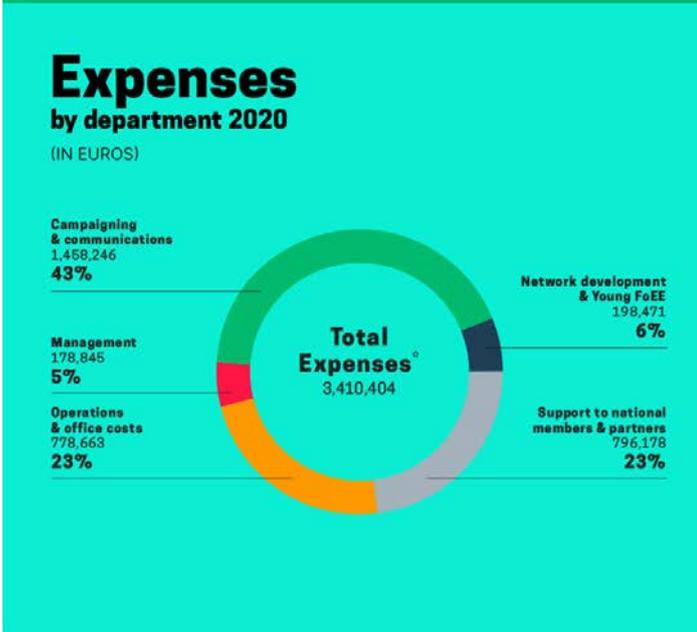
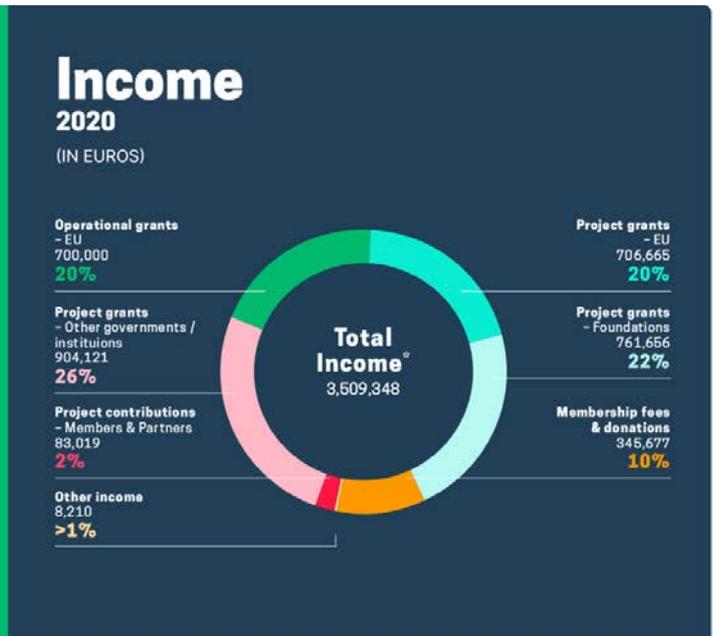
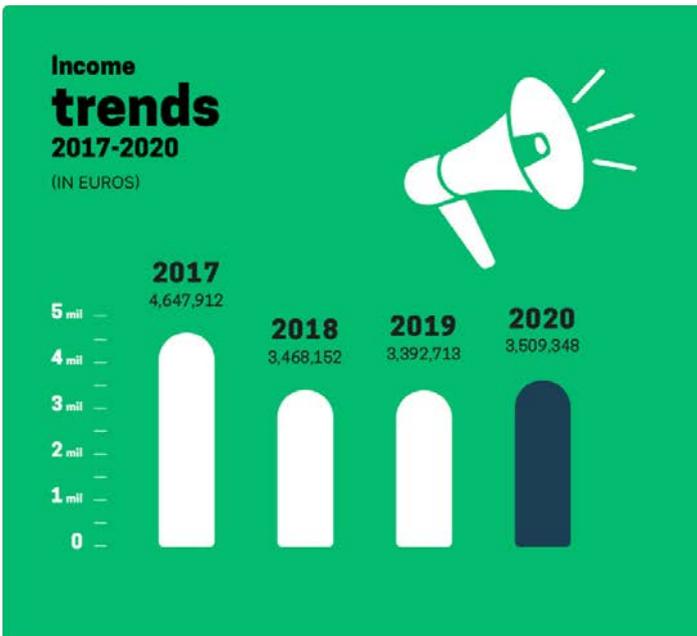
Delivering +200'000 signatures for nature protection to the federal chancellery in Berne. © Pro Natura / B. Devènes.

Our Funding 2020

Financial information 2020

We were able to increase our income slightly in 2020, compared to the year before, in spite of the major challenges that the year held. In 2020 we experienced changes in some of our traditional funders' priorities, and increased competition for EU and governmental grants.

We have continued to maintain a good balance between funding sources, with EU funding representing 40% of our income. A total of 18 funders together with our members groups have contributed to our income. We avoided, therefore, major dependencies on too few funding sources. The vast majority of our funders have continued to support our work and we expect this cooperation to go on in 2021 as well.



EU Transparency Register no. 9825553393-31

* Numbers may not add up due to rounding. All figures rounded to the nearest Euro. Full copies of Friends of the Earth Europe's accounts are available from the Belgian national bank at www.nbb.be from 1st July 2021. Quote company number 0443.252.089. Details of our funding can be found on our website: www.friendsoftheearth.eu/our-funding

Our Funders

Friends of the Earth Europe's work would not be possible without the support of our donors. We would like to thank the following institutions and foundations for helping fund our work:

EU INSTITUTIONS



European Commission
Directorate General Environment
(Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises - EASME) LIFE programme



European Commission
Directorate General Agriculture
- CAP Info Measures



European Parliament Directorate
General Communications



Education, Audiovisual & Culture
Executive Agency (EACEA)
- Youth in Action / Erasmus+

GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



German Environment Agency

Supported by:



Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

based on a decision of the German Bundestag

European Climate Initiative (EUKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)



European Climate Initiative EUKI

FOUNDATIONS

- Adessium Foundation
- Open Society Initiative for Europe
- European Climate Foundation
- Minor Foundation for Major Challenges
- Fondation Charles Léopold Layer
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Grace Foundation
- James M. Goldsmith Foundation
- Funders for Fair Trade
- Plastics Solutions Fund via Zero Waste Europe



Thank you!



A participant at Friends of the Earth France's climate camp. © Revol

Thank you also to our national member groups and to Friends of the Earth International.



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43

weeks in 2020 spent working from home

46,000

Twitter followers in 2020



23,500

Facebook followers in 2020



100,000

hours spent on Zoom calls in 2020 (feels like!)



1,950

Articles published in the press in 2020

Our members

MOBILISE! RESIST! TRANSFORM!

Austria, Vienna GLOBAL 2000 | GLOBAL 2000. **Belgium – Wallonie, Namur** Les Amis de la Terre | Friends of the Earth Wallonia & Brussels. **Belgium – Flanders, Gent** Friends of the Earth Vlaanderen & Brussel | Friends of the Earth Flanders & Brussels. **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Banja Luka** Centar za životnu sredinu | Friends of the Earth Bosnia and Herzegovina. **Bulgaria, Sofia** Za Zemiata | Friends of the Earth Bulgaria. **Croatia, Zagreb** Zelena Akcija | Friends of the Earth Croatia. **Cyprus, Limassol** Friends of the Earth | Friends of the Earth Cyprus. **Czech Republic, Brno** Hnutí Duha | Rainbow Movement. **Denmark, Copenhagen** NOAH | NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark. **England/Wales/Northern Ireland, London** Friends of the Earth | Friends of the Earth. **Estonia, Tartu** Eesti Roheline Liikumine | Estonian Green Movement. **Finland, Turku** Maan Ystävät Ry | Friends of the Earth Finland. **France, Montreuil** Les Amis de la Terre | Friends of the Earth France. **Georgia, Tbilisi** Sakhartvelos Mtsvaneta Modzraoba | Greens Movement of Georgia. **Germany, Berlin** Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland | Friends of the Earth Germany. **Hungary, Budapest** Magyar Természettudósok Szövetsége | National Society of Conservationists. **Ireland, Dublin** Friends of the Earth | Friends of the Earth Ireland. **Latvia, Riga** Zemes Draugi | Friends of the Earth Latvia. **Lithuania, Kaunas** Lietuvos Žaliųjų Judėjimas | Lithuanian Green Movement. **Luxembourg, Luxembourg** Mouvement Ecologique | Ecological Movement. **Macedonia, Skopje** Dvizhenje na Ekologistite na Makedonija | Ecologist's Movement of Macedonia. **Malta, Valletta** Moviment għall-Ambjent | Friends of the Earth Malta. **The Netherlands, Amsterdam** Vereniging Milieudefensie | Friends of the Earth Netherlands. **Norway, Oslo** Norges Naturvernforbund | Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature. **Poland, Krakow** Polski Klub Ekologiczny | Polish Ecological Club. **Russia, St. Petersburg** Russian Social-Ecological Union | Friends of the Earth Russia. **Scotland, Edinburgh** Friends of the Earth Scotland | Friends of the Earth Scotland. **Slovakia, Banská Bystrica** Priatel'ia Zeme – Slovensko | Friends of the Earth Slovakia. **Slovenia, Ljubljana** Focus | Friends of the Earth Slovenia. **Spain, Madrid** Amigos de la Tierra | Friends of the Earth Spain. **Sweden, Gothenburg** Jordens Vänner | Friends of the Earth Sweden. **Switzerland, Basel** Pro Natura | Friends of the Earth Switzerland.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH EUROPE The European network's representative at the heart of the European Union campaigning for sustainable solutions to benefit the planet, people and our future, influencing European and EU policy and raising public awareness on environmental issues.

[friendsoftheearth.eu](https://www.friendsoftheearth.eu)

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