

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



WeMoveEurope



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HALLO, BONJOUR,
BUENOS DÍAS
EVERYONE,

If life is a gift, then the WeMove Europe community is a gift within a gift. I feel like being part of it gives me, all of you, our partners and Europe a chance to be our best selves.

This is a little storybook of moments when we were at our best selves when we found ways to fight and change Europe for the better. Or, when we didn't exactly do that, but we learned loads along the way and will do better next time. It's also full of stories of change that are still being written and that you can still be part of.

Looking back at last year, it's hard to summarise our feelings in one page. 2020 was truly the year of the Corona-coaster. It drove many to the brink through the mass loss of human life, denied goodbyes, closed borders, empty streets, banned hugs, overworked health workers, silenced artists.

But for all that darkness, there was also hope. All that being closer to our own mortality meant people were more prepared to talk about bigger change. **It created openings on some issues we thought would never get talked about at a mainstream level,** most notably the Universal Basic Income for Europe. Literally, hundreds of thousands of people in Europe threw themselves behind that campaign. And it's only getting started.

In some ways, we have to let go of our obsession with instant impact and linear ideas of how change happens. We will not know what the real impact of this moment is for a long time. And as the writer Rebecca Solnit would put it, **inside that uncertainty, there is hope.**

But some of the change is already here - perhaps nowhere more than in the massive effort by this community around the European Recovery Plan. We helped to make sure that the €750 billion to help the European economy recover after COVID would be green and just. That most of the money would go to those places in Europe that most need it. That a good half of the funds would arrive as grants, not loans, to avoid another dehumanising debt crisis. This is pretty big.

WeMove Europe turned five in 2020. We are just getting started. And we are so excited about the potential of what we can do together and our power to transform this home we call Europe into a place and a project we can be proud of.

LAURA SULLIVAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



FOR A GREEN AND JUST RECOVERY

385,000 signatures

CAMPAIGN ONGOING!

There was a lot at stake when it came to Europe's recovery from the pandemic - €750 billion in recovery funds, to be exact.

We wanted to ensure this money went towards a green recovery, meaning that less green countries in Europe would get the bulk of European recovery funds (**achieved!**), and that these countries would get at least half of those funds as grants, to avoid deepening their debt crisis (**achieved!**)

With those successes under our belt, we could turn to check where the money was going: not a cent for the fossil fuels industry and their greenwashing machines! Currently, oil, coal, and the most noxious gasses are banned from this huge pot of money.

With SumOfUs and Avaaz, **we got one million people to call for this money to be spent in a way that benefits Europeans and the planet**, not polluting industries.

AIM: To ensure the EU's €750 billion Covid Recovery Fund goes towards a green recovery

OUTCOME: The Fund is well on its way to enabling a Green recovery

LEARNINGS: No issue is too technical - our community understood the potential for recovery funds to transform our economies. We didn't shy away from talking about budgets and conditionality.





This campaign just kept growing! Our community took action in so many ways. WeMove Europe members...

Took to the streets with protests in Berlin and Brussels. Some of our members and partner movements spoke directly to Ministers of Environment to push them on this campaign;

Plastered Bilbao and Lisbon with posters to sway key politicians there, and organised a digital meeting between over 200 people and a key decision-maker, in the run-up to an important vote in the European Parliament;

Sent Facebook, Twitter and email messages directly to policy-makers in the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament demanding that they keep fossil fuels out of the recovery funds;

Paid for advertisements to take over the media before politicians started negotiations! **Politico and Euroactiv had our message visible across their sites** throughout the year;

Enrolled the support of a Spanish influencer on YouTube, who got our community's message across to tens of thousands of people and got many of them to join us;

30,000 of us took part in an official consultation of the European Commission;

... and **hosted webinars** to help people understand the recovery funds and their transformational potential.

We feared that this money would go straight to oil and coal. Our success so far is a major result considering the power and deep pockets of the lobby we're facing.



This show is not over - watch this space!



SAY NO TO A TOXIC EUROPE!

AIM: A people-friendly strategy on chemicals to protect our health

OUTCOME: We got it!

LEARNINGS: Our voices matter in these nitty gritty fights

It matters when citizens get involved to support champions of their rights and question the logic of those clearly pushing a pro-business agenda that poses risks to our health.

127,000 signatures

CAMPAIGN WON!

In September, the European Commission presented a new Chemicals Strategy which could have gone in favour of big business. We intervened and helped shape it into a people- and health-friendly chemicals strategy. This was a story of people like us making our voices heard in what was otherwise an internal battle inside the European Commission between two departments, one defending health, and the other... well, not exactly doing that.

Before we got involved, parts of the EU Commission were pushing to allow even more toxins into everyday products. Internal documents leaked to the media proved this. Our partners, the Health and Environment Alliance and European Environmental Bureau, asked WeMove Europe for help - and **our community jumped into action.**

Facing a strong opponent - big businesses who were ruthless in protecting their profits - our community banded together with a 127,000 signature petition. This was instrumental to our partners, making it possible for them to show that citizens were keeping a close eye on the toxins debate.

On Wednesday 14 October 2020, the European Commission presented the new European Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. On paper, the strategy will do more to protect our health and the environment, and **it is a major step forward in the delivery of Europe's Zero Pollution Ambition.**

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME FOR THE EU



200,000 signatures

CAMPAIGN ONGOING!

In March, Europeans were already seeing the frightening effects of the pandemic on our financial security, as business started to close and many jobs were threatened. To combat this insecurity, **the WeMove Europe community took the idea of an Unconditional Basic Income (UBI) to the European stage.** A UBI is an unconditional monthly cash payment that everyone receives, regardless of circumstances, to cover basic living costs. We wanted a UBI supported by the EU.

More than 200,000 of us showed support for a UBI by signing this petition!

But to convince the politicians, we needed more. That's why our **community crowdfunded for a professional poll in 6 European countries.** It showed that close to 70% of Europeans are supportive of a UBI program at the EU level. We also asked what benefits a UBI would have for their lives, and most people said it would help them cover their basic needs and reduce their anxiety.

But we didn't stop there. In July, our members gave what they could - from 3 to €300 - **to fund a sponsored advert in the Politico newsletter** promoting the need for an emergency UBI. According to Politico, it was one of the most successful sponsored posts in their newsletter last year.

This campaign requires more work, more pressure, and more of a sense of urgency to support people who are struggling. The arch of justice is long!

AIM: To get an Unconditional Basic Income for all

OUTCOME: Politicians know that a hell of a lot of Europeans care about this, but have not yet acted

LEARNINGS: Real radical change takes time, but our campaign so far shows that people are ready to support bold, transformative solutions to achieve security for everyone

”

This is where social Europe can begin!

-
Emile, a community member from France

HUMANITY FIRST

AIM: Make Europe more humane when it comes to the rights of people on the move

OUTCOME: We got the Commission to look into legal proceedings against those who violate human rights

LEARNINGS: It takes time!



We are all humans and we need to look out for each other

Vivienne, a community member from France

99,000 signatures

CAMPAIGN ONGOING!

We want to make sure the EU upholds the values on which it has been built: human rights and dignity.

Back in March 2020, when disturbing scenes emerged of Greek police firing tear gas on people at the Turkish border, we knew we needed to act fast. We aimed to make sure EU institutions are accountable for violations of migration law and the negative effects of migration policy.

The WeMove Europe community crowdfunded a legal action, a complaint to the EU Commission to start an infringement procedure against Greece. This was the first time we used a legal tactic, where we got free support from lawyers. **We had strong partners in this campaign: Oxfam officially joined the legal action and Human Rights Watch provided their support afterwards.**

We intervened right before important votes by committees of the European Parliament: our members wrote to MEPs, making sure they voted to hold EU institutions accountable. Additional actions got us a meeting with the office of the European Commissioner for Home Affairs.

This fight is far from over, but our campaign continues to build momentum in 2021, and we are determined to win.



EU BORDER CHIEF: RESIGN!

65,000 signatures

CAMPAIGN ONGOING!

As the end of 2020 approached, evidence was mounting that the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, was involved in abuses against migrants. Videos emerged of Greek border guards attacking people in unstable boats, forcing them away from EU waters, to be left stranded at sea. Investigations showed **Frontex witnessed numerous violent incidents, and its officials, including the Director, Fabrice Leggeri, tried to cover them up.**

Since the launch of this campaign, our members have rallied behind the call to make sure Frontex does not remain unpunished for human rights abuses:

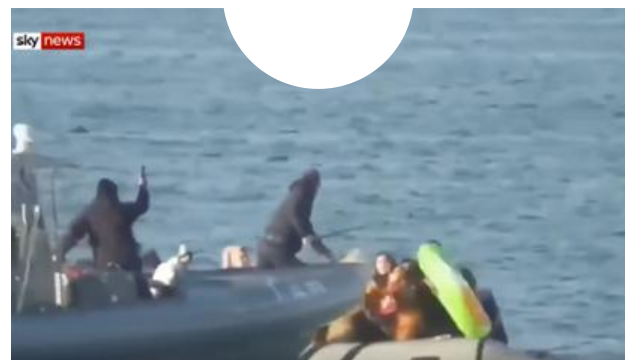
- We wrote to the Frontex scrutiny committee in the European Parliament to make their private meeting public. We got it!
- We asked the MEP budget committee to postpone the approval of Frontex's budget - Frontex is the only agency that did not have its 2019 budget approved by the committee!
- Our community wrote directly to MEPs pressuring them to scrutinise Frontex

Although it is really hard to take on Frontex, **we will keep fighting to defend human rights!** This campaign will come back next September when the final decision on whether to discharge the Frontex budget will actually take place.

AIM: Make Frontex accountable to the EU institutions for its human rights abuses

OUTCOME: The Frontex Director is under greater pressure than ever before from MEPs and the public

LEARNINGS: Reasoning with MEPs on issues related to fundamental rights works!





EU BOSSES: A SHADOW OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

127,000 signatures

AIM: Make sure all European Commissioners drop their ties to big corporations

OUTCOME: They did, in 2 weeks!

LEARNINGS: Careful targeting matters. Some of the Commissioners were genuinely intending on doing this anyway. Others were not. We need to focus only on those who need a push

CAMPAIGN WON!

In 2020, we wanted to make sure the brand new European Commission had absolutely no links with big companies.

Commissioners (Gentiloni of Italy, Borrell of Spain, Hahn of Austria) had conflicts of interest with companies covered by their portfolio and did not publish their financial interests in time (the deadline was January 2020). For example, at that time, **Gentiloni still owned shares in Amazon.**

Now this might seem dull, but it **goes to the core of what democracy is about** and showed how important our role as watchdogs can be.

A strong petition was boosted by action from **members of our community**, who **took to Twitter to bring to light key Commissioners' shady links with big companies.**

Two weeks after we started banging the drum on this, all Commissioners released their financial interest declarations. What we managed to do was to let the Commission know we cared, and to accelerate the process.



After we launched the petition, WeMove got a direct call from Commissioner Gentiloni's office, letting us know he was selling his Amazon shares.

Concrete proof that when we speak up together, our representatives listen.

SUPPORT PESTICIDE REBELS!



200,000 signatures

CAMPAIGN ONGOING!

Back in September, **activists in Northern Italy found themselves in trouble and reached out to us for help.** They were being taken to court by the South Tyrol government for trying to stop the use of pesticides in the region -- **the government was using intimidation to silence activists.**

Together with Munich Environmental Institute and Campact we organised a protest delivering over 200,000 signatures in support of the pesticide rebels to the South Tyrol government. A few days afterwards, the government issued a press release: they would seek negotiation to solve the issue!

South Tyrol dropped one of the two lawsuits. The second lawsuit has been postponed until May 2021.

We managed to make **a local campaign have an effect on the European level** through actions online and at the place where the power lies.

AIM: Help activists taken to court by their government for trying to stop the use of pesticides

OUTCOME: The government dropped one of the lawsuits - the other has been postponed

LEARNINGS: Action on the ground during the pandemic was possible and effective



NO MORE RECYCLING OF LEAD

AIM: Get MEPs to vote against the European Commission's questionable plan to recycle PVC contaminated with lead

OUTCOME: We did it (and won by just 41 votes)!

LEARNINGS: Sometimes a little goes a long way: one quickly organised email action led by the WeMove Europe community helped shift this vote and bring people closer to European decision-makers

27,000 emails sent to MEPs

CAMPAIGN WON!

At the start of 2020, a number of concerned MEPs and organisations (including the Health and Environment Alliance and the European Environmental Bureau) reached out to us: they were worried that the European Commission's plan to recycle lead-contaminated PVC would pass.

We took rapid action in the days before the vote, sending thousands of tweets and 27,000 emails to MEPs to ensure they stood up for our health and a toxic-free circular economy. **French MEP Leïla Chaïbi reported receiving over 3,000 messages from our community... and it worked!**

This action prevented up to 10,000 tonnes of lead from being brought into the EU every year for at least the next 15 years, helping the development of a circular economy.

In February 2020, MEPs supported the objection to recycling lead-contaminated PVC with 394 votes in favour, 241 against and 13 abstentions.

This action was not just a success for recycling and the circular economy, but also **boosted the connection between citizens and elected representatives**. Some MEPs responded to the action and got in touch - to agree, disagree, and even to ask us when the vote would happen because they didn't see it in the agenda!

By raising our voices together we stopped pollution from recycled toxic lead.

Pressure from people like us is needed to keep the corporate lobby in check and this time we did it!

TECH & PRIVACY

Being aware of the impact of technology on today's world is very important in our work. We always strive to keep the bigger picture in mind and consider things like climate impact, inclusiveness and accessibility in our technology-related decisions. And we work hard on privacy and data ownership issues. This means that every time we handle the personal data of members of this community, we go the extra step to protect the privacy of the people behind the data. In general, we use Europe-based software, tools and servers which are subject to stricter privacy regulations, thanks to GDPR. Our platforms and tech team build and customise tools that make our campaigns successful while protecting our online security and privacy.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US!



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See our latest campaigns and take action at [WeMove.eu/our-campaigns](https://wemove.eu/our-campaigns)



The WeMove Europe team in Vienna on our last retreat, January 2020



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