

WeMove.EU



The Europe-wide online Campaigning Organisation

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WeMove.EU is a campaigning organisation seeking a better Europe; for a European Union committed to social, environmental and economic justice and citizen-led democracy. We are people from all walks of life, who call Europe our home – whether we were born in Europe or elsewhere.

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1. Our vision for Europe

Many citizens feel powerless about decisions made by distant European institutions or by national governments convening behind closed doors. WeMove.EU brings citizens together to push the European Union to make better decisions.

We challenge the fact that many of the decisions at the European level are made in the interest of powerful lobbies rather than ordinary people. Our answer is not a return to nationalism, but a move towards policies that reflect the concerns of Europeans. We want to provide citizen-led alternatives which will provide pressure and bring about change.

Our Europe is about *democracy*. We want European democracy to be led by its people: everyone living in the European Union needs to have a say in EU decision making. Decisions must not be dominated by the interests of large corporations or by a narrow-minded understanding of national interests. True European democracy requires a balance between decisions made at the local, regional, national and European levels. Although we strongly support local decision making, we know that issues like tax evasion, climate change or organised crime cannot be tackled on a national level alone. That is why much more creativity is needed to bring those kinds of decisions – that need to be at the European level - to people wherever they are.

Our Europe is about *social justice*. We want a Europe with an economy that works for all of us, a Europe that invests in good jobs and protects the welfare state, a Europe that stands for tax justice. Europe must be about equal opportunities for everyone. This is only possible if everyone has access to quality education and health care.

Our Europe is about *protecting the planet*. We want Europe to overcome its dependency on fossil fuels and to build an energy system based on efficiency and renewable energy. It is our responsibility to protect biodiversity and animal welfare, in Europe and elsewhere. European agricultural policy has to support sustainable agriculture which produces healthy and affordable

food for all.

Our Europe is about *civil liberties and rights*. We want a Europe that rejects mass surveillance and embraces free and diverse media – both traditional and online. Our Europe does not tolerate national attempts to limit freedoms or individual rights.

Our Europe is *against discrimination*. We want a Europe free of discrimination against women or based on race or sexual orientation. An open Europe that embraces diversity. A Europe that sees the movement of people as something of value and that is fundamentally humane in its policies that relate to migrants and refugees, where human rights apply to everyone, no matter their legal status.

Our Europe is *accountable and free of corruption*. We want to stop the use of political power for private gain. We will fight for clear rules about conflicts of interest, the punishment of corrupt politicians and their permanent removal from public office.

Our Europe is a *globally responsible Europe*, using its weight in the world to build peace, advance human rights and fight global poverty.

Our campaigns work towards a vision for the future of a connected, human, soulful Europe. We push together for the Europe we want and challenge unacceptable European policy decisions, thereby strengthening European democracy.

1.1 How we work

We come together at critical moments to take action to effect political change on the EU level, to build a more **citizen-centred Europe**. We target those who can deliver change – be it in European institutions, member states or corporations.

We use online tools to lower the barrier to participating in European democracy, so all Europeans have a voice in this political process; a process where big money, corporate lobbyists and national-minded politicians in powerful countries wield too much power. Our model of online organising allows us to rapidly combine the effort of thousands of us into a powerful collective force. We harness this online participation to facilitate grassroots action – online and offline.

Our campaigning model is built around partnerships. Our aim is to bring together the know-how and political experience of existing organisations. In these partnerships, WeMove.EU provides the potential for cross-border mobilisation that has been lacking on a European level. By working in meaningful partnerships with other organisations, we will strengthen civil society and help running the most effective campaigns possible.

We strive for accuracy, relevance and a strong theory of how change happens. Our ambition is to run those campaigns that most effectively work for our idea of Europe and to run them ethically, including protecting the privacy rights of our supporters.

1.2 What we are not

WeMove.EU never collaborates with groups that follow an anti-democratic agenda.

WeMove.EU is not a political party, nor does it have any affiliation to any political party or group. When it comes to addressing grievances and maladministration, we know no friends; when it comes to applauding progress towards our values, we know no enemies.

1.3 How we are funded

WeMove.EU receives funding from different sources, and all our activities are possible thanks to the generous contributions of individuals, members and foundations that support our work.

As part of our next strategy from 2020-2022, we have the ambition to become an organisation which is fully funded by individuals' supporters. We currently have an income of more than €900.000 coming from small donations from individuals (estimate figures November 2018). This represents almost 60% of our total income and is for us an important indicator of the fact that what we do is supported by many people across Europe.

To this contribution we can add donations from a group of what we refer to as 'major donors' across Europe. Major donors are individuals across Europe, who believe in our mission and campaigning, and give somewhat larger sums of money to help us to continue. We also receive support through grants from a number of foundations and hope in the future to receive some funding from institutions e.g. the European Commission's fund for awareness raising on rights issues in Europe. When building our fundraising strategy for the period 2020 – 2022 contributions from individual donors will continue to form the backbone of our sources. However, we will also need to diversify those sources to ensure we have a strong and stable organisation in the coming years.

How WeMove.EU works:

In 2017, WeMove coordinated a campaign that mobilised over 1 million Europeans to say no to a massive threat to the health of millions of people across Europe and the world: the toxic weedkiller, glyphosate. What happened was a not entirely foreseen political earthquake in Europe.

What happened?

1. WeMove joined forces with long-time allies to build and connect a huge movement of civil society from across Europe to challenge a new license for glyphosate and make the case for health and the environment.
2. Over 1 million signatures were collected for the European Citizens Initiative (ECI) in less than 5 months, making this the fastest ECI to ever succeed.
3. The ECI went all over the EU institutions: it was debated by member states in the Council; ECI organisers met the Commission, and presented in the Parliament.
4. On the political level, the EU was only able to relicense glyphosate for 5 years (instead of the usual 15 years) due to pressure from member states.
5. Since the campaign ended, a number of member states have put restrictions on glyphosate in place of their own accord.
6. The Commission proposed new legislation on General Food Law (GFL) in direct response to one of the demands of the ECI.
7. Ultimately WeMove helped to shift the debate on the social and environmental costs and acceptability of glyphosate in our food system, and ensured the voices of Europeans were heard at the highest levels of the EU.

How did we do it?

- We teamed up with some of the Europe's biggest and brightest campaigning platforms to build a pan-European coalition of over 100 organisations
- We started a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and set up innovative online tools to mobilise one million signatures against glyphosate
- We coordinated a massive effort in paper signature collection from small NGOs and volunteers, collecting and sorting thousands of signatures in key countries
- We identified where the power was inside the EU institutions and focused the energy of our members on the particular member states where we could see change happen.

2 Europe is in Crisis: An Opportunity and Need for Citizens' Engagement

Europe is in crisis, a crisis in three dimensions:

1. **Power imbalances in decision making:** the European institutional scene is dominated by corporate lobbyists and politicians focused on narrow national and commercial interests. This leads to decisions that put those interests before people and planet, that do not serve the common good nor democracy.

2. **Power of people:** millions of people are aware of the level of crisis in Europe and in the world but feel powerless to change it. Decades of neoliberal policies have left their impact on peoples' lives – their ability to pay their rent, to get decent work, to have some kind of say over what happens to them and their families – and they feel fear. That fear often translates into fear of the other, something which in turn is being exploited by populist groups. Much of this fear is built on a false analysis of where the world is and the role of neoliberal policies in generating instability, in undermining well-being of people and in destroying our planet. The sense of powerlessness which millions of people feel is unjustified. People have no idea how strong they are, especially when they work together on problems which can be tackled together, in their local communities, at their parliaments and together at the EU level. WeMove seeks to build that people power and to bring hope and awareness back to people. Ultimately it is an awareness of the incredible things we can achieve when we are both rooted in local realities and connected in a powerful movement across Europe.

3. **Power of civil society:** against the political crisis in Europe, civil society faces a number of threats. As a movement, we are too divided across countries, issues and struggles. We are further divided by acts of repression that cut our freedom and our capacity to operate. This repression has different faces, from the more extreme tactics (labelling of CSOs as a threat to society, shutting down offices, arresting civil society actors, cutting off funding sources) to much more subtle measures (increasing the administrative burden on CSOs, laws that reduce what they are allowed to speak about and campaign on).

This crisis of European democracy urgently needs to shift from vicious to virtuous circle via a huge increase in citizen engagement across our continent.

3 The Objective: Campaigning for a Better Europe

We are organising **citizens' campaigns against specific decisions in the EU**. We see **online organising** as an important tool, but will also in future organise campaigns offline in the real world, involving **local activists** as much as possible. This will help us target decision makers where it impacts most, particularly on a local level.

We want to build a community of supporters working towards better decisions in Europe. With their engagement with WeMove.EU, activists will effectively and efficiently be able to influence EU decision making to improve policy outcomes. **WeMove.EU promises to provide citizens with the opportunity not just to make their voices heard, but also to make them count.**

In time, we hope to become a leader in the field, so activists from all over Europe understand that they can really change things by joining WeMove.EU. This community of activists will also **provide surge capacity to other players**, like Brussels-based NGO coalitions. Close collaboration with the European members of the OPEN network of online campaigning organisations is especially important to us.

4 The Model: How WeMove.EU Works

Online organising has become a powerful tool to leverage mass activism in campaigning.

International online organising has been proven to work and has helped bring about changes on many levels. Online organising is key to change in Europe, to bring people from all over Europe together to voice their opinions. It can bridge the gap between people coming from different countries, speaking different languages and yet experiencing the same challenges. While online campaigning organisations already exist on the global or national level, until WeMove.EU, there was no such organisation fully focused on change in Europe.

We provide surge capacity to existing organisations, e.g. networks of environmental and social NGOs to build effective and inclusive campaigns at the European level.

Beyond this, we link up the national levels in Europe. Brilliant campaigning organisations are still limited by their national scope. For example, German online campaigning organisation Campact targets German decision makers in its campaigns on many European issues. However, it can only reach 96 of the 751 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), which hampers their overall impact. For this reason, Campact is interested in the building of a sister organisation operating on an EU level and many of our campaigns are run in partnership with them.

Now that we have built a base of active Europeans fighting for a better Europe online, we are looking at how to improve and expand the way we engage with our supporters offline. From the beginning, we have recognised the need to be able to rapidly activate a European community of change agents online and on the ground. This is where we now need to invest.

5 Inside WeMove.EU

Team: WeMove has currently 14 full-time members of staff and 8 part-time staff based all across Europe from Warsaw to Madrid and Bordeaux to Brussels and Berlin. Staff is organised in three Teams: Campaigns, Technology and Operations. We have a Management Team made up

of the managers of those teams plus the Executive Director. You can learn more about our team here: <https://www.wemove.eu/team>

Governance: The team is accountable to a strong board based across Europe. It is composed of members with huge knowledge and expertise of online campaigning on the national level (Campact in Germany and 38 Degrees in the UK). Other members of the Board bring a great understanding and experience on EU level policy making and influencing and the link back to citizens. Updated information on the Board composition are available on our website here: <https://www.wemove.eu/team>

Technology: Over three years of rapid growth, we've learned a lot about the role of technology in online campaigning. Drawing upon that learning, we are now building next generation infrastructure to match the challenges of modern campaigning and get ready for big organising in Europe. We believe in scaling our efforts to the whole sector and sharing our work with other campaigning organisations by using free and open source licenses and participating in progressive networks e.g. Open. We've set ourselves high standards, among them: better privacy and data control. All of our members' data and almost all the tools are hosted within the EU. Every new service we provide is inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities. Alongside building strong technology foundations, we test new approaches and new tactics for engaging and mobilising our supporters.

Legal base: Since 16 June 2015, WeMove.EU is incorporated as a European Cooperative (SCE) registered in Berlin.

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