WHO we are

Friends of the Earth Europe
Annual Review 2014

Friends of the Earth Europe Board 2014-15
Lawrence Sudlow, Friends of the Earth Spain – Chair; Bertrand Sansonnens, Friends of the Earth Switzerland – Secretary; Katie Kiria, Friends of the Earth Georgia – Treasurer; Andy Atkins, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland – Member; Eddie Olsson, Friends of the Earth Sweden – Member.

Cover image: Silje Lundberg from Young Friends of the Earth Norway is a leader in the campaign to protect the Lofoten islands from oil exploration, natures-keepers.org © Luka Tomac / FoEE

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It gives me great pleasure to introduce this review of our work and the impact we have had over the last year.

At a time when the political climate in Brussels is posing new threats to our work, it is heartening to be reminded of the strength and diversity of our network, and of the work of citizens and communities across Europe who are at the forefront of real solutions to benefit people and planet.

Last year saw familiar obstacles as well as some emerging threats. The new European Commission, under the guise of ‘better regulation’, seems set on pursuing an ideological agenda against environmental and social policies, with potentially disastrous consequences. This has so far resulted in the scrapping of key sustainable resource use and recycling targets – the so-called ‘circular economy package’. The worry is there may be more to come in 2015, with vital nature protection laws being called into question. At the same time, negotiations for the proposed EU-US trade deal rumble on, representing a similar assault on our hard-won environmental, social and health standards in Europe.

At a time when policymakers are lagging behind, citizens and communities are leading the way. Local energy projects are springing up across Europe, and taking back control of our energy system. Food co-operatives, farmers’ markets and community-supported agriculture systems are leading the way for a better food future.

Nature protection is also ever-strong at the local level. Last year also saw the launch of our ‘Keepers’ photography exhibition and book, bringing together conservationists from 13 member groups fighting to protect wild nature across the continent.

As we face the challenges of 2015, some of the obstacles may be new, but our motivation remains the same. As Andreas Demetropoulos from Cyprus, profiled in ‘Keepers’ put it, “It’s a matter of love; when you love something you are committed to looking after it. You see how things should be in the future, and this horizon keeps you going”.

For me, for all of us in the Friends of the Earth network, and for everyone who shares our values, it is vital that we retain our commitment to our vision of the future, and do not lose sight of this horizon.

MAGDA STOCZKIEWICZ. DIRECTOR, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH EUROPE
MAY 2015
The process to develop climate and energy policies for Europe for 2030 began badly. The first proposal from the European Commission, early in 2014, did not even include a target for reducing energy use. Friends of the Earth Europe did a number of things to correct this. We exposed flaws in the Commission’s methodology and were able to convince national and EU officials that much more ambitious savings make economic sense. We pushed for improvements, as did seven member state ministries. This was accompanied by articles by the Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, BBC and other media which helped highlight the role of efficiency in reducing gas imports.

All this resulted in a reversal from the Commission which later in the year recommended 30% energy efficiency as part the EU’s 2030 climate package. A weaker target of ‘at least 27% savings’ was adopted by heads of state. But the fact there is a long-term energy savings target at all can be traced to Friends of the Earth. The difference we made is still paying off with good chances the target will be increased in future.
Ahead of the COP20 UN climate talks in Lima in December, Young Friends of the Earth Europe called for climate justice alongside many other civil society organisations at the Social pre-COP in Venezuela. Then they brought 50 European youth to Brussels in December for a parallel ‘Lima in Brussels’ week of climate workshops and movement building looking ahead to COP21 in Paris.

“THE INDUSTRY IS TRYING TO CHANGE THE LEGISLATION...TO REPEAT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE FAVOURABLE POLICIES WE’VE SEEN IN THE U.S.”

ANTOINE SIMON, SHALE GAS CAMPAIGNER IN IPS NEWS

Our movement to put power generation in citizens’ hands continued apace with our ‘Community Power’ project to promote the benefits of community-owned and run renewable energy sources. Numerous successful projects can be found in our partner countries. Examples in our brochure include the isles of Eigg in Scotland and Samso in Denmark which have achieved 100% renewables-based energy self-sufficiency. Back in Brussels, our advocacy work ensured EU state aid guidelines now support a wider range of community energy projects.

“THE ENERGY REVOLUTION”

Keeping Europe Fracking-Free

While we have seen important global victories in the fight against shale gas – including fracking bans in Scotland and New York – we continue to expose the threat shale gas poses to people and planet. Our research revealed how fracking threatens water-stressed and earthquake-prone regions around the world. Back in Brussels we shed light on the tangled web of EU shale gas lobbyists operating to weaken regulation.
2014 began and ended with wins in the fight to keep Europe GMO-free. In January a two-thirds majority of EU governments said no to the cultivation of a second genetically modified maize. By December there was strong momentum behind new rules to give governments the right to permanently ban GM crops on their territories.

This national opt-out law, while not perfect, is considerably stronger than it could have been thanks to pressure put on the European Parliament by Friends of the Earth groups. We were active in contacting parliamentarians about the flaws in the draft rules which could have given biotech companies a legal say in proposed bans. Our advocacy included the hand-over of 165,000 signatures from concerned citizens and by the autumn the parliament had deleted the worst parts of the draft. The opt-out law is now in place having been passed early in 2015. For the first time a country’s right to reject GMOs is enshrined in law.

The onus is now on member states to legislate responsibly and keep our fields GMO-free.
MEAT ATLAS

What are the global impacts of industrial meat and dairy production? Our Meat Atlas provides a comprehensive overview of the climate, local environment and health problems caused by industrial agriculture. From free trade deals that lead to lower food standards, to water stresses from intensive livestock farming, we made a powerful case for sustainable local food.

FIXING THE FOOD SYSTEM

With partners from five countries, we launched a project to promote the benefits of sustainable local food, such as farmers’ markets and food cooperatives, to connect it to citizens. Examples like the surging farmers’ market scene in Sofia prove communities are ready and able to provide the solutions to our broken agricultural system – although they need more support from policymakers.

“WE DON’T NEED TO TAKE RISKS WITH UNTESTED AND TOXIC GM CROPS WHEN SAFER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE WAYS TO FARM ARE AT HAND.” MUTE SCHIMPF, FOOD CAMPAIGNER IN THE PARLIAMENT MAGAZINE

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS 2014

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

GETTING TOUGH ON LAND GRABBERS

We turned up the heat on the European financiers of land grabs overseas. We filed a complaint to the OECD about Rabobank, one of the financiers of the palm oil company Bumitama, and two months later it cut its ties with an illegal plantation in Indonesia. We exposed the failings of another palm oil company – Wilmar International – to live up to its promise to cut out land grabbing and the exploitation of human rights from its supply chain.

John Muyisho, a farmer affected by land grabbing in Uganda. © Jason Taylor / FoE
History was made in June when the UN Human Rights Council agreed to develop binding rules to stop human rights violations by transnational corporations. This came after huge pressure from international civil society groups and many countries in the global south.

Friends of the Earth Europe took a lead role in a ‘Treaty Alliance’ of more than 600 organisations calling for a strong international law to protect human rights and environmental defenders from destructive business practices. We used our international network to bring a large delegation of representatives of communities from areas affected by harmful business practices – including Nigeria, Palestine and Uruguay – to present their cases at the Council meeting in Geneva.

The proposal is in early stages, and our challenge now is to get the EU to engage in the process. We are working with the Treaty Alliance to push national governments to put pressure on the EU, and put human and environmental rights ahead of corporate profits.
CLEANING UP THE NIGER DELTA

We worked closely with Friends of the Earth groups in Nigeria, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria to push Shell and other oil companies to clean up their mess in the Niger Delta. More than 40,000 people signed a petition calling on Shell to act on its pollution, and the Nigerian government gathered governments, civil society and corporations to implement a UN clean-up report. A new government in Nigeria will now finally have to act to clean up the Delta.

“WHAT WE SEE IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. GIVEN THE LACK OF A MANDATORY LOBBY REGISTER, TOO MUCH OF THE LOBBYING DIRECTED AT EU INSTITUTIONS IS SHROUDED IN SECRECY.”

NATACHA CINGOTTI, TRANSPARENCY CAMPAIGNER IN EURACTIV

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS 2014
RESOURCE USE, NEW EUROPEAN COMMISSION, & EU FUNDS

MIXED RESOURCE RESULTS

It was a mixed year for our work on resource use. Significant achievements came when the European Commission adopted our recommendations for a 70% EU recycling target by 2030, and for ‘footprint’ indicators to measure materials, greenhouse gases, land and water use. But, these strong legislative proposals were scrapped by the incoming European Commission. Promises to replace them with a ‘more ambitious’ package will be under close scrutiny.

FIGHTING DEREGERULATION

The revised work programme and structure of the new European Commission, led by Jean Claude Juncker, signaled a frightening deprioritisation of the environment. We were quick to react to this turn of events and with our partners in the Green 10 we mobilised the European Parliament to intervene. We successfully pushed for the inclusion of sustainability in the remit of first vice-president Frans Timmermans. With the new Commission’s fierce deregulation agenda, we are fighting to uphold EU laws that protect people and planet.

GREENER EU FUNDS

EU funds until 2020 for central and eastern Europe are markedly more sustainable after four years of strong advocacy by us at the EU level, as well as from Friends of the Earth and Bankwatch groups in member states. More funding was allocated for climate action, and future projects will be selected based on strict sustainability criteria, in part thanks to our critical analysis of the worryingly unsustainable draft plans that member states had originally submitted.
EU-US TRADE DEAL
- STOP THE TROJAN TREATY

"EUROPE’S SAFETY-FIRST POLICIES ARE A FUNDAMENTAL CORNERSTONE AND MUST NOT BE TRADED AWAY TO PLEASE INDUSTRY."

MUTE SCHIMPF, FOOD CAMPAIGNER IN THE GUARDIAN

STOPPING TTIP
- THE TROJAN TREATY

The transatlantic trade deal under negotiation between the EU and US became headline news in 2014, in part due to our high-profile campaigning at the EU level and awareness-raising by national Friends of the Earth groups.

Among the dangers posed by the deal – known as TTIP – are threats to food safety standards and measures that would give excessive rights to overseas investors.

Our giant inflatable Trojan horse began a tour of Europe, warning of the dangers of this ‘Trojan treaty’. In Denmark, Germany and Hungary, Friends of the Earth groups took to the streets to warn citizens of the dangers posed by the trade deal to people and planet.

In Brussels we brought the controversies of the deal to the forefront of the public debate. We helped nearly 150,000 citizens – a record for a European Commission consultation – say that they don’t want corporate courts as part of the treaty. We uncovered the billions of Euros European
governments were forced to pay out to investors by these secret courts under existing trade agreements, and with a report and high level conference helped put the controversial investment part of the deal under public scrutiny.

We played an important role in increasing the transparency of the negotiations. When the talks began they were shrouded in secrecy with negotiating documents off-limits to all but a select few, but we helped lead a coalition of 250 organisations and forced the European Commission to release key texts. Now MEPs now have more access to documents, and documents that were previously only shared with national governments are public.

Yet these measures do not go far enough. Many of the texts that have been published only confirm our concerns about this corporate captured trade deal. With our Trojan horse visiting seven more countries in 2015 we will continue to mobilise public opposition to stop TTIP.
Highlights of our member groups’ achievements in 2014.

FINLAND
CLIMATE LAW SUCCESS

After several years of campaigning by Friends of the Earth Finland, the Finnish government approved a strong climate law which commits the country to an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. While Friends of the Earth Finland is continuing to call for at least a 95% reduction, the law remains a huge success for the climate movement.

SCOTLAND
ON THE ROAD TO A FRACKING BAN

The Scottish government announced a moratorium on fracking after strong pressure from Friends of the Earth Scotland and many community groups, as mounting evidence on the public health, local environment and wider climate risks forced its hand. Friends of the Earth Scotland is working hard to ensure underground coal gasification is included in the moratorium and to gather huge support for a permanent ban.

ENGLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND
FRACK FREE

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland celebrated as they moved into the fourth year of keeping the UK free from fracking. Not one local council has so far allowed fracking to go ahead, and Wales followed Scotland in implementing a moratorium to suspend fracking. This is despite the UK Government pushing to go “all out for shale”. Friends of the Earth groups across the country joined with other grassroots movements to call on all politicians to say no to fracking for good.
**Estonia**

**In-Tents Green Education**

Friends of the Earth Estonia’s ‘Green Tents’ education drive raised awareness of how to eat and live more sustainably. Over the last one and a half years, 17 green tents have popped up at public events and in schools across the country. The tents give visitors the opportunity to join workshops, discuss ideas, and learn to think and act green.

![Green education workshops in Estonia. © FoE Estonia](image)

**Sweden**

**Save the Night Trains**

More than 7,000 people signed Friends of the Earth Sweden’s petition calling on Deutsche Bahn to stop the closure of European night trains between Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Berlin, Prague and Paris. Several routes were closed in December but Friends of the Earth Sweden will continue to fight for their reopening as a founder of a newly formed international coalition for night trains.

![Sowing the seeds of struggle. © FoE Austria](image)

**Austria**

**Seeds of Change**

Thanks to the help of over half a million supporters who signed a petition, Friends of the Earth Austria was able to help overturn a proposed EU regulation on seeds. The regulation would have put numerous old and rare varieties of fruit and vegetables at risk. The European Parliament rejected the proposal by an overwhelming majority, and a year later, the European Commission finally withdrew it. Rich seed diversity survived after all!

![Informing people about the benefits of energy savings. © FoE Russia](image)

**Russia**

**Wellbeing for All**

Another new member has been welcomed to our network – Friends of the Earth Russia. Established in 1992, the groups is active across the country and works for nature conservation, and health and wellbeing of people in Russia and around the world. In 2014 the group ran an information campaign on energy efficiency across more than 22 regions of Russia, showing alternatives to fossil fuels, nuclear and large scale hydropower plants.

![Sowing the seeds of struggle. © FoE Austria](image)
**SPAIN**

**GIVING POWER TO COMMUNITIES**

Friends of the Earth Spain helped make community-run solar power a reality for citizens when they opened a Solar Garden in Madrid. 89 people have bought into the scheme to help expel dirty energy from the national grid, helping to save 24 tons of CO₂ each year. The project has been so successful that a second community solar project is already well underway.

**WALLONIA & BRUSSELS**

**GETTING BACK TO NATURE**

There were queues around the block for the opening of Friends of the Earth Wallonia’s new film ‘Présent Simple’. The beautiful documentary chronicles the benefits of living a simpler life, closer to nature, and it opened to packed audiences across the south of Belgium. After a successful crowdfunding campaign, audiences around the country will soon be able to share the experiences of the film’s subjects, Marc and Veronika, two former Friends of the Earth Wallonia volunteers, who now live in the Czech countryside.

**FRANCE**

**KICKING OUT COAL**

Friends of the Earth France pressured the French bank Société Générale to stop financing the Alpha Coal project in Australia. This mine is a climate bomb that would destroy hopes of meaningful climate action and threaten the Great Barrier Reef. Through actions and advocacy work, Friends of the Earth France helped push Société Générale to withdraw its funding.

**LUXEMBOURG**

**TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY**

Land use planning in Luxembourg dominated discussions as the government proposed new guidelines for the territorial development of the country. The plans for house building, industries, and streets was based on GDP growth of 2-3% per year. Friends of the Earth Luxembourg encouraged debate about the problems with economic growth and about alternatives and wellbeing. It developed detailed proposals for priorities in mobility and housing.
**SWITZERLAND**  
**PROTECTING PONDS, PREVENTING PESTICIDES**

Friends of the Earth Switzerland celebrated the creation of the 100th community-built pond as part of its campaign to save amphibians. Frogs and related species are disappearing at an alarming rate due to many causes, including intensified agriculture and habitat loss. Friends of the Earth Switzerland continues to be actively engaged for cleaner agriculture and released a report showing the real costs to society of the massive use of pesticides.

**GERMANY**  
**FIGHTING FOR FOOD SAFETY**

Over 50,000 people marched in Berlin for agricultural policy reform as part of Friends of the Earth Germany's Good Food, Good Farming campaign – twice as many demonstrators as the previous year. The protestors called on the German government to reject the proposed EU-US trade deal over concerns that it threatens food safety standards. Friends of the Earth Germany is also working intensively on strong legal protections against GMOs, and is calling for a halt to the further expansion of factory farms.

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**  
**HYDROPOWER OUT**

A warm welcome to Friends of the Earth Bosnia and Herzegovina which joined our network in 2014! Based in Banja Luka, the group has been bringing together activists and professionals to work for people and planet since 1999. 2014 saw it campaign against damaging hydropower projects in the Sutjeska national park. 6,000 people signed a petition to force a citizens’ initiative calling for a stop to damaging development in the country’s oldest protected area.

**CROATIA**  
**KEEPING SERVICES PUBLIC**

With the Croatian government intending to privatise the country’s highways, Friends of the Earth Croatia joined forces with unions and other organisations to collect nearly half a million signatures against the plan – enough to force a referendum. Citizens across Croatia are now waiting for the chance to formally say ‘no’ to the privatisation of public goods.
2014 saw the launch of KEEVERS – a photo exhibition and book by Friends of the Earth Europe, with photos from Luka Tomac, a photographer and campaigner with Friends of the Earth Croatia. It documents the tireless efforts made by activists and volunteers to undo the damage done to Europe’s precious ecosystems by irresponsible human activity, and restore our continent to a wilder, more natural and more vital place.

While they may be physically separated by the nature they strive to protect – the mountains of Bulgaria, the fjords of Norway, the Hungarian grasslands, and many more – the individuals profiled remain united by their vision of a wilder world, where people are once more connected with the nature that sustains them.

Our work on nature will gather pace in 2015 to connect citizens with the natural world across Europe and make sure EU decision-makers strengthen vital nature protections.

Read more about the KEEVERS project: natures-keepers.org
“IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO GIVE NATURE A SPACE OF ITS OWN FOR DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO GIVE PEOPLE A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE THE VALUE OF WILDERNESS.”

**DR. HEIDRUN HEIDECKE**, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH GERMANY

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**GERMANY**

The Friends of the Earth network was saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Heidrun Heidecke early in 2015. Dr. Heidecke had a distinguished career with Friends of the Earth Germany, and her work was integral to the restoration of a former coal mine north of Leipzig. The area is now home to beavers, cranes, otters, ospreys and many more, and serves as a powerful symbol of transformation.

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**NORWAY**

Friends of the Earth Norway is fighting against the dumping of toxic mining tailings in nature-rich fjords. More than 30 European and international groups wrote to the Norwegian government to call for a halt to the dumping, and hundreds have since protested in Førde, home to one of the affected fjords.

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**CZECH REPUBLIC**

Friends of the Earth Czech Republic won the prestigious EuroNatur conservation award for its ‘outstanding commitment to the protection of the Šumava National Park’. Earlier in the year, a Czech court ruled that protestors, including many Friends of the Earth Czech Republic members, had acted peacefully and lawfully in their 2011 protests against loggers.
**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**2014**

**INCOME 2014 (IN EUROS)**

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount (in Euros)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational grant – EU</td>
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<td>Project grants – EU</td>
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<td>Project grants – Other governments</td>
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<td>Project grants – Foundations</td>
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<td>Project contributions – Members &amp; partners</td>
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<td>Membership fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,389,216</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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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](http://www.nbb.be) from 1st July 2015. Quote company number 0443.252.089. Details of our funding can be found on our website: [www.foeeurope.org/about/financial](http://www.foeeurope.org/about/financial)

**THANK YOU!** Friends of the Earth Europe’s work would not be possible were it not for the support of our donors. We would like to thank the following institutions and foundations which helped fund our work: EU Commission Directorate General (DG) Environment; DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid; DG Agriculture and Rural Development; Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (Erasmus+); the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (Intelligent Energy Europe); the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Federal Ministry for the Environment – Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety; European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe; Adessium Foundation, European Climate Foundation; Ford Foundation; Grassroots Foundation; Heinrich Böll Foundation; Isvara Foundation; James M. Goldsmith Foundation; The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust; Mava Foundation; Open Society Foundation; David and Lucile Packard Foundation; V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation; The New Venture Fund and Wallace Global Fund. Thanks also to Friends of the Earth Europe national member groups and Friends of the Earth International.
In December 2015, the United Nations climate talks will take place in Paris. World governments expect to agree to a new global treaty to combat climate change. As the catastrophic impacts of climate change become more evident, so too escalates the urgency to act.

Last year we were present at the climate talks in Peru to call for justice and real solutions to the climate crisis.

In the run-up to Paris, and beyond this summit, we will continue to push European governments to match their stated commitment to limit global warming with action to transform Europe’s energy system. We will continue to promote the wealth of proven solutions that are already delivering transformation around Europe and the world.

We will be following developments in the EU’s Energy Union strategy. This has recognised the need to save energy and help citizens take control of clean, local renewable sources, and we’ll be watching that these moves are not negated with new investments in fossil fuel infrastructure.

Throughout 2015, Friends of the Earth will be bringing more and more people together to fight against the power of the polluters and make sure decision-makers hear the voiceless.

We will be on the streets before, during and after the climate negotiations in Paris and as long as it takes to realise energy solutions that benefit ordinary people, not multinational corporations.

For us Paris is just the beginning – an opportunity to start connecting our demands for justice, equality, food, jobs, and rights, and to strengthen the movement in a way that will force governments to act in the interests of people and not in the interests of elites. Paris will launch us into 2016 as a year of action – a year when people’s demands and people’s solutions take centre stage.

The Paris deadline will come and go, like others before. But the energy transformation is under way and politicians should respond to citizens’ demands and facilitate it, not slow it down.