OUR impact

Friends of the Earth Europe
Annual Review 2017
What should Friends of the Earth do to help put Europe onto a just and sustainable footing?

This was the question I asked myself, with a little trepidation, as I walked through the doors of Friends of the Earth Europe in September 2017 as the new director. I came to Brussels from Friends of the Earth Croatia, where I’d started as a volunteer some 20 years ago.

Croatia is the most recent country to join the EU. Joining the bloc was a long-term goal, and it brought with it legal reforms and improved environmental laws. But since becoming a member state, the pressure to improve rule of law and build a stable economy has fallen away. Amidst a long economic crisis, Croatia has struggled with a lack of vision as it has tried to find its place in a changing EU.

Croatia’s experience mirrors many of the challenges facing the EU as a whole. Europe too lacks vision and is still far from a path to sustainable, fairer societies.

In 2017, we were starkly reminded of how big our environmental challenge is: Trump withdrew from the Paris climate agreement, data emerged of a shocking 76% loss of insects on German nature reserves since 1990, polar ice reached its second-lowest level ever, and the astonishing extent of plastic pollution in the world’s oceans was revealed.

2017 also saw environmental defenders around the globe facing record violence and deaths, whilst attacks and restrictions on fragile civil society and independent media within Europe put our democracies on the line.

My initial answer to my question is that Friends of the Earth, and our radiant network of national organisations, must be at the forefront of a vibrant and strong democratic space. Civil society must be better connected across Europe and to our grassroots. And we must be even more fearless in advancing the visionary solutions we need to transform to the sustainable and just world we know is possible.

Friends of the Earth Europe is already on this path. In 2017, during EU debates on the Future of Europe, we played a key role bringing civil society together behind a ‘vision for a sustainable Europe for citizens’. We joined renowned scientists to expose how there is no room for gas if we want to avoid catastrophic climate change. We hosted the first convergence of energy citizens, at the forefront of the fossil free future we need. And we began the debate on moving to a truly circular economy based on ‘sufficiency’.

Friends of the Earth was at the centre of mass nature and anti-corruption protests in Bulgaria; helped stop fracking in Scotland, Ireland, and Spain; our popular education programme, School of Sustainability, reached 4.5 million people; and the whole network mobilised to successfully halt oil drilling in the Lofoten islands of Norway.

This is truly a momentous time to be a friend of the earth.
RESISTING AGRIBUSINESS MONOPOLIES

We continued to campaign against the worrying trend of agribusiness mergers consolidating power over our food systems. With our ‘Agrifood Atlas’ we showed how monopolies are on the rise in every section of the food chain. With six of the world’s seven largest agribusiness companies set to merge into just three, we led European mobilisation calling on EU regulators to block the biggest merger of them all between Bayer and Monsanto, which we dubbed the ‘merger from hell’.

UPHOLDING EU NATURE LAWS

We worked with Friends of the Earth Bulgaria to put pressure on the European Commission not to fund a motorway through Kresna gorge, in the south of Bulgaria. The gorge is protected by EU nature laws and is one of the country’s most pristine sites. With our ‘Save Kresna’ partners we submitted a legal complaint testifying that the motorway is illegal as it contravenes nature protections.

We brought local witnesses to Brussels to meet decision-makers and called on the European Commission to investigate.

“THE EVIDENCE IS STRONG AND GROWING THAT PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES CAN ONLY THRIVE WHEN THEY HAVE ACCESS TO NATURE.”

ROBBIE BLAKE, NATURE CAMPAIGNER
IN THE GUARDIAN
We joined forces with the trade union movement to call for a ‘just transition’ – a transition away from fossil fuels that leaves no-one behind. At the COP23 international climate talks in Bonn, Germany, we held an event to explore what such a transition should look like and how to make it happen. International speakers brought examples – good and bad – from around the globe. Throughout the year we held talks and strengthened our alliance with trade unions for a plan for the planet which is also a plan for workers and their communities.

“TRUMP HAS EXCLUDED AMERICA FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE REALITY OF CLIMATE CHANGE. THIS MUST BE A TRIGGER FOR INCREASING CLIMATE ACTION IN EUROPE TO END FOSSIL FUEL DEPENDENCE BY 2030.”

*SUSANN SCHERBARTH*, CLIMATE JUSTICE CAMPAIGNER IN LE FIGARO/AFP
FOSSIL FREE EUROPE VICTORY FOR NORWAY

The Norwegian government announced that the Arctic Lofoten islands will be protected against oil and gas drilling for at least the next four years. This marked a significant victory for Friends of the Earth Norway and our Fossil Free Europe campaign. For more than 20 years, the oil industry has been battling for control of the region, but resistance from local communities, fishers and environmental groups has managed to protect it.

As part of the campaign we projected imagery from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster onto Norway House in Brussels to warn of the dangers of fossil fuel extraction especially in pristine environments like the Arctic.

“THE TRUTH IS THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO ROOM FOR GAS IN THE TRANSITION WE NEED TO A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE.”

OUR DIRECTOR JAGODA MUNIĆ.
IN THE IRISH TIMES
We attacked new subsidies for fossil fuels, including nearly €200 million for gas projects, and upped the ante in our campaign for a Fossil Free Europe.

foeeurope.org/NoRoomForGas

“IT IS SCANDALOUS THAT, JUST SIX MONTHS AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT, THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK HAS LAUNCHED A PROGRAM TO INJECT PUBLIC MONEY INTO THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY.”

COLIN ROCHE, EXTRACTIVES CAMPAIGNER IN LE MONDE
“INVOLVING NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE RATIFICATION OF FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS WILL INCREASE THE DEMOCRATIC SCRUTINY AND GIVE CITIZENS A STRONGER VOICE.”

PAUL DE CLERCK, TRADE CAMPAIGNER IN AFP

We continued to expose the undemocratic nature of EU trade, notably the controversial CETA deal with Canada. We campaigned at national level against the ratification of CETA. We supported the Belgian government’s request for a European Court of Justice opinion on CETA. We worked with allies to collect 415,000 signatures objecting to the establishment of a Multilateral Investment Court System and published ten reasons why the EU’s proposal doesn’t fix a fundamentally flawed system.

Our vision of a just, sustainable, democratic Europe was endorsed by more than 250 cross-sector civil society organisations. Entitled ‘Scenario 6: Sustainable Europe for its Citizens’, in response to President Juncker’s lacklustre 5 scenarios, our proposal got the attention of politicians considering the future of Europe. We presented the scenario in the Italian and Danish parliaments, to European Commission Vice-President Timmermans, and to groups in the European Parliament. We’ll be building alliances and momentum for the Europe We Want ahead of the 2019 European Parliament elections.

foeeurope.org/6thscenario
We took action to push the European Commission to tackle the plastic crisis. © Rethink Plastic

As the environmental impact of plastic rocketed into the public consciousness and up the political agenda, we pushed the European Commission to draw up laws to tackle plastic pollution. We played a leading role in the Rethink Plastic alliance of NGOs and made sure the demands of over 750,000 people around Europe who called on the EU to clean up its act on plastic pollution were heard in Brussels.

“But do we need these single-use plastic bottles in the first place or is there a more sustainable option such as reusable glass?”

Meadhbh Bolger, Resource Justice Campaigner in the Financial Times

LEADING THE DEBATE ON LIMITING CONSUMPTION

Despite its commitment to sustainable development, the EU is falling short when it comes to reducing the ecological footprint of its citizens and liberating ecological space for development in the global South. Here is where we need ‘sufficiency’: a strategy of limiting consumption of energy and natural resources in absolute terms. To bring this new concept into the EU policy arena, we organised a conference that brought together representatives from the EU institutions, NGOs, and think tanks. The event’s debates laid the foundations for our booklet ‘Sufficiency: moving beyond the gospel of eco-efficiency’.

Our publication explores sufficiency and how to move beyond eco-efficiency. © FoEE
CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS 2017

YOUTH, NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE EARTH AFRICA FORMED

Young Friends of the Earth continued to broaden and develop its network, with an exchange between seven groups and counterparts in Friends of the Earth in Africa aimed at strengthening the climate justice youth movement in both regions. As part of the project – where participants explored effective solidarity, best practice in youth work and future collaborations – Young Friends of the Earth Africa was formed.

SYNERGIES IN EASTERN EUROPE

For the very first time, we facilitated a gathering of Eastern member groups to build support and foster knowledge sharing. The event mapped individual and common challenges in the region and built understanding of the historical and political background of Central and Eastern European and Russian organisations. It led to collaborative work on a range of topics including protecting the Danube river, joint fundraising, and continuing the School of Sustainability ideology of environmental transformative education.

CLIMATE CAMPS, LAWSUITS AND ‘AGRI-ACTIVISM’

Young Friends of the Earth Europe’s ever-growing network of national groups went from strength to strength in 2017. In Germany, BUNDjugend helped push the German government to quit coal with a 200-person, 12-day, youth-focused climate camp in the Rhineland – the largest coal-mining area in Germany. In Norway, Natur og Ungdom launched a high-profile court case against their government, urging it to stop drilling for oil in the Arctic.

For the second year in a row, Young Friends of the Earth Europe set up young volunteers with long placements on Caerhys organic farm in Wales, where they got hands-on experience of sustainable agriculture practices and mentorship in campaigning and activism.

“IT IS CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT THE STATE IS VIOLATING THE CONSTITUTION AND OUR RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT BY ALLOCATING NEW OIL FIELDS.”

GAUTE EITERJORD, CHAIR OF NATUR OG UNGDOM/YOUNG FOE NORWAY

Celebrating 10 years of Young FoEE; volunteers meet the team at Caerhys organic farm. © Young foEE
Our work to hold corporations to account for environmental and human rights abuses achieved notable successes at the national, European and international levels. After years of campaigning by Friends of the Earth France, and more than three years of legislative debate which was subject to strong lobbying by the private sector, the French parliament adopted a law on transnationals’ duty of vigilance which obliges corporations to respect human rights and the environment. This law is the first of its kind in the world. The French example is a boost to our efforts to get the EU and its Member States to participate in a United Nations process to establish a binding treaty to make all businesses accountable for human rights abuses. We exerted pressure on parties to participate in the UN talks and succeeded in bringing several EU countries – as well as the European External Action Service – to the negotiating table. While we push for an international law to prevent corporate impunity, we continue to use the tools at our disposal to hold corporations to account. We supported the Ikebiri community from Nigeria to bring a legal case against the Italian oil giant ENI to seek the clean-up of, and compensation for, a catastrophic oil spill in the Niger delta. This is the first case of its kind in Italy.

“EUROPE NEEDS TO EMBRACE THIS HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW ITS CITIZENS AND THE WHOLE WORLD THAT IT PRIORITISES HUMAN RIGHTS OVER THE INTERESTS OF BIG BUSINESS.”

ANNE VAN SCHAIK, CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY CAMPAIGNER IN EURACTIV
ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND
MAKING WALES BEE-FRIENDLY

Friends of the Earth Cyrmu made great strides in making the country into a safe haven for bees. It worked with the Welsh Government and other nature groups to introduce the Bee Friendly scheme, which certifies organisations which complete a set of four actions to help pollinators: on food, habitats, community involvement and pesticides. 30 organisations have already gained accreditation, including schools, universities, local authorities, and housing associations. The race is on for the first town and city in Wales to be certified.

BELGIUM (FLANDERS)
OCCUPYING IN DEFENSE OF NATURE

Around 300 people took part in a three-day festival-style occupation of a green zone in the city of Leuven. Project developers plan to turn the Parkveld zone into a business and residential district. Friends of the Earth Flanders liaised with local residents and farmers who will be directly affected and also brought a global message to the occupation about the need to protect nature and fight climate change. Since the festival even more people are actively involved in the defense of Parkveld.

IRELAND
FRACKING BANNED. FOREVER.

In 2017 a new law said no fracking in Ireland. Ever. Friends of the Earth Ireland helped 20,000 people support the ban through signing petitions, making submissions to their elected representatives or writing to the Irish Government’s Environment Committee. Campaigners gathered outside government buildings at all major decision points, attended all government debates, and organised marches and parties to highlight the anti-fracking message.

SPAIN
MURALS FOR RESISTANCE

Friends of the Earth Spain chose a creative action to reclaim justice and signal the end of dirty energy. In eight cities, activists painted resistance murals under the motto “Libera tu energía” (Free Your Energy). Berta Cáceres, the environmental defender murdered in Honduras in 2016, was a recurring motif. With artistic and fun activities, 135 activists reached over 2,350 people in the street and many more via social networks and national and regional media, raising the profile of clean, community-controlled energy.
MALTA
NATURE THERAPY

Villa Chelsea garden in Malta is a place where people with mental health problems thrive in harmony with their social and natural environment. Friends of the Earth Malta has been giving workshops on topics including vegetable and herb planting, composting, pollinator-friendly gardening, and building garden furniture from pallets. Participants learn about fresh, healthy, local food, the importance of pollinators, and environmental threats, and they provide edible delights for the community.

CZECH REPUBLIC
KEEPING THE WILDERNESS WILD

After a long campaign, Friends of the Earth Czech Republic successfully pushed the Czech Parliament to strengthen the country’s national parks laws, overturning amendments backed by the President which would have watered down restrictions on logging and construction. After more than 50,000 people called on the government to reject the amendments, and 400 people demonstrated in Prague in front of the houses of parliament, MPs did the right thing and backed stronger nature protection laws.

FINLAND
COAL-FREE FINLAND

Friends of the Earth Finland pushed local governments to commit to a coal- and fossil-free economy powered by renewables. Local groups in seven towns and cities persuaded over a hundred new local councilors to promote coal- and peat-free energy production. The coal-free Finland campaign also led to the cities of Espoo and Vantaa committing to be carbon-neutral by 2030.

CYPRUS
CUTTING OUT PLASTIC

With plastic waste choking our natural areas like never before, Friends of the Earth Cyprus is pushing back against the plastic flood by bringing people together to discuss the problems and create solutions. Their work educating the public about plastic pollution through beach clean-ups, organising reuse and compost workshops, arranging clothes swaps and promoting reusable bags, water bottles and coffee mugs, means the movement to cut out plastic in Cyprus is gathering momentum.
SCOTLAND
FINAL FRACKING BAN

After six years of campaigning alongside community groups and activists, Friends of the Earth Scotland finally achieved a government ban on unconventional oil and gas extraction - in short: fracking. They helped 20,000 people respond to a public consultation via online actions, public events and providing support to community activists. This crucial decision, which won cross-party support, is protecting people and land, water and air as well as boosting the global fight against fracking.

LUXEMBOURG
SHATTERING THE GROWTH ILLUSION

Friends of the Earth Luxembourg continued to contest the dogma of growth. When the Luxembourgish government commissioned the economist Jeremy Rifkin to carry out a study on how to prepare Luxembourg for the third industrial revolution and digitalisation, Friends of the Earth Luxembourg protested outside the event to present his official findings. Holding up slogans such as 'growth: an illusion that will burst like a soap bubble' they questioned current economic policies and advocated for an exit from the spiral of growth and for a new sustainable economic and social model.

FRANCE
BNP PARIBAS TAKES MAJOR STEPS TO DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS

Friends of the Earth France forced France’s biggest private bank to drastically reduce its financing of so-called ‘unconventional’ fossil fuels: tar sands, shale gas, and oil and gas exploration and production projects in the Arctic. The move follows several years of campaigning targeting BNP Paribas for its support for climate-wrecking fossil fuel projects such as the Dakota Access Pipeline.

GERMANY
LARGEST EVER ANTI-COAL PROTEST

Ahead of the UN climate conference (COP23) in Bonn, 25,000 people gathered together to demand a phase-out of coal at Germany’s largest ever anti-coal protest. Friends of the Earth Germany worked with a number of other organisations to encourage maximum participation and thousands of activists travelled from all over the country, and further afield. Hubert Weiger, chairman of Friends of the Earth Germany said: "The success of climate protection in Germany depends entirely on Germany’s ability to solve its coal problem".

Pushing for a just transition away from coal outside Bonn. © FoE Germany

Activists burst the growth bubble outside the Luxembourgish Parliament. © FoE Luxembourg
SWITZERLAND
UNITED AGAINST PALM OIL

Friends of the Earth Switzerland forced palm oil onto the agenda at home and overseas. In just one week, 10,000 people signed a petition calling on big retailers to cut out palm oil and to offer alternatives. With Friends of the Earth groups in Malaysia, Nigeria and Honduras, they lobbied against free trade agreements that include palm oil – winning a freeze on free trade talks with Malaysia.

BELGIUM (WALLONIA)
NO TO NUKES

Friends of the Earth Wallonia and Brussels turned up the heat on Belgium’s dangerous nuclear power plants. A satirical video informing of a nuclear accident went viral on social media, with more than 10,000 views in just a couple of days. In June volunteers came together to take part in a huge human chain – 90 kilometres and 50,000 people long – to call for the country to shut down nuclear and develop green, community-owned energy projects.

NETHERLANDS
MILK SHAKE-UP

Three major Dutch supermarkets committed to supply 100% sustainable milk at a fair price for dairy farmers, after a successful campaign from Friends of the Earth Netherlands. 54,000 people signed a petition, and people took action in 16 cities across the country to put pressure on the supermarkets.

CROATIA
BINNING THE INCINERATOR IN ZAGREB

More than 20 years of campaigning by Friends of the Earth Croatia against a polluting waste incinerator in Zagreb paid off when the local government finally decided to scrap the project. This is an important step forward for the city’s waste management which remains bottom of the charts in Europe for separate collection and recycling.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA
WATER FOR PEOPLE, NOT PROFIT

With support from Friends of the Earth Bosnia and Herzegovina, the local community has been peacefully protesting against plans for destructive hydropower plants on the Kruščica river. They have been violently removed by police but these brave people are united and will continue to defend their right to a healthy environment and to water, while the investors have only a profit motive.
The first-ever European Energy Democracy convergence brought together 80 people from 20 countries who are all part of the growing movement to put the energy system in people’s hands. We organised the event with Rescoop.eu near Girona, Spain, to connect knowledge and ideas and empower more people to create clean, citizen-owned energy solutions. Participants learned from successful projects and shared experience of getting community energy off the ground.

Blogs and videos from the event spread the community energy message to the wider movement.

At the same time we pushed for citizens, not polluting industry, to benefit from the EU’s clean energy plans. Our campaign on the Clean Energy Package focused on tackling energy poverty and winning rights for communities to generate their own energy.

This included a stunt outside the Energy Council and multiple briefings and meetings. The European Commision and European Parliament supported measures to encourage community-owned renewables – a sign that the citizen energy is getting the recognition it deserves. And MEPs backed a 35% binding target for energy savings for 2030, and measures which will help lift people out of energy poverty as well as reduce emissions.
Thanks to our School of Sustainability project, people-centred and transformative education approaches have flourished: almost 2000 activities reached more than 4.5 million people in the last three years.

Our outreach and training activities enabled Friends of the Earth groups in 20 countries to integrate global justice and development issues into their work and to strengthen activist culture, coalitions and organising work.

We delivered capacity building on how to work with communities in resistance, meaning communities disproportionately impacted by social and environmental injustice. Participants shared knowledge and ideas about communities in resistance, including people suffering from health impacts due to pollution, and people losing their rights to access nature due to land grabbing.

FoEE and our member groups took part in solidarity actions, standing alongside each other and allies around the world.

We responded to calls related to human rights issues from countries including Russia, Honduras and the Philippines, and helped ensure that environmental defenders are protected, human rights abuses are prevented, and perpetrators face justice.

We published inspiring resources on our Tools for System Change website: virtual.foei.org/trainings/case-studies to help spread the learning and inspirational stories and enable anyone to benefit from the School of Sustainability.
FINANCIAL INFORMATION
2017

INCOME 2017 (IN EUROS)

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (in euros)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational grant – EU</td>
<td>700,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project grants – EU</td>
<td>1,768,219</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project grants – Other governments/institutions</td>
<td>618,303</td>
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<td>Project grants – Foundations</td>
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<td>Project contributions – Members &amp; partners</td>
<td>56,672</td>
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<td>Membership fees and donations</td>
<td>249,251</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>280,530</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,647,912</strong></td>
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EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT 2017 (IN EUROS)

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<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Amount (in euros)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Campaigning and communications</td>
<td>1,634,816</td>
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<td>Network development</td>
<td>185,765</td>
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<td>Support to national campaigns</td>
<td>1,855,405</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management &amp; organisational development</td>
<td>282,466</td>
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<td>Administration, IT &amp; office costs</td>
<td>658,221</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,616,674</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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EXPENSES BY TYPE 2017 (IN EUROS)

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Salaries</td>
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<td>Office costs</td>
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<td>Campaigning activities</td>
<td>567,017</td>
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<td>National member &amp; partner projects</td>
<td>1,726,832</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,616,674</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Reserves allocation for 2017

31,238
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 2018. Quote company number 0443.252.089. Details of our funding can be found on our website: www.foeeurope.org/about/financial

THANK YOU!

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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.

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