OUR impact

Friends of the Earth Europe
Annual Review 2018
Friends of the Earth Europe Board 2018-2019
Cara Augustenborg, Friends of the Earth Ireland – Chair; Leonore Gewessler, Friends of the Earth Austria – Secretary; Donald Pols, Friends of the Earth Netherlands – Treasurer; Nanna Clifforth, Friends of the Earth Denmark – member; Leena Kontinen, Friends of the Earth Finland – member; Martin Galea, Friends of the Earth Malta – member; Katia Uspenskaya, Friends of the Earth Russia – member; Akos Eger – Friends of the Earth Hungary – member; Ernst-Christoph Stolper, Germany – member.

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When we consider this together with seriously alarming figures on biodiversity and ecosystem collapse, and a shrinkage of civic space, it is clear we need people to bring positive and just solutions.

One truly inspiring example of people power is youth rising for urgent climate action across Europe, and the globe. Today’s youth are impacted people – they know their right to a future and a decent life is in peril, and they are demanding urgent climate action and justice from world leaders. The Friends of the Earth Europe network has been proud to support this youth-led movement and march in solidarity.

Last year Friends of the Earth Europe adopted our new five year strategy for the pursuit of our vision and solutions for a sustainable and environmentally, socially and economically just Europe. Part of this strategy is working to find new narratives. Last year, together with youth and women’s rights organisations, trades unions and other allies, we conducted research on how to stimulate wider debate on the future of Europe. Our testing confirmed the power of real-life, positive stories: people coming together to defend their rights and build more equal, caring communities can transcend borders and motivate others to act.

At the grassroots level, there are many examples of bravery and victories supported by our network. From the 20,000 citizens who pushed the Czech government to protect the country’s forests (page 15), to the German activists who saved the ancient Hambach forest from an expanding coal mine (page 8), and the Spanish groups stopping industrial livestock expansion (page 14).

Across Europe, Friends of the Earth groups advocated for just and sustainable solutions – be it by defining steps towards a fossil-free Europe, promoting the concept of sufficiency, advocating for agroecology, or setting course for sustainable trade. At the EU level we saw big wins on cutting plastics and boosting community energy.

Such examples of effective advocacy, resistance and promoting solutions underline the necessity of civil society in a healthy democracy. Looking ahead to a new European Parliament and Commission it is imperative that our institutions and elected representatives defend freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and the right to protest, and funding and access for civil society organisations. With democracy reinforced we can get on with changing the direction of Europe and achieving social, environmental and economic justice for future generations. In solidarity!
Winning the battle against plastic pollution

Pushing the EU to agree unprecedented cuts to single-use plastics

Friends of the Earth Europe and our network was central to the creation and ambition of new laws on plastics. From 2021, EU countries will ban several single-use plastics, introduce goals to reduce them in future, and put responsibility on manufacturers to pay for waste management and the clean-up of litter.

Conving legislators to regulate a hugely powerful industry was far from easy. In the face of huge industry resistance, we worked hard to shift the debate in Brussels.

With the Rethink Plastic alliance, we hosted innovative talkshow-style events with policymakers and media, and provided expert insight to shape the policy.

We helped shift the public debate too. We generated hundreds of media hits in some of Europe’s biggest publications, and released new research on how plastic packaging fails to prevent – and can instead cause – food waste. The new laws would simply not have been possible without widespread public demand – which our network succeeded in galvanising.

The time is ripe for Europe to transition away from single-use plastics to reusables.

MEADHBH BOLGER, RESOURCE JUSTICE CAMPAIGNER IN LE FIGARO

Cleaning up plastic in the UK. © FoE EWNi

ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND
SUPPORTING CITIZENS TO SCRAP PLASTICS

Over 200,000 people called on the UK government to tackle ocean plastics. Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland’s plastics campaign had widespread media coverage, engaged thousands of young people and helped start new local groups sharing tips on living without plastics. Online, thousands of people took part in #PlasticFreeFriday or took the #DrasticOnPlastic challenge to time how long they could last without using single-use plastic. As a result the environmental movement has helped make plastics a priority for the UK government which has tabled a plastic pollution bill.

Getting MEPs to pledge to vote to end plastic pollution. © Rethink Plastic
We were instrumental in bringing together broad civil society organisations to build power for a caring, more equal, greener Europe. Our ‘Manifesto for a Sustainable Europe for its Citizens’ sets out a future for Europe based on democracy, social and environmental justice, human rights, equality, and solidarity. Endorsed by 200 organisations, it addressed candidates in the European elections and was taken-up by several political groups in their party programmes.

The incoming Parliament, as well as the new European Commission, will be critical in setting a direction for Europe. We will be sending a loud message for open, tolerant, compassionate societies. But also that Europe needs a radical change of direction – social and environmental justice should be at the heart of how we live, not profits of big business.

We are official partners of the European Parliament’s ‘This Time I’m Voting’ campaign and will continue to engage people in debate about what kind of Europe we want.

“We, as citizens, should not limit ourselves in the debates on the future of Europe to the question: ‘Do you want more or less Europe?’”

**JAGODA MUNIĆ, DIRECTOR IN RESEARCH EUROPE**
CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS 2018
FOOD, AGRICULTURE, BIODIVERSITY

THOUSANDS TAKE ACTION FOR #GOODFOODGOODFARMING

We helped connect thousands of people across Europe to take action for a better food system. Together with national members and allies we organised protest picnics, farm visits, workshops, street demos, and more, over a weekend of action. All were united by a common message: good food and good farming, now!

A month later we brought these people’s voices to Brussels and handed-over 100,000 signatures supporting our demands outside a meeting of EU agriculture ministers.

REFRAMING THE GMO 2.0 DEBATE

Friends of the Earth France helped force a European Court of Justice decision on whether crops produced with new genetic engineering techniques should be subject to existing GMO safety rules. The ruling? A decisive yes.

The biotech lobby had hoped to influence the public debate with a well-funded PR campaign and to avoid referring to these new techniques as ‘GM’ or ‘GMOs’. But we brought together campaign groups to coordinate messaging and demands and frame the narrative around the ruling and beyond. Crops made with these new techniques are now discussed as what they are: genetically-modified organisms.

“We welcome this landmark ruling which defeats the biotech industry’s latest attempt to push unwanted genetically-modified products onto our fields and plates.”

MUTE SCHIMPF, FOOD CAMPAIGNER IN POLITICO
ADVANCING THE DEBATE ON SUFFICIENCY AND DEGROWTH

Our report ‘Sufficiency: Moving beyond the gospel of eco-efficiency’ shook up policy makers, academics and NGOs of different sectors. A post-growth conference in the European Parliament, which we co-organised, brought together ‘degrowthers’, ecologists, MEPs and European Commissioners to envision a different society. Inspired by civil society and confronted with the limits of a capitalist system, politicians are finally starting to shift the focus from infinite growth to well-being, equity and sustainability.

Calling on the EU to #rethinkplastic. © FoEE

Our publication explores sufficiency and how to move beyond eco-efficiency. © FoEE
“EU DECISION MAKERS HAVE AGREED A PALTRY 32 PER CENT TARGET FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY THAT IS INADEQUATE FOR A CLIMATE-SAFE FOSSIL-FREE FUTURE.”

MOLLY WALSH, CLIMATE JUSTICE CAMPAIGNER IN THE FINANCIAL TIMES
A totemic campaign by Friends of the Earth Germany and partners mobilised one of the country’s largest ever climate demonstrations to help save an ancient Rhineland forest from an expanding coal mine. Hambach Forest became the epicentre of the country’s struggle to phase out coal, raising mass public support. There was also success in the courts: just in time to prevent tree clearance, a district court decided that the power company RWE cannot cut down the forest for a year.

Soon after, the strength of the climate movement helped environmental NGOs negotiate an end to coal with trade unions, business and the government.

SPAIN
BYE-BYE COAL, HOLA SUN!

Sweeping change came to Spain’s energy in 2018. Friends of the Earth Spain played a major role in abolishing the so-called ‘sun tax’, with their campaign ‘libera al sol’. The infamous tax on home solar panels paralysed new investment in renewables. But strong civil society opposition and a new government ushered in a new law overturning the tax and supporting citizen and community renewable energy. Large-scale mobilisations in 20 Spanish cities also helped push the Spain to shut half its operating coal power plants by 2020.

We helped Europeans win new rights to produce and own their own renewable energy - the culmination of years of campaigning. This golden nugget was hidden amidst an otherwise mixed, jumbo-package of new EU clean energy legislation.

Community energy projects cut carbon emissions, often have solidarity as a central value, and help communities control and profit from their own energy. The new laws help lift major constraints hampering community energy, which could unleash a more decentralised energy system for Europe. What started off as a small fringe voice in 2013, became well recognised fact, and now established law.

The legislation also recognises the challenge of energy poverty and requires energy savings to target energy-poor households.

“Energy rebellion now!” © FoE Spain
VICTORIES FOR A FOSSIL-FREE FUTURE AROUND EUROPE

A fresh approach for Friends of the Earth Netherlands saw them working with trade unions and social movements to make sure that workers and ordinary people participate fairly in the transition, with the most polluting corporations paying their fair share. Now tenants’ organisations, youth clubs, and green entrepreneurs are on board, and the media and politicians are talking with relish about a just transition.

Meanwhile, Friends of the Earth Netherlands helped push their government to pass a new climate law which commits them to cutting CO₂ by 95% by 2050.

“POLITICAL LEADERS NEED TO SHOW SERIOUS SUPPORT FOR A JUST TRANSITION THAT CREATES DECENT WORK AND QUALITY JOBS.”

SUSANN SCHEARBARTH, CLIMATE JUSTICE CAMPAIGNER IN BUSINESS GREEN

NETHERLANDS / EUROPE SHELL SUED OVER CLIMATE CRIMES

Shell faced a major first-of-its-kind lawsuit aimed at forcing the oil multinational to change its ways on climate change. Friends of the Earth Netherlands, now backed by six Dutch NGOs, European groups, and 13,400 individual co-plaintiffs, launched the lawsuit demanding the fossil fuel company acts on climate change. If successful it would significantly limit Shell’s investments in oil and gas globally.

Left: A plaintiff in the court case against Shell. © FoE Netherlands

Above: At the launch of the Shell court case. © FoE Netherlands

Bottom: Standing hand-in-hand for a just transition. © FoE Netherlands
AUSTRIA
CAMPAIGNERS BRING END TO SUBSIDIES FOR HEATING HOMES WITH OIL

Friends of the Earth Austria unmasked a hidden subsidy system by oil and gas giant OMV for the installation of oil heating systems in Austrian homes. Facing high media attention, OMV had to admit that these payments are not compatible with tackling climate breakdown and has been forced to phase-out the programme. Heating homes with oil is the most CO₂-intensive type of heating system. Ending subsidies for this pollution is an important step towards clean heating systems.

NORWAY
CLIMATE LAWSUIT CHALLENGES NORWAY’S OIL DRILLING

Young Friends of the Earth Norway appealed the verdict of a climate lawsuit against the Norwegian state. The lawsuit argues that climate change caused by burning Norwegian oil in other countries is Norway’s responsibility; though the first ruling was not successful. The lawsuit received massive attention globally. But it’s not the end of the story - the next court hearing will be in November 2019.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
CITIZENS SAY “NO” TO COAL POWER PLANT

When Sanski Most was threatened by the construction of a coal-fired power plant, Friends of the Earth Bosnia and Herzegovina held a public debate and invited another community already affected by such a plant to share their experiences. After hearing the numerous problems with pollution and disturbance, residents of Sanski Most decided to oppose the construction by any means possible. This was the first time a community in Bosnia and Herzegovina had sent a clear message against a power plant like this. Citizens of Sanski Most said “NO” and showed once again how people power can prevail.
PROMOTING A TRADE SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

Using our unique checklist tool, we carried out a ‘sustainability check’ on the EU-Indonesia trade deal: it failed. Subsequently we increased pressure on negotiators and brought together organisations from Indonesia and Europe to get palm oil excluded from the talks. As part of our work to bring solutions, we published a vision for an alternative trade system which could have a positive impact on climate justice and environmental protection. This vision was presented at key political conferences, and we continue to advocate for it.

“ALLOWING THIS UNSUSTAINABLE PALM INTO EUROPE WILL INCREASE DEFORESTATION, CONFLICTS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. PALM OIL SHOULD BE TAKEN OUT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.”

PAUL DE CLERCK, ECONOMIC JUSTICE CAMPAIGNER IN THE GUARDIAN

HISTORIC COURT CASE AGAINST ITALIAN OIL GIANT ENI

Friends of the Earth Europe supported a local Nigerian community to bring the first legal case in Italy against Eni for its oil pollution in Nigeria. We supported the Ikebiri community to bring the oil and gas company to court in Milan for an oil spill in the Niger Delta.

HOW LAWS CAN SAVE LIVES

Although regulation, rules and standards are essential, we have recently witnessed a deregulation trend across Europe. To explore the value of regulation for people’s everyday lives, we travelled to four countries to meet and film ordinary people fighting for better laws. Our resulting film series ‘Protect and Resist’ documents astonishing stories, from the ‘air-watchers’ tackling pollution to the heroes of the first pesticide-free town. Watch how people power and regulation go hand in hand to protect people and planet!

protectandresist.video
CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS 2018
YOUTH, NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH RISING

Young Friends of the Earth Europe continued to grow, welcoming new groups in Macedonia and Latvia to its uniquely strong and autonomous network of youth volunteer activists.

This growth depends on creating empowering spaces for young people from all backgrounds.

Last year, an ‘intersectionality in practice’ training in Norway led to 10 member groups running their own workshops on intersectionality.

The workshops dealt with diverse topics including gender justice, inequalities in education systems, LGBTQI+ issues and climate justice, and directly trained 147 people across Europe.

This approach was also a focus of the 2018 summer camp in Cyprus, which brought together 54 young people from Europe and Africa, and led to a collectively-produced toolkit for intersectional movement building.

PRIZE-WINNING INITIATIVE ON POPULAR EDUCATION

Our School of Sustainability project was recognised by the Global Education Network Europe as one of the 20 most outstanding projects for inclusion. Our work was recognised for creating stronger analysis of development issues and environmental justice and because it “empowered a range of target groups to engage in public mobilisation on a local, national, and international level”. While the project is officially over, popular education approaches continue to flourish throughout the network.

RAISING YOUTH VOICES IN OUR NETWORK

Our joint project with Young Friends of the Earth Africa on strengthening solidarity between our two regions has come to an end, but it’s just the beginning for the future of youth in Friends of the Earth.

Together, we presented a motion calling for a stronger voice and representation of youth within the Friends of the Earth International federation, which was passed unanimously. Exciting and hard-working years are ahead of us!
**LUXEMBOURG**

**50th Anniversary of Friends of the Earth Luxembourg**

Founded in 1968, Friends of the Earth Luxembourg celebrated 50 years of victories, lost battles and challenges. A celebration event titled ‘People need visions and visions need people’, was attended by 500 guests including Grand Duke Henri, ministers and members of parliament, members, and other actors from civil society. The evening was a motivational boost to continue commitment to sustainability and to work together for future generations in Luxembourg.

**ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Wales Goes Fossil Free!**

Wales is on a path to a clean energy future since the Welsh government ruled that fossil fuel extraction projects are incompatible with climate change targets. The decision came just months after the Planning Inspectorate threw out a proposal for a huge opencast coal mine in the Rhymney Valley. Friends of the Earth Cymru played a vital role in supporting the fierce local opposition to the plans. The new law was helped to be passed by policies were introduced to be in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – an act Friends of the Earth Cymru was instrumental in drawing up.

**SPAIN**

**Stopping Industrial Livestock Together**

With Friends of the Earth Spain and more than 50 local groups behind it, the Spanish National Platform to Stop Industrial Livestock was born to fight for a different food system based on environmental and social respect. Industrial livestock has been on the increase in Spain but now dozens of macro-projects have been stopped, mostly in rural areas where the mobilisation has been a real success. This inspiring platform has proved the opposition is strong enough to paralyse projects in this damaging industry.

**MALTA**

**Malta’s First Repair Café**

More than 30 participants learned and discussed how to take action to move towards a zero-waste society at Friends of the Earth Malta’s two-day live-in activist camp at Xrobb l-Għagin Nature Park. The camp offered various side activities, including a clean-up and Malta’s first Repair Cafe. At the café, which is based on a solidarity economy, people who have things that need fixing meet others who know how to carry out repairs. More are planned in 2019.
NORWAY
EXPERIENCE TO BEAR ISLAND
AND THE BARENTS SEA

In the summer of 2018, members of Young Friends of the Earth Norway sailed on an expedition to Bear Island and the Barents Sea to document and give attention to the natural diversity of these oceans. The expedition became soon popular within the organisation. After this success, they will continue to share their stories and images of Norway's beautiful oceans.

SWEDEN
YOUTH MOBILISE AGAINST
BROKEN SOLAR PROMISES

After Gothenburg’s state housing company failed to install solar panels on municipal properties – having promised to by 2017 – a young activist group of Friends of the Earth Sweden made it their task to see it happen. The group, Solcellskaparna, started a petition and organised a demonstration, and brought the question of solar energy to the attention of the media. The group continues to fight for a world free from fossil fuels and will not stop until the Gothenburg authorities carry out what they promised.

CZECH REPUBLIC
LET’S SAVE FORESTS

With the help of foresters and scientists, Friends of the Earth Czech Republic published a package of solutions to the countrywide forests crisis. Leveraging public support from more than 20,000 people, it pushed the government to implement sustainability measures in a long-awaited new bill, and raised the topic to public awareness. The group also helped bring about cleaner air in Czech Republic by advocating for an end to subsidies for coal boilers and focusing on environmentally friendly heating solutions, primarily for low-income households.
BULGARIA
PIRIN IS SAFE!

Thousands of people in more than 40 Bulgarian towns and abroad demonstrated for months to protect Pirin National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. One year after the Bulgarian government allowed construction in the park, the Bulgarian Supreme Administrative Court ruled that there should be an Environmental Impact Assessment done on the new management plan for the park and that until then no construction would be allowed. Although the battle is not over, we can celebrate this victory!

“IT’S DISTRESSING TO SEE THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT APPROVE AN ILLEGAL PLAN TO LOG IT [PIRIN] AND EXPAND A SKI RESORT.”

ROBBIE BLAKE, NATURE CAMPAIGNER IN Euronews

HUNGARY
NATIONWIDE SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY TOUR IN HUNGARY

Friends of the Earth Hungary continued its nationwide sustainable education push. With contests and activities run across 350 schools, and involving 72,000 pupils and 2,500 teachers, they brought attention to issues around food, climate, and waste. Children were amazed by the negative social and environmental impacts of their electronic devices, and after the activities began to change their attitudes towards these important topics.

POLAND
23RD ECOLOGICAL FAIR IN GLIWICE

More than 2,000 visitors participated in Friends of the Earth Poland’s ecological fair. The annual event, now in its 23rd year, aims to promote organic farming, raise environmental awareness and put local residents in direct contact with producers of organic and traditional food. Organic farmers and processors presented products from the region and adults and children took part in lectures and workshops.
BELGIUM (WALLONIA)
24HOURS OF SIMPLE LIVING

A memorable weekend of ‘voluntary simplicity’ was organised by Friends of the Earth Belgium – Wallonia. Participants discussed material and mental decluttering, how to live simply even if those around you are not supportive, and how to be active without wearing yourself out. There were workshops on basketry, gardening and cookery. Despite all the activities, the aim of the weekend was slowing down, and simply enjoying time together. It will remain in the minds of the people present at one of the best weekends of 2018.

NETHERLANDS
A DUTCH CLIMATE LAW

This was a major breakthrough, and ten years in the making for Friends of the Earth Netherlands. A new Dutch climate law sets the Netherlands on the road to reducing CO₂ by 95% by 2050. It is less ambitious than was hoped, but the moment is no less beautiful.

CROATIA
BRING THE MAGNOLIA BACK

Friends of the Earth Croatia initiated a campaign to prevent the destruction of greenery on a symbolic square in the centre of Zagreb. For more than 6 months the initiative – named ‘Bring the Magnolia back’ united local citizens and other organisations to protest the destruction of protected cultural assets in the city. After this campaign, the magnolia tree became a symbol of resistance against a harmful city management. The initiative, in a new form, will continue with its work to protect public spaces in Zagreb.
FINANCIAL INFORMATION
2018

INCOME 2018 (IN EUROS)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational grant – EU</td>
<td>700,000</td>
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<td>Project grants – EU</td>
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<td>Project grants – Other governments/institutions</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 &amp; donations</td>
<td>282,889</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td>3,468,152</td>
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EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT 2018 (IN EUROS)

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<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Campaigning &amp; communications</td>
<td>1,592,853</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network development &amp; youth</td>
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<td>Support to national members &amp; partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management &amp; organisational development</td>
<td>230,898</td>
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<td>Administration, IT &amp; office costs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
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EXPENSES BY TYPE 2018 (IN EUROS)

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<td>Campaigning activities</td>
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<td>Support to national members &amp; partners</td>
<td>608,742</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>3,458,383</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Reserves allocation for 2018

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<td>9,769</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 from 1st July 2019. 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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