



**WEMOVE
EUROPE**

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2022

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00 WHAT WILL 2022 BE REMEMBERED FOR?

I'm very happy to share with you a set of stories of what this community achieved in 2022, against all odds.

They echo the words of the anthropologist Margaret Mead – that we should **“never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has”**.

Last year, we were all shaken by the onset of war in Ukraine.

So we did what we do best: this community found ways to bring lasting change.

Together we pushed the EU to apply a special law to protect those fleeing war.

We were part of a movement that created a precedent: this law had never been put into practice before. And it mattered for millions of people seeking safety from war.

We also learned that sometimes the fruits of our efforts only emerge long after we planted the original seeds. In 2020, activists in Northern Italy - facing intimidation from their government and agribusiness for speaking out against pesticides - reached out to us for help. We supported their protest and backed them up with a 250,000 signature strong petition, attracting a lot of attention. **People power gave strength to this local fight and finally, in 2022, all lawsuits were dropped.**

In the autumn, **we helped secure the first ever law to ban importing products to the EU linked to deforestation. For example, soya and meat that is made by destroying our forests.** Again, this was a case of where key politicians heard us, because together

we were louder, clearer and more creative than any of us could be on our own. We proved again that together we are enough to drive change.

But there were also moments when we just didn't win. Read below about our campaign to stop gas and nuclear from being labeled as “green” energy. I think it's important to celebrate the moments when you win, but also where you lose and learn along the way.

We can't win every fight. **But with the power of this amazing community, we will never stop trying.**



**LAURA
SULLIVAN**

**Executive Director,
WeMove Europe**

01 PROTECT PEOPLE FLEEING WAR



*"Everyone
deserves a chance
at a safe haven from
war and opportunities for
a better life when the rest
of the world can help!"*
Sanda, Sweden

**93,996
signatures**

In February, war came to Europe. The WeMove team were together in Brussels when we heard the news, and we moved fast to respond to the situation.

While tens of thousands took to the streets to protest the war, we mobilised online. In less than 24 hours, 70,000 of us came together demanding protection for people fleeing the war. And our leaders heard us.

Europe's interior ministers unanimously agreed to invoke a special law (the Temporary Protection Directive) for the first time in history.

This means that Ukrainian citizens and non-EU citizens living in Ukraine who are unable to safely return to their country of origin can quickly get residence permits in EU countries. They can work, and are able to access medical assistance. **This is a monumental win for people on the move everywhere.**

However, some people were still left behind - foreign students and temporary workers.

That's because not all refugees are treated equally. **And it's why we need to make sure Europe protects ALL people fleeing war.**

02 SUPPORT PESTICIDE REBELS



Thousands of us supported activists to fight back against pesticide use in Northern Italy – and **we won!**

The local government and the food industry - who are not used to being challenged - weren't happy when these activists spoke out. With millions of euros at stake, they were willing to do anything to protect profits at the expense of our health. So they brought a wave of lawsuits to intimidate and silence local activists.

Our community stepped in. The quiet mountain region of South Tyrol relies heavily on tourism and hates bad publicity. So **our community came together from all over**

Europe to support these activists. We organised a protest and spread our message in multiple languages, attracting a lot of attention..

And it worked! In May, courts in Northern Italy dropped the last remaining lawsuit. This result shows that **when we come together we can help local activists stand up to governments and companies.**

But this win isn't just about activists in Northern Italy. It's about stopping intimidating lawsuits across Europe. And **it's about everyone in Europe being able to stand up to power without being bullied into silence.**

03 BAN FOREST-KILLING PRODUCTION



"Because of the survival of my generation and the ones to come. Because we have to consume justly, not harm. Because of the animals. Because we can do better." Jannes, Netherlands

We won! Supermarkets in the EU will no longer be allowed to sell products that add to deforestation. Soon, you won't find chocolate, coffee, or meat that's made by killing our trees. The vote on a new law to protect our forests got the support of European politicians.

This win wouldn't have been possible without this community. **As part of the #Together4forests movement, we joined a petition of 1.2 million people, sent more than 200,000 messages and made phone calls to key MEPs and ministers.**

Right before key votes, we piled up the pressure on decision-makers. We produced giant billboards and placed them in front of

the EU institutions to get their attention. So, when it was time to vote, our politicians knew **people across Europe were counting on them to protect our forests.**

These new rules can make a huge difference for our forests. Because only deforestation-free products can be sold in the EU, communities, animals and habitats will start to have some protection against the destruction of their lands. With the EU leading the way, there's a good chance other countries will follow with their own laws.

EU member states will now work to ensure that this groundbreaking law works not just on paper, but in practice.

04 STOP THIS AGENCY GONE ROGUE



We helped hold Frontex, the EU's border agency, to account for its role in violent pushbacks and internal corruption!

In 2022, after years of campaigning, we delivered two massive blows to this corrupt agency:

In April, the long standing director of Frontex resigned because of so much pressure from the WeMove community, MEPs, partners and activists. We wrote to the Frontex scrutiny committee in the European Parliament to make their private meeting public, and directly to MEPs to pressure them to scrutinise Frontex. **Over 65,000 of us took action** - signing the petition, and sending emails to Leggeri and others at Frontex demanding his resignation. We got it!

In October, we asked the MEP budget committee to postpone the approval of Frontex's budget! More than 39,000 of us signed a petition to stop the European Parliament from approving Frontex's budget. Over 1,500 of us tweeted to MEPs just as they were going into a key vote. **And the outcome? We won. Our MEPs voted against discharging Frontex's budget, hitting them where it hurts most for the first time in history.** Even though the budget was later approved, the fact that we were able to postpone it hurt Frontex's reputation.

These wins are the result of people power. It's the result of over two years of pressure - from this community, from our partners, from journalists, and from some politicians.

05 PEOPLE VS BIG TECH

"Big Tech will keep getting more powerful if we don't fight to stop them. People before profit always."

Caroline, Ireland



We won a better internet, where citizens are able to access vital infrastructure and information, and can easily connect and participate.

In April 2022, the EU reached an agreement on a new law to protect our rights online. The new law, the Digital Services Act (DSA) brings us **one step forward in the fight for a better, safer internet**.

We stood together with over 100 partners supporting a petition to get this win across the line.

It is the world's most ambitious attempt to stop the damage inflicted on people by Big Tech companies. This law will help end some of the worst advertising practices of Big Tech platforms such as Meta and Google. It will also help stop the spread of disinformation and hate speech, and the abuse of our personal data.

But this new law doesn't fix all of the problems with Big Tech. There's still a long way to go to make sure that the big tech industry is truly accountable to people and society, but **we can be proud of the achievements that the DSA brings** to start reigning in the Big Tech industry.

**83,786
signatures**

06 STOP BIG POLLUTERS SUING OUR GOVERNMENTS

1,081,428
signatures



This was a win they told us wasn't possible. But **we never doubted the power we have together.**

EU leaders kept supporting a toxic treaty - called the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) - that meant our governments could be sued for billions whenever they took ambitious climate action.

To show the European Union the ECT was a relic of the past, **we teamed up with Extinction Rebellion and staged a massive climate crime scene** right outside their meeting. Decision-makers were forced to walk through the terrible reality they were helping to create.

Next, climate activist Greta Thunberg joined our fight - we spread her message in our tens of thousands.

And our actions had impact! First **Poland and Spain announced they would be ditching the toxic treaty.** It sent shockwaves across the EU. Soon they were not alone. **The Netherlands, France, Slovenia, Germany and Luxembourg also joined the party!**

But we did not stop there. We urged our MEPs to do the same. And they did it:

The European Parliament, following our rapid response, pressured the entire EU to leave the toxic treaty.

This win is absolutely huge but the fight is not over. It's now up to the European Commission to kickstart the process for a coordinated EU exit from the ECT. And we don't expect the Commission to just roll over and give in. We'll keep the pressure up! **We'll be watching what happens.**

07 PROTECT NATURE, NOT PROFITS

Agricultural giants used every trick in the book - even the war in Ukraine - to convince European leaders to ditch a new climate law that protects nature on farms. But **our community brought the truth to Brussels on a huge, people-powered wave, and now we're just a step away from getting the law we need.**

Together we made sure that EU leaders heard the truth. We sent 100s of tweets to the Environment Commissioner, Virginijus Sinkevičius telling him how important defending Europe's nature is for our future. **He agreed with us: we need new laws to restore nature!**

With our partners, we gathered over 100,000 signatures and convinced the Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, to announce the new law. He said, "the citizens of Europe have demanded this."

The Nature Restoration Law, will be the first law in 30 years to stop wildlife disappearing in the EU: a massive win for nature. It also supports the growing methods of family farmers. All farmers must leave land free for trees and hedges and cut their use of chemical pesticides by half. The changes will help reduce greenhouse gasses and support the recovery of vital insect populations, like bees.

We are even closer to making farming in harmony with nature the norm.

The Council of the EU and the European Parliament have recently started examining the draft law. And in 2023, with your help, we will make sure that they pass this ambitious Nature Restoration Law.



**108,475
signatures**

08 BOLD NEW RULES FOR RENEWABLES

This year, the European Parliament voted to put billions in the pockets of polluters. New guidelines are set to label toxic gas and nuclear fuels as 'green' investments.

There is no way to sugar-coat it: this is not the result we wanted.

This community has been campaigning to close the gap on the climate crisis - not reward the fuels that got us here.

In our thousands, we took action together.

Sending tweets, writing emails and calling our politicians. We even produced a video that went viral and uncovered the lies of the big polluters.

Small donations across this community poured in and we bought media space on major political websites, placed eye-catching billboards outside the European Parliament, and developed articles with journalists.

We even went to Strasbourg together to get politicians on our side before the final vote.



134,381 signatures



Joining forces with grassroots groups and NGOs, we marched, hung banners, put door hangers on MEP's office doors, and made human chains right outside the European Parliament. We even crashed the party - storming into the voting room after the vote to make our voices heard.

At the start, only 190 Members of the European Parliament were pledging to vote against labelling gas and nuclear as 'green' investments.

In the end, we secured 279 votes. **That's a direct result of your actions. That's something you can be proud of.**

The WeMove Europe community is brave.

Together we have worked tirelessly over the years for a Europe that puts people and the planet first. **And we'll keep working.** As we regroup and work out next steps, our partners Client Earth, WWF and Transport and Environment are taking the fight to court!

TECH & PRIVACY

Being aware of the impact of technology on today's world is very important in our work. We always strive to keep the bigger picture in mind and consider things like climate impact, inclusiveness and accessibility in our technology-related decisions. And we work hard on privacy and data ownership issues. This means that every time we handle

the personal data of members of this community, we go the extra step to protect the privacy of the people behind the data. In general, we use Europe-based software, tools and servers which are subject to stricter privacy regulations, thanks to GDPR. Our platforms and tech team build and customise tools that make our campaigns successful while protecting our online security and privacy.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US!



info@wemove.eu



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