

European *Alternatives* Journal

Democracy & Culture
Equality & Culture
Beyond
the Nation State

Special thanks to

All the authors and contributors to this publication. All the activists that are struggling across the world.

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European Alternatives

European Alternatives team

Jana Ahlers, Georg Blokus, Abhishek Chauhan, Camilo Alvarez Garrido, Billie Dibb, Faith Yayra Dzanta, Jacc Griffiths, Gabrielle Jourde, Viktoria Kostova, Ophélie Masson, Marta Cillero Manzano, Niccolò Milanese, Gabriela Ortiz Soto, Martin Pairet, Bessy Polykarpou, Ségolène Pruvot, Csenge Schneider-Lonhart, Gabriela Siegel, Ruxandra Serban, Seema Syeda and Myriam Zekagh.

Editing

Seema Syeda

Art Direction and Graphic Design

Luca Pantorno - IG [lucapantorno](#)

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Imagine, Demand, Enact

Printed in 2024

Aliyah Davies is a campaigner for the 4 Day Week Campaign, the UK's national campaign organisation for a four-day working week with no loss of pay. She has a background in politics, with in-depth knowledge of national politics and the Parliamentary process, having previously worked for a member of the UK Parliament for a number of years.

Dr. Amiera Sawas is Head of Research and Policy at the The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. She is a feminist researcher and advocate who works at the intersections of climate change, gender justice, public participation and the social contract. Amiera has almost 20 years experience working on these issues across academia, the private sector, think tanks and NGOs, with previous roles at Climate Outreach, ActionAid and the Grantham Institute for Climate Change at Imperial College. Amiera has a PhD on water, climate and human rights in Pakistan and is a contributing author to the IPCC sixth assessment report on gender and climate security. As a person of both Syrian and Irish heritage, with close links to Pakistan, she has lived life with an acute awareness of the impacts of colonial histories and believes passionately in the need to decolonise.

Citizens Takeover Europe is a coalition of civil society actors promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of citizens and residents in European politics through advocating democratic reform and empowering civic practices. European Alternatives is a member of the coalition.

Daniel Kopp is Director of Communications at UNI Europa, the European Services Workers Union.

Esther Lynch is the General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation.

FIERCE is a coalition that aims to revitalise the alliances between the feminist movement, civil society and political decision makers.

Kim Claes is corporate capture and Fossil Free Politics campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe. The 'Fossil Free Politics' campaign was launched in 2019 by almost 200 civil society organisations, and is calling for formal limits to the power of fossil fuel lobbyists in Europe in the same way we have for the tobacco industry. Friends of the Earth Europe, in collaboration with Corporate Europe Observatory, Food and Water Europe and Greenpeace are coordinating this campaign.

Oliver Roethig is the Regional Secretary of UNI Europa, the European Services Workers Union.

Pact for Equality is a migrant-led initiative to end all forms of racism and discrimination across the EU.

Seema Syeda is Head of Communications at European Alternatives.

Shubham Kaushik is Communications and Media Officer at EDRI. She leads EDRI's campaigns and communications on AI, biometrics, migration and tech, and climate justice. She has experience as an independent journalist in India and comes from an academic background in social science.

Viktoria Tomova is Communications and Media Officer at EDRI. Viktoria leads EDRI's campaigns and communications on encryption, CSAR, age verification, platform power, decolonising the digital rights field process and a positive vision for digital futures. She is also a Public Voices Fellow on Technology in the Public Interest with The OpEd Project & The MacArthur Foundation.

Ahead of the 2024 European elections, European Alternatives has launched *By The Many! Towards a people-powered Europe*. *By The Many!* is a campaign calling for a radical shift in our politics, based on the transformative power of people working across borders. We imagine a democratic Europe in which everyone can live a good life, and which acts to bring transnational justice and a flourishing planet.

We believe that the profound change that is required in our continent needs to be made by the many. We can **imagine, demand and enact** this alternative Europe together.

In order for this to happen, each person needs to be empowered to act individually and collectively to transform social, political, economic and interpersonal structures and relations, both locally and transnationally. The European Union can put in place policies that make this change possible.

We call for a redistribution of power away from the national, simultaneously to the translocal and the transnational. We base the legitimacy of this campaign on declarations from transnational people's assemblies for eco-social justice, transnational peace, and an end to the climate catastrophe, on the democratic ideas and possibilities they open, and on its involvement of minoritised and underrepresented groups.

We want to bring into the European institutions the demands collected over decades through assemblies, festivals and gatherings across Europe and beyond, involving thousands of people. Some recent concrete results of these moments are the Porto Declaration for Eco Social Justice (2022), the Porto Declaration for Transnational Peace (2022) or the Palermo Climate Declaration Avoiding Climate Catastrophe (2021).

Initiated by European Alternatives and created in collaboration with grassroots partners and movements, we present a manifesto for alternatives to nationalism, patriarchy, racism, exploitation and injustice. Together, we want to imagine a positive vision of society that can be transformed and shaped by the hands of the people.

Our campaign is founded on taking the lead from people directly impacted by EU policies. This means taking the lead from those most ignored by political establishments:

- Racialised communities and ethnic minorities
- Women and gender minorities
- LGBTQIA communities
- Workers and carers
- Persons with disabilities
- Migrants, asylum seekers and the undocumented

Putting power firmly in the hands of ordinary people is the only way to disrupt the system, and offer a real alternative to the failings of democracy and the false promise of capitalism.

All our demands are based on the equal protection of people and planet over profit. We are calling for:

- Immediate climate action for a planet in balance
- A world led by workers
- A democratic process that derives power from the people
- Justice and equity for all
- A digital revolution that serves the people

The By The Many campaign is fluid and amorphous - the spirit of the campaign encompass the actions of everyone struggling to transform our world. In this special European Elections issue of the European Alternatives Journal, we platform organisers and campaigners whose demands drive forwards the aims and key focuses of the By The Many campaign.

In this issue, we draw together contributions from **European Trade Union Confederation** General Secretary Esther Lynch; **4 Day Week** campaigner Aliyah Davies, Daniell Kopp and Oliver Roethig from **UNI Europa, the European Services Workers Union**; the **Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty Initiative's** Dr Ameira Sawas; Kim Claes from **Friends of the Earth Europe**; **Citizens' Takeover Europe**; the **European Common Space for Alternatives**; the **Pact for Equality**; **FIERCE**; **European Digital Rights Network (EDRi)** and more.

Watch the By The Many Campaign video trailer here:



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A Planet

in Balance

Our Demands: A Planet in Balance

A Planet in Balance is the first of the
By The Many! demands.
The planet hosts and encompasses all.
We must take care of it.

by European Alternatives



It is urgent to move away from fossil fuels in our societies to achieve ecological, economic and social justice. There can be no eco-social justice without climate justice and a transformation of our economic model which is based on exploitation. Instead of focusing on individualised solutions to climate change, we need investment in public infrastructures, clean energy sources, and the protection of water as a universal public good for life.

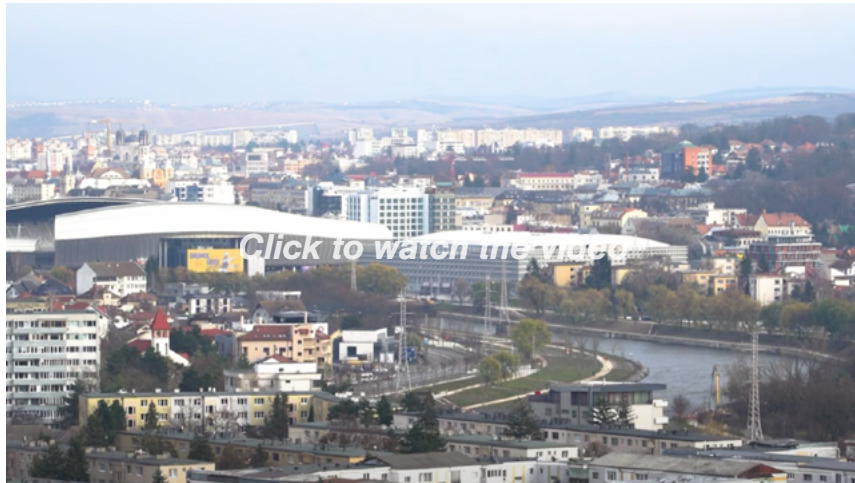


A toxic waste dump in Pata Rát.
Credit: Tamás Márkos

- **We want a non-eurocentric European democracy, radically responsible towards the planet, animals and people**
- **A European Green Deal that divests from fossil fuels and unproven solutions to the climate crisis**
- **A tax on billionaires and corporations to finance climate action, including support to the hardest-hit countries**
- **Energy-efficient housing that saves energy, lifts vulnerable and low-income households out of poverty, and protects tenants from rent increases and renovation costs**
- **We demand more research, expertise and activism at the intersection of health and environmental concerns**
- **We need institutional commitment to end Fossil Fuels, deforestation, and water pollution, and the protection of water as a universal public good**
- **Polluters must pay reparations in a way that rapidly ensures the transformation of our economic system away from polluting industries to social and ecological justice and sustainability**
- **Climate refugees should be recognized legally and given support and welcome, as should all people fleeing disaster, war or persecution**
- **The right to protest against polluters and climate destruction must be guaranteed.**

Our By The Many campaign draws on the wide scope of our activities and engagement over the years, fostering translocal connections for action. One important focus of our activity is the question of housing and environmental degradation, particularly as it intersects with the rights of marginalised communities. Watch Spaces for Action, a documentary episode that touches on these issues in the context of the city of Cluj, as part of our *Holding Spaces* series.

Spaces for Action: Cluj



Spaces to Imagine, another episode in the *Holding Spaces* series, looks at the intersection between agriculture, environment and colonialism in the context of the island of Sicily.

Space to Imagine: Palermo



For a decolonial EU climate policy

Dr Amiera Sawas questions the EU's commitment to climate action and pushes for the bloc to sign the Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty.

by Dr Amiera Sawas,
Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty Initiative



Climate-related flooding in Pakistan. Taking into account colonial times, the EU (including the UK) accounts for 18.7% of global total historical emissions, in second place after the US. Credit: Asian Development Bank via Flickr.

In November 2023 I was attending a conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, to talk about the vision of a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty. The, soon to be elected, Federal Minister for Water and Energy in Pakistan, was on my panel. Minister Dr. Musadik Malik brilliantly laid out the case for the country to prioritise a just energy transition. He concluded with the following, which I still think about to this day:

“The wild card is geopolitics... I was made to believe that the world is one big global village. We’re all interwoven into a fabric. And then, the Russia Ukraine war started. And the price of LNG went from 40 million dollars a cargo to 165 million dollars. And we looked at the same world which was telling us let’s go green, let’s go green, because we are all interwoven into one global fabric. Well we looked at the world and we said ‘what about us?’. And they said ‘what about you?’. And in that moment we realised that we are not even a patch on that fabric. Not even a patch. So I was quite surprised when I realised that Germany had opened up its coal mines. And I said, ‘hmm interesting. Our coal was brown, what’s theirs, yellow with orange polka dots?’ So this anomaly of geopolitics can hit us any time. All the more reason why we depend more and more and more on our indigenous resources. All the more reason why we should go sustainable, why we should go green. And we should go green in our own image. Based on our own assets.”

The EU wields enormous power in both global climate impacts and diplomacy. Indeed, taking into account colonial times, the EU (including the UK) accounts for 18.7% of the global total historical emissions, in second place after the US. Europe is home to some of the biggest polluters in the world, notably the fossil fuel companies BP (UK), Shell (Netherlands) and Total (France). Further, the EU has many bilateral relationships with countries across the world where climate policy is a key topic of diplomatic relations. The bloc’s importance in our climate future can not be stated enough. And yet as we approach its upcoming elections, how it is prioritising climate action is under question. In the latest leaked document on the EU’s strategic agenda for 2024-2029, climate is no longer listed as a top priority. This goes against the will of the peoples across EU member states, 93% of which in the latest survey see climate change as a serious problem and 88% thinking climate action should be a policy priority. Additionally, EIB research has shown that 61% of Europeans think a green transition will improve their lives.

A decarbonised energy system is not only the right thing to do to meet citizen’s needs and mitigate runaway climate change, but it’s the smart thing to do for EU member states, in terms of jobs and growth, a policy choice which – like the US Inflation Reduction act - promotes an industry strategy for the future. Europe is very well-placed to diversify away from fossil fuels. The European Green Deal has laid the groundwork for fossil fuel phase out, politically and legally, and several member states have phase out plans.

It has been 8 years since the historic Paris agreement built global consensus on key goals for climate action. In particular mitigating global warming to under the 1.5 degree limit and ensuring sufficient finance is allocated from historically responsible countries to those on the frontlines to adapt and mitigate losses and damage. And yet, we are close to breaching 1.5 degrees and the annual 100 billion USD goal has never been met. There is an accountability gap. Northern states are not accountable to the UNFCCC agreement, to each other, nor to their own citizens. This is fragmenting and dismantling cooperation in an increasingly polarised world. The EU must get its act together as it enters its next strategic period and be a force for good in the world. One way to do this is by promoting international cooperation and building trust between northern and southern states through a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty.

“In the latest leaked document on the EU’s strategic agenda for 2024-2029, climate is no longer listed as a top priority.”

We have entered the end of the era of oil, gas and coal. The uptake of renewables is growing exponentially and starting to make fossil fuels increasingly obsolete. There is enough clean, renewable energy potential in every region of the world to deliver safe, reliable and affordable electricity to everyone. And this is what newer generations expect of us. In research with over 6000 people under 35 across Europe in 2021/2, a large majority (81%) responded that we need a social transformation – changing our economy, how we travel,

live, produce and consume – in order to tackle climate change. But, consistent with other research, they expressed scepticism about mainstream politics and distrust of political figures in delivering on the climate agenda. The undeniable reality is that later is too late. If we allow the expansion of fossil fuel extraction to continue, we lock climate, health, economic and security risks that won’t be reversible, and it will be these generations and the ones after them that suffer as a result.

“The call for a Fossil Fuel Treaty is based on the successes of other treaties that have fostered greater peace, justice and cooperation.”

A new social norm for a comprehensive systemic change, based on equity, justice and decolonisation, is the global response we must collectively build. We can take the first steps, together, by championing a new treaty which will build trust and accountability for collective action with a clear plan to manage fossil fuel phase out and build a just transition. The proposed Fossil Fuel Treaty would transparently manage fossil fuel phase out: stopping the expansion of fossil fuel extraction and winding down existing production to safe levels. It would ensure every country in the world is able to tap into the abundant renewable energy that exists and make the shift to communities and economies free of fossil fuels by having wealthy, fossil fuel extractors commit to making the transition in their own countries and pay for their fair share of the problem by delivering financing and technical support to countries least responsible for climate change.

The call for a Fossil Fuel Treaty is based on the successes of other treaties that have fostered greater peace, justice and cooperation (see also). It unpacks the global geopolitics which have marginalised the majority of countries for too long. It is being spearheaded by twelve nations from the Pacific, Latin

America, Caribbean and Southeast Asia including two fossil fuel producers, Colombia and Timor Leste. President of Colombia Dr. Petro Gustavo has called on the international community to envision a new future, through a Treaty, grounded in resilient, regenerative ‘biological wealth’ rather than destructive fossil fuel wealth; with a “change [in] the way forward. A way forward which, from my point of view, can be much more powerful, and prosperous, than the path that we would be leaving behind.”

“A new social norm for a comprehensive systemic change, based on equity, justice and decolonisation, is the global response we must collectively build.”

The global network behind the call for a treaty also includes nine Peruvian Indigenous nations and more than 800 parliamentarians around the world. More than 100 local and subnational governments have joined including the State of California, Sydney, Kolkata, Lima, Vancouver, Belém, London and Warsaw as well as 2,000 plus civil society organisations, 3,000 scientists and academics, 101 Nobel Laureates, the World Health Organization and other health organizations, thousands of youth, faith and business leaders and many, many others.

Importantly, the European Parliament has also endorsed the notion of a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. There are so many strategic advantages for EU member states to endorse and be involved in negotiating a treaty. Importantly, it would meet its historical commitments to phasing out fossil fuels in line with net zero by 2050, but doing so in a managed phase out with Just Transition at its core. It would also create a platform for more equal and trusting diplomatic relationships with countries across the global south.

Dr. Amiera Sawas is Head of Research and Policy at the [The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative](#). She is a feminist researcher and advocate who works at the intersections of climate change, gender justice, public participation and the social contract. Amiera has almost 20 years experience working on these issues across academia, the private sector, think tanks and NGOs, with her most previous roles at Climate Outreach, ActionAid and the Grantham Institute for Climate Change at Imperial College.

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Humanity has risen up many times in the past to face great challenges, using international treaties to phase out things that threaten our survival from land mines to ozone-depleting chemicals and plastics. We can and are doing it again when it comes to oil, gas and coal. And the EU can play an important and positive role. It has shown climate leadership and can refocus its efforts on being a force for a just and equitable transition and decarbonised European energy security. At COP28, the bloc supported language on “transitioning away from fossil fuels”. With its Green Deal plan laid out already, the EU can pick up the mantle of driving a global and local just transition by endorsing a treaty which builds on the deal while meeting the urgency of getting off fossil fuels highlighted by climate science.

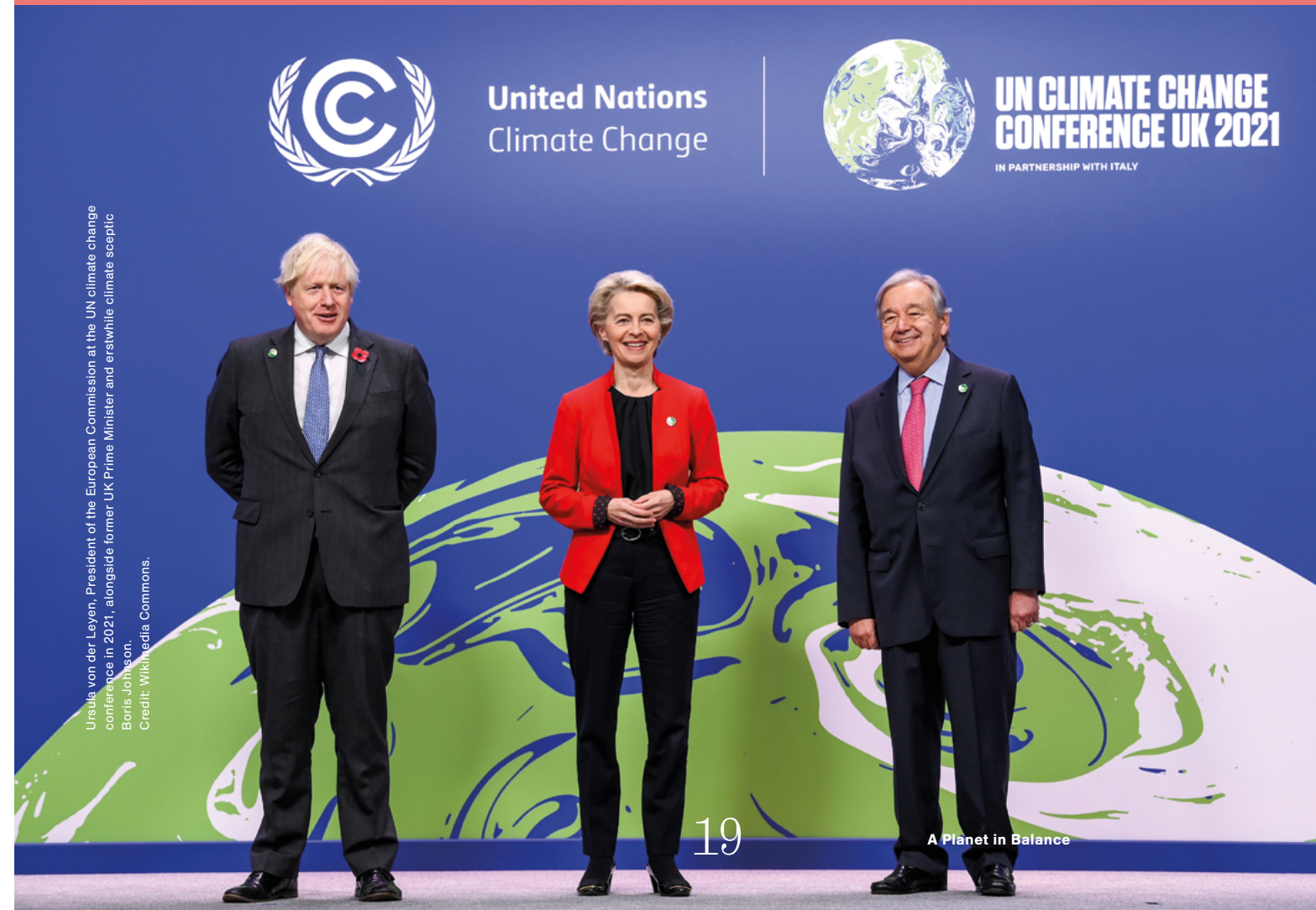


Aerial view of the coal mine Tagebau Hambach in Elsdorf, Germany. Germany has begun reopening coal mines in the wake of the Russia Ukraine war. Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

Whose green backlash? Taking the wheel from corporate lobbyists

Friends of the Earth Europe's Kim Claes on tackling the vested interests blocking green transition in the EU.

by Kim Claes, Friends of the Earth Europe



Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission at the UN climate change conference in 2021, alongside former UK Prime Minister and erstwhile climate sceptic Boris Johnson. Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

“If the “green backlash” is not really in citizens’ interest, for whom is this phasing out of regulation being done?”

The past few months were marked by an unprecedented push against regulations, those linked to the EU Green Deal and other social and environmental laws. The recently leaked EU strategic agenda, which defines EU’s priorities for the next mandate, confirmed this trend. **It reveals major backtracking on topics like the climate crisis, biodiversity collapse, and pollution - the biggest threats our societies face.**

In February, Ursula von der Leyen announced the scrapping of proposals to halve the use of pesticides in agriculture by 2030. The EU’s nature restoration law, launched to revitalise 30% of natural ecosystems before 2030, hangs by a thread after two years of negotiations. There was also the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) saga last months. In this case, the directive survived, but the political agreement was severely watered-down.

Ahead of the European elections in June, at which climate-sceptic radical-right parties are expected to make significant gains, EU politicians seem to be giving in to deregulation lobbying. They claim that green policies are to blame for the economic malaise. Can we speak of the usual election fever or is there more to it? Are EU citizens really fed up with climate regulations and overly rigid environmental laws?

Last month, several public opinion surveys in Germany, France and Poland revealed that most people in these countries support more ambitious policies to tackle the climate emergency as long as sufficient compensation is provided and everyone contributes in proportion to their financial ability.. So if the “green backlash” is not really in citizens’ interest, for whom is this phasing out of regulation being done? This touches on a deeper festering wound within the EU institutions: the overbearing power of lobbies and vested interests.

Fossil Free Politics

Let’s zoom in to the fossil industry, given their lobbying work is emblematic of a wider structural problem. Who did President von der Leyen turn to for advice when the EU sought to reduce its dependency on Russian oil and gas? Exactly, the big European oil and gas companies. From the onset of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, fossil fuel

companies have enjoyed unprecedented access to decision making, taking a lead in Europe’s energy crisis response whilst scaling back on their own climate commitments. The same industry that has ensured Europe’s continued fossil fuel dependence was advising, manipulating and threatening decision-makers to ‘solve’ an energy crisis caused by fossil fuel dependence by making Europe even more dependent on fossil fuels.

Politicians were and are still welcoming fossil fuel companies as advisers instead of arsonists, failing to recognise their vested interests and their role in creating, prolonging, and profiting from the energy and climate crisis. Fossil fuel lobbyists’ role in shaping REPowerEU has meant a programme ostensibly focused on energy efficiency and accelerating the clean energy transition has instead secured the fossil fuel industry’s future business. In the name of urgency, they were pushing for ever more gas infrastructure and gas-based projects, while weakening social measures that would have helped millions.

Thanks to their oversized influence, they have stalled vital political action on energy markets, reaping billions in profits. Since Russia’s invasion, Shell, BP, TotalEnergies, Chevron, and ExxonMobil have pocketed over €200 billion in profits, while millions of EU citizens have been left to pay the price through higher household bills, struggling to heat their houses.

Remarkably, Europe’s oil and gas multinationals and energy giants have always had considerable lobbying

“Politicians were and are still welcoming fossil fuel companies as advisers instead of arsonists.”

power in Brussels, and the EU institutions often proved quite willing to invite them to the table when it came to EU energy policy or priority investments. An analysis by Friends of the Earth Europe published in June 2022 showed that the von der Leyen Commission had met more than 500 times - more than once every other day - with the fossil fuel industry or with groups with fossil fuel membership in the first half of its 5 year mandate... and counting.



“The EU’s inability to shield people from corporate greed has fueled widespread discontent in civil society. This fear and frustration are in turn fueling the rise of the far-right.”

People over Polluters

The fossil fuels lobby is only one dramatic example. **The increasing influence exerted by corporate lobbyists on the political agenda in Europe is resulting in a loss of democracy in EU decision-making and the postponement, weakening, or blockage of urgently needed progress on social and environmental reforms.** The EU’s inability to shield people from corporate greed has fueled widespread discontent in civil society. This fear and frustration are in turn fueling the rise of the far-right.

In the framework of the Fossil Free Politics Campaign, responding to undue fossil fuel company influence in EU decision-making, over 100,000 signed a petition to kick big polluters out of politics, and 100 civil society and trade unions raised concern last October. As a result of the petition, the first-ever public hearing into the fossil fuel industry’s responsibility for the energy crisis was held at the European Parliament). One of the panelists during the hearing, Anna Gilmore, Professor of Public Health and Director of the Tobacco Control Research Group at the University of Bath, warned that the fossil fuel industry was using the same lobbying and PR tactics as the tobacco industry.

That’s why one of the main demands of the Fossil Free Politics Campaign is to institute a firewall to restrict undue influence of the fossil fuel lobby over climate and energy policy-making (like the firewall imposed on

the tobacco industry), keeping Commission advisory groups free from corporate control, and ensuring that EU decision-making centres on the voices of groups representing the public interest.

Power to the People

For years, Friends of the Earth Europe and its allies have been drawing attention to the excessive influence of big corporations on EU policy-making, resulting in decisions which put profits ahead of people and the planet. Nowhere does this become more apparent than with the lobbying efforts of the fossil fuel industries at the European institutions.

In times of multiple crises and disinformation and excessive lobbying forces, a strong climate and civil society movement is needed to expose these excesses, denounce conflicts of interests and hold politicians to account.

Now, more than ever, we must advocate for social and environmental justice at the heart of the EU. Although it is a tough battle, the years of campaigning of civil society are also reaping successes , such as the recent decision of the EU to leave the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT).

Corporate influence threatens European democracy, obstructing a swift and just green transition. Instead of aiding people in moving away from fossil fuels, corporate lobbying subsidises polluters and prioritises profits. It’s time to reclaim people’s rights.

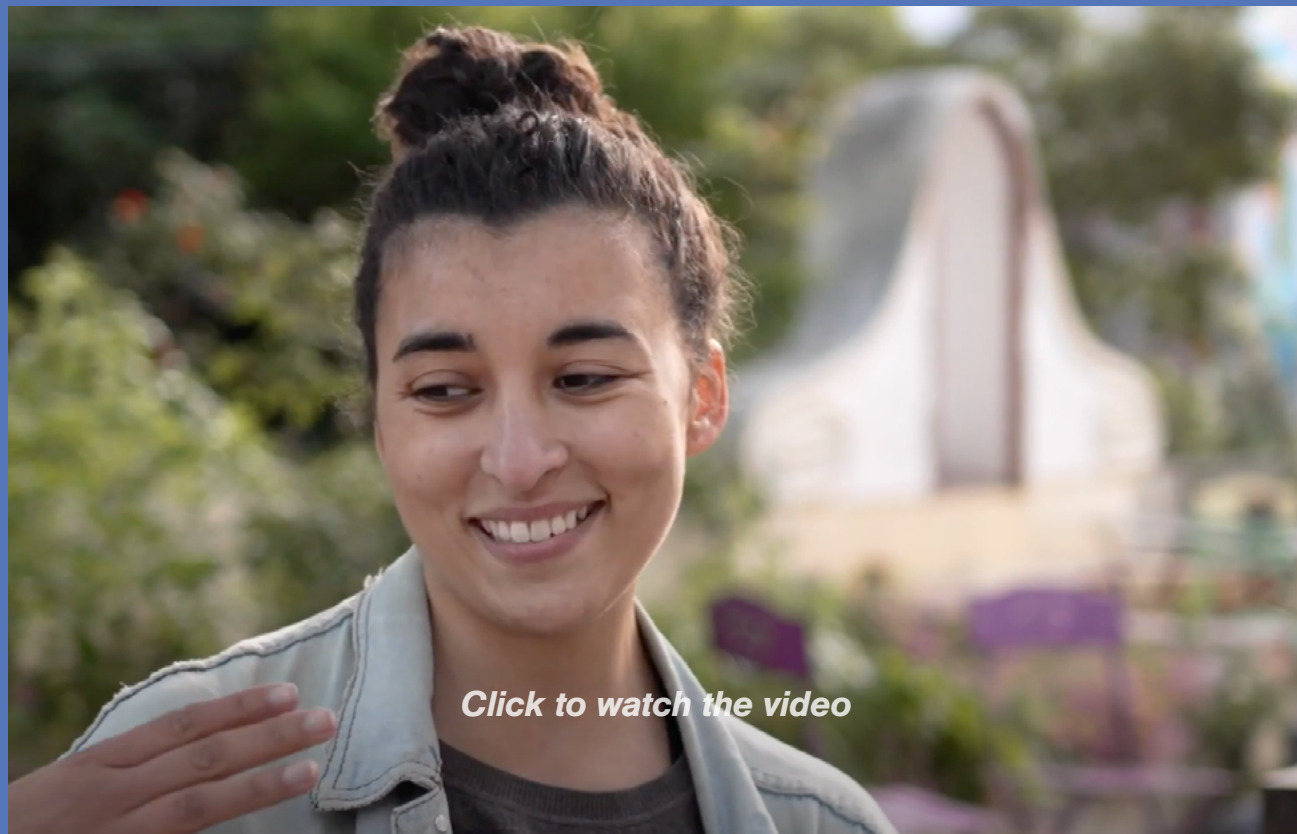
Kim Claes is corporate capture and Fossil Free Politics campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe. The ‘Fossil Free Politics’ campaign was launched in 2019 by almost 200 civil society organisations, and is calling for formal limits to the power of fossil fuel lobbyists in Europe in the same way we have for the tobacco industry. Friends of the Earth Europe, in collaboration with Corporate Europe Observatory, Food and Water Europe and Greenpeace are coordinating this campaign. More info: fossilfreepolitics.org

**A World
Led by
Workers**

Our Demands: A World Led By Workers

Our second demand is a for a world led by workers. This is the only way to achieve true equality and liberate humanity from exploitation.

by European Alternatives



Click to watch the video

As profits are prioritised, workers are increasingly overworked and under-paid. The result is an unprecedented cost of living crisis and higher rates of in-work poverty, whilst corporations are reporting record profits.

The EU must ensure that workers, including young, migrant and seasonal workers, and women, have the right to a living wage, good working conditions, dignity at work, and the freedom to organise. Trade union and worker collectives must use their power to constrain and control capital. We need to visibilise unpaid carers and wage workers, who are often women and migrants, and protect their workers' rights.

Only through fair working conditions during a time of technological revolution and climate action can we transition fairly away from an economy based on unsustainable growth and extraction.



EA staff and participants from the Between Land and Sea Festival, Bremen, join the Make Amazon Pay Picket lines.

- **We want more useful, meaningful and quality work: mobilise the power of trade unions and workers collectives to constrain and control capital**
- **We want an end to unpaid internships**
- **We want full implementation of the Platform Workers' Directive ensured by the European Labour Authority**
- **Transnational institutions must mobilise to protect workers, including young, migrant and seasonal workers, and their right to a living wage, good working conditions, dignity at work and to organise**
- **The workplace should be a place for creativity and freedom. European institutions should defend and promote this possibility to democratise work and everyday life, in relations between partners, family members, buyers and sellers and at the workplace**
- **Action for collective negotiation: we demand combating the power of finance by banning corporate lobbies from democratic institutions, prioritising social dialogue with worker organisations within corporations**
- **The EU must ensure universal access to basic income, decent housing, healthcare and education.**

Our demand for a world led by workers draws on the experience of hundreds of workers across sectors including migrant workers, care workers and precariously employed workers that we have engaged with over the years.

Watch Deliveroo and Guerilla rider Ronnie talk to us about his experience organising in his workplace:



EU elections: workers' rights at the ballot box

A May Day message from ETUC General Secretary Esther Lynch.

by Esther Lynch,
European Trade Union Confederation



May Day is the moment when we celebrate the collective power of working people.

No matter where we're from, what job we do or what our gender is, sticking together is how we have won in the past and how we will win in the future.

“May Day always serves as a reminder of the power that working people have when we come together, whether it's in our workplaces, in the streets or at the ballot box.”

The mobilisations that will take place across Europe today will demonstrate once again that there is power in a union.

And my message to workers this year is that we must make that power felt at the ballot box as well as in the streets and in our workplaces.

Because our ability to bring about change at election time has been all but written off by some people who talk about the results of next month's European elections like a foregone conclusion.

Before campaigning has properly begun or any votes have been cast, there is a narrative being pushed that the far-right have already won the elections and control the parliament.

It is therefore, according to its proponents, naïve to make the case for policies which will improve people's lives.

Let's be clear: a far-right surge in these elections is a real and dangerous prospect.

Our analysis of far-right voting behaviour in this European Parliament term shows that they have consistently voted against the interests of working people.

Whether the issue was fair pay, creating quality new jobs or people's safety at work, the far-right sided with big business not ordinary working people.

I don't underestimate the threat that even more far-right MEPs would pose.

But it is within our power to prevent this outcome and instead impose the real priorities of working people.

The European Parliament's own polling shows the fight against poverty and social exclusion is the number one priority of citizens for the election campaign.

That is followed by public health and support to the economy and the creation of new jobs.

It shows clearly that there is a hunger for a social Europe that improves their quality of life not anti-worker politicians who will use culture wars to mask business as usual.

The poll though also shows how we could end up with the latter.

While workers, the unemployed, students and retired people are more likely to prioritise poverty, public services and jobs, they are less likely to vote.

Meanwhile bosses are most likely to say deregulation and less trade union rights should be a priority but are more likely to vote.

“Let's not forget that the right to vote for ordinary people was one of the first great battles of the trade union movement in Europe.”

To put it bluntly: your boss will definitely be voting and that's why you should as well.



Esther Lynch is General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation.

That is the only way to ensure that we have a parliament that acts on the priorities of the many and not the few.

One of the most pernicious myths peddled in the populist era is that all politicians are the same.

We only need to take one look at the far-right's voting record to see that's not the case.

But our research also shows there are plenty of positive reasons to vote too.

“To put it bluntly: your boss will definitely be voting and that's why you should as well.”

The ETUC's European election manifesto sets out 12 commitments that together would add up to a fair deal for workers.

They include transformative measures like guaranteeing trade union rights, cutting off public funding for companies which refuse to negotiate fair pay with trade unions, maximum working temperature limits to prevent workers paying the price of climate change with their lives, or an enforceable right to disconnect from work and a just transition directive to guarantee workers and their trade unions a say in how change is managed, jobs are protected and a right to training delivered.

We used our manifesto as a yard stick against which to measure the democratic groups standing in the

European elections and once again found not all politicians are the same.

We found the progressives, meaning the Socialists and Democrats, the Left and the Greens/EFA groups are far more likely to back policies which would improve the lives of working people than other groups.

The only problem with progressives in the European Parliament is that there aren't enough of them.

The right want you to believe that this will be the case in the next Parliament too. That the race is already run. But it's not true. It is in our hands to change that.

May Day always serves as a reminder of the power that working people have when we come together, whether it's in our workplaces, in the streets or at the ballot box.

Let's not forget that the right to vote for ordinary people was one of the first great battles of the trade union movement in Europe.

All across Europe, trade unions were at the heart of ending voting rights based on wealth and property and winning universal suffrage through demonstrations and strikes.

That's why mobilising in next month's European elections is the logical extension of our celebrations today.

Let's use our collective power to stop the far-right and put into power people who will act on the real priorities of working people.

The rise of the four-day work week

Aliyah Davies on the productivity benefits and rising popularity of the four-day work week.

by Aliyah Davies,
4 Day Week Campaign



1. <https://www.henley.ac.uk/news/2023/portugals-government-backed-4-day-week-trial-results-show-drops-in-anxiety-and-fatigue-and-improved-work-life-balance>

2. <https://www.connexionfrance.com/news/four-day-week-for-divorced-parents-under-review-says-french-pm/637220>

3. <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/employment-law-compliance/italy-lamborghini-four-day-workweek#:~:text=Lamborghini%2C%20the%20luxury%20automaker%2C%20has,Online%20and%20other%20media%20outlets.>

4. <https://fortune.com/europe/2024/04/08/first-company-turkey-adopts-4-day-work-week-employee-life-balance/>

2024 is poised to be a watershed moment for democracies worldwide, with a quarter of the global population heading to the polls in elections that will impact nearly half the world's population. A sizable portion of these elections will take place in Europe, the most notable of which is arguably the election for Members of the European Parliament, which will be the first since the UK's official departure from the European Union.

“By endorsing the four-day week and supporting member states’ efforts to implement it, the EU can catalyse positive change across industries and empower workers to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.”

Among the many issues shaping these elections is the movement for working time reduction, particularly the advocacy for a four-day working week. As winds of change sweep through the continent, the European Parliament stands at a pivotal juncture to lead the charge towards reshaping our relationship between work and life.

Europe has emerged as a fertile ground for the four-day week experiment, with numerous trials already underway or recently concluded across the region. From Belgium's groundbreaking four-day work week legislation (the first of its kind on the continent) to Portugal's government-backed private sector four-day week pilot programme which has been met with widespread enthusiasm from participants - 85% reported they would require more than a 20% pay increase to return to working five days¹.

Examples of four-day week trials on the continent have highlighted the potential benefits of a shorter work week. In Ireland, revenue increases and improvements in hiring rates following a trial have demonstrated a positive impact for businesses. Germany is embarking on its own trial with hopes of addressing economic stagnation and labour shortages. While in France, a

four-day week for divorced parents and those with complex parenting situations is being considered as a way to support them with childcare arrangements².

Where government-backed large-scale pilots haven't taken place, individual employers are taking the leap towards this workplace change. Luxury car manufacturer, Lamborghini, recently agreed a deal with autoworkers in Italy to implement a four-day working week - the deal also included a pay raise for workers and a one-time bonus³. Likewise, Akso Akrilik in Turkey (an EU candidate country) has taken the leap to be the country's first employer to trial a four-day working week with no loss of pay for 200 of their staff⁴.

Whether government-backed or business-led, these initiatives reflect a growing recognition in Europe that the traditional five-day work week may no longer be conducive to productivity, well-being, or sustainability.

The EU Parliament's involvement in legislating for working time reduction is crucial, building upon the foundation laid by the Working Time Directive 2003. The Directive was introduced with the aim to safeguard workers' health and safety by setting limits on weekly working hours. The four-day week represents a natural evolution to this premise, recognising the importance of adequate rest and recuperation in preventing workplace accidents and promoting overall well-being.

“Europe is grappling with a burnout epidemic, with a majority of Europeans reporting experiences of burnout or nearing its brink.”

Beyond its implications for health and safety, the four-day week holds promise as a catalyst for addressing pressing societal challenges. Europe is grappling with a burnout epidemic, with a majority of Europeans reporting experiences of burnout or nearing its brink⁵. Coupled with productivity disparities among EU nations and a mental health crisis documented across the continent, the need for transformative labour policies

is more evident than ever. Introducing a four-day week can not only enhance productivity but also alleviate strain on mental health and mitigate burnout, fostering a healthier, more resilient workforce.

Moreover, the four-day week aligns with Europe's ambitious climate goals, as outlined in the Green Deal. By reducing commuting emissions, office carbon footprints, and promoting sustainable living practices, the policy represents a systemic shift towards a more environmentally conscious approach to work. As the

“Introducing a four-day week can not only enhance productivity but also alleviate strain on mental health and mitigate burnout, fostering a healthier, more resilient workforce.”

EU claims to reaffirm its leadership in the fight against climate change, embracing the four-day week can further solidify its commitment to sustainability and inspire global action.

But ultimately, the push for a four-day week in Europe is about more than just rethinking the way we work – it is about reimagining the future of work itself. The European Parliament has a unique opportunity to champion progressive labour reform and pave the way for a brighter future of work in Europe. By endorsing the four-day week and supporting member states' efforts to implement it, the EU can catalyse positive change across industries and empower workers to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

When they cast their votes this June, EU citizens have the power to shape Europe's trajectory towards a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous future. The time has come for policymakers to heed the calls of advocates and make the four-day week a reality for workers across the continent.

Allyah Davies is a campaigner for the 4 Day Week Campaign, the UK's national campaign organisation for a four-day working week with no loss of pay. She has a background in politics, with in-depth knowledge of national politics and the Parliamentary process, having previously worked for a member of the UK Parliament for a number of years.

Make Amazon Pay

Daniel Kopp and Oliver Roethig of UNI Europa, the European Services Workers Union, reflect on a transnational campaign to limit the power of big capital.



With a net worth of 200 billion USD, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has just become the richest man in the world again – a position he held after Amazon’s explosive growth during the Covid-19 pandemic, and then temporarily lost to Elon Musk. Bezos’ astronomical wealth – which is higher than the GDP of two-thirds of the world’s countries – reflects Amazon’s status as one of the most powerful companies in the world.

“A pre-Covid survey suggests that half of internet users in major European economies live in a house with an Amazon prime account.”

Having taken off with Bezos’ original ambition to build an “everything store”, Amazon has in the meantime morphed into an “everything company”. Amazon is most widely known as a retailer in e-commerce. Indeed, today a business cannot survive without selling through Amazon – and a pre-Covid survey suggests that half of internet users in major European economies live in a house with an Amazon prime account. But this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Amazon Web Services dominates the cloud computing market with almost one third of global market share. Amazon has entered health care and the finance sectors. Due to its growth in video content and advertising, Amazon is already one of the largest media corporations in the world. It already occupies one third of the streaming market.

With this economic power comes political power. And one reason for Amazon’s success is that it has creatively – and successfully – evaded regulation in the 21st century digital economy.

In Europe, this type of power has a number: annually, the company is spending 4.5 million euros on lobbying in Brussels, making it the 7th largest spender for a single company. With such a large lobbying budget comes the power to influence the decision-making

process of the European Union to the disadvantage of workers, and the trade unions that represent them.

Earlier this year, however, coalition of trade unions, led by UNI Europa, the European Services Workers Union, and civil society organisations such as Corporate Europe Observatory made a dent in Amazon’s EU influence operations.

In 2021, Amazon refused to testify at a European Parliament hearing on working conditions. In December 2023, the company cancelled a visit by a delegation of Members of the European Parliament to its warehouses in Germany and Poland. The following month, the company refused – now for the third time – to engage with the Parliament by not participating in another hearing, citing scheduling issues. The same month, however, the company had attended nine meetings with MEPs, including one just a day after the hearing.

Amazon is used to flouting rules – and disregarding the European social model – with too little pushback. But this time it went too far. Amazon’s refusal to engage with our democratic institutions rubbed Members of European Parliament on the Employment and Social Affairs Committee the wrong way – and they initiated the procedure to get the company lobbyists’ badges withdrawn.

“One reason for Amazon’s success is that it has creatively – and successfully – evaded regulation in the 21st century digital economy.”

As the coalition of trade unions and civil society organisations wrote in an open letter: “Amazon’s disregard for the EU’s democratic institutions should not allow the company to get off the hook.” It did not.

After weeks of campaigning, in February 2024, the European Parliament decided to bar Amazon’s 14 accredited lobbyists from its premises. This was only the second time in the history of the European

Parliament, after Monsanto in 2017, that a corporation’s lobby access was removed – a huge success for corporate accountability.

Many of the parliamentarians had been steadfast allies of the global Make Amazon Pay campaign that was launched in 2020 by UNI Global Union, Progressive International and dozens of other trade unions, civil society organisations, data rights advocates and consumer groups. Each year, the campaign grew its public pressure campaign, most notably through coordinated strikes and protests across more than 30 countries on Black Friday, the busiest shopping day of the year. Across political divides, the campaign moved the political terrain towards a more critical stance on Amazon – and eventually led to the parliamentarians taking action.

“Annually, the company is spending 4.5 million euros on lobbying in Brussels, making it the 7th largest spender for a single company.”

In response to the Parliament’s ban, Amazon stated that they “declined to participate in a session that was clearly one-sided and not designed to encourage constructive debate or objective scrutiny.” Curiously, until that point, Amazon had given scheduling reasons for not attending the latest hearing in the Committee in January 2024. And it’s a lopsided understanding of “one-sided” if both social partners – employer and trade unions – were invited to the hearing.

It was only after the Parliament’s decision and additional public scrutiny that Amazon updated its registration in the EU Transparency Register. Previously, the company reported spending 2.75 million euros, now it stands at a whopping 4.5 million euros. That’s a lot of money. But as the campaign to ban Amazon lobbyists shows, with political will corporate power can be reined in.

The decision by the European Parliament shows Amazon that it cannot continue disregarding our

“As the campaign to ban Amazon lobbyists shows, with political will corporate power can be reined in.”

democratic institutions without consequences. We will continue to campaign so that the same will be true in the future when it comes to workers’ democratic rights: like the right to freely join a union and bargain for better conditions and pay.

Daniel Kopp is Director of Communications at UNI Europa, the European Services Workers Union.

Oliver Roethig is the Regional Secretary of UNI Europa, the European Services Workers Union.

Power

to the

People

Our Demands: Power to the People

Our third set of demands aim to transform democracy and bring power away from the nation state to the translocal level.

by **European Alternatives**



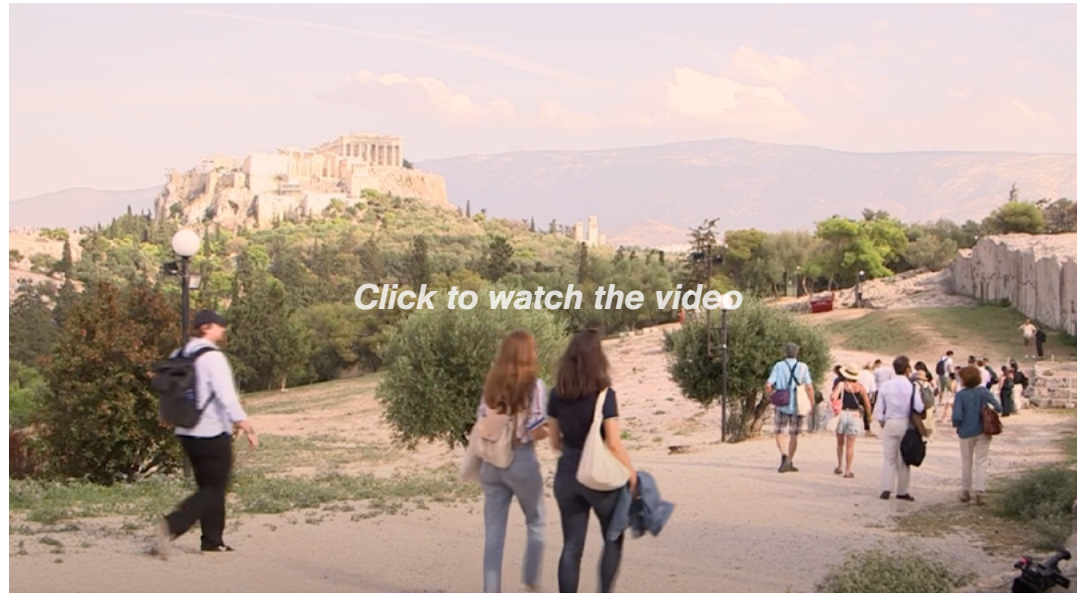
Corporate power has captured the political process at the expense of the voices of ordinary people. Far-right narratives have used political institutions to continue to target racialised people, the LGBTQIA community, migrants, workers, and those in poverty. We need a redistribution of wealth and power away from national governments and corporations towards people and local agencies.



The 2023 Holding Spaces Assembly in Cluj.
Credit: Tamás Márkos

- **We call for people's assemblies and deliberative, participatory democracy for a radical relocation of power and agency**
- **We call for meaningful civic education in schools and beyond that promotes historical and social awareness and political agency of all people**
- **We call for transnational lists: we want more power and representation to minoritised and marginalised groups, including racialised groups, LGBTQIA+, women and young people, and greater political diversity for a non-heteronormative, anti-racist, non-anthropocentric democracy**
- **We call for voting age to be set at 16 years old, in all EU member-states**
- **We call for more power to the European Parliament to introduce legislation that is binding in member-states. We call for a redistribution of power away from the national, which means simultaneously power which is closer to the people, and connected power which has a greater impact on a global scale**
- **We demand voting rights for all residents of Europe**
- **We demand access to affordable, decent living spaces and a housing market that prioritises the rights of tenants and buy-to-live first-time homeowners over super landlords and corporations buying-to-rent**
- **We call for the redistribution of wealth across social classes and across borders, ensuring a decent standard of life for all, are achievable aims and essential to democratic societies in which each can participate fully.**

Our By The Many! demands for a people-powered Europe stem from years of experimenting with citizens' assemblies. Watch Spaces to Assemble, an episode from our documentary series *Holding Spaces* about the power of citizens' assemblies:



Also watch Virginia Fume, formerly of EUmans, explain how transnational assemblies could improve access to healthcare across Europe:



Democratic Manifesto for the European Elections

Citizens Take Over Europe calls for a leap forward in the democratisation of the European Union.

by Citizens Takeover Europe



Democracy is more central to the future of Europe than ever before. It is only through widespread and empowering civic deliberation, participation, and citizen involvement in decision-making that the polarised conflicts in Europe – e.g. regarding the environment, migration, agriculture, security – can be resolved. It is by allowing for more civic voice and transparency that social, intergenerational, and climate justice can be restored or even strengthened, and lasting peace can be secured. Citizens and civil society are essential in their role as watchdogs of proper political dialogue and policy-making, as well as to deter corrupt practices. As various authoritarian challenges to democracy show us in a dramatic way, it is only by extensive and meaningful citizen involvement in politics that much needed democratic resilience can be enhanced in practice. **Citizens Take Over Europe therefore calls for a leap forward in the democratisation of the European Union.**

CTOE calls on the political parties and independent candidates for the 2024 European Parliament elections to remedy the democratic deficits in the EU. This means that the EU institutions need to follow up in a clear, transparent and effective manner to the democratic reform proposals formulated by the Conference on the Future of Europe. The EP should take the lead in institutionalising the demands both in its own procedures and within its powers and calling on the other European institutions to do so. So far, the political proposals have not been taken up by the institutions, as CTOE has noted again and again.

We request more specifically from our political representatives:

- 1** The creation of permanent citizens/people’s assembly for Europe; including a mechanism of mandatory, transparent, and detailed follow-up to such an assembly’s recommendations by the institutions of the European Union;
- 2** The insertion of a meaningful citizen component into the Convention procedure for EU Treaty change. The European Parliament has already adopted a fair number of proposals for Treaty amendment and has called for a Convention. Core demands relating to EU democratisation should be made central to the process of Treaty reform. This means that the ordinary Treaty revision procedure should include robust formats for citizen and civil society participation and deliberation. The inclusion of citizens from accession states should be guaranteed in this process to ensure the EU is preparing in a democratic way for its future.
- 3** Making the European Citizens’ initiative (ECI) a real democratic instrument. The ECI instrument is to be transformed into a direct right of initiative in which citizens’ proposals are to be submitted directly to the legislator (European Parliament and Council of the EU) for consideration. Moreover ECIs should be given the right to initiate a European Citizens’ Assembly. ECIs should also have the right to put forward proposals that may involve Treaty change, thereby giving citizens the possibility to exercise constituent power;
- 4** A pan-European referendum should be established that can be initiated by citizens and prepared by a European Citizens’ Assembly. The purpose of the Assembly is to discuss and recommend a referendum text

that will be put to voters. Its design will aim at triggering public interest and trigger an informed public debate before an actual referendum is held.

- 5** An empowering European digital platform for participation, accessible through a European Digital Citizenship. It should allow citizens to sign petitions, ECIs, interact with each other, and should include civic artificial intelligence giving information on the access to European public services and participatory venues for citizens and civil society organisations;
- 6** Electoral reforms and Europeanising EP elections, establishing: a) for all European citizens and long term residents an equal right to vote that is based on pan-european electoral standards; b) transnational lists that offer citizens the choice among candidates selected by national political parties and running only in one member state as well as European candidates selected by European party alliances and running in multiple member states; c) the right to vote for people with longer residence in the EU; d) the creation of new parties and the collection of signatures for the presentation of new electoral lists should be simplified and made accessible.
- 7** Radical transparency as a right ensured to the European public with regard to lobbying practices by corporate entities and private stakeholders vis-à-vis European leaders, MEPs and public servants. This includes accountability and transparency of conflict of interests, financial receipts and so on, from the part of EU political decision-makers;

8 The consolidation of a democratic ecosystem throughout Europe where decisions should systematically and meaningfully involve those that are most affected by them, particularly through their local authorities and communities, and where relevant local citizens’ assemblies and other forms of participation;

9 Protecting European civil society organisations by developing instruments for safeguarding and enhancing civic spaces in domestic contexts as well as at the transnational level, provide robust funding schemes for civil society organisations, and develop a permanent instrument for monitoring and checking EU legislation on whether it promotes or harms the functioning of civil society.

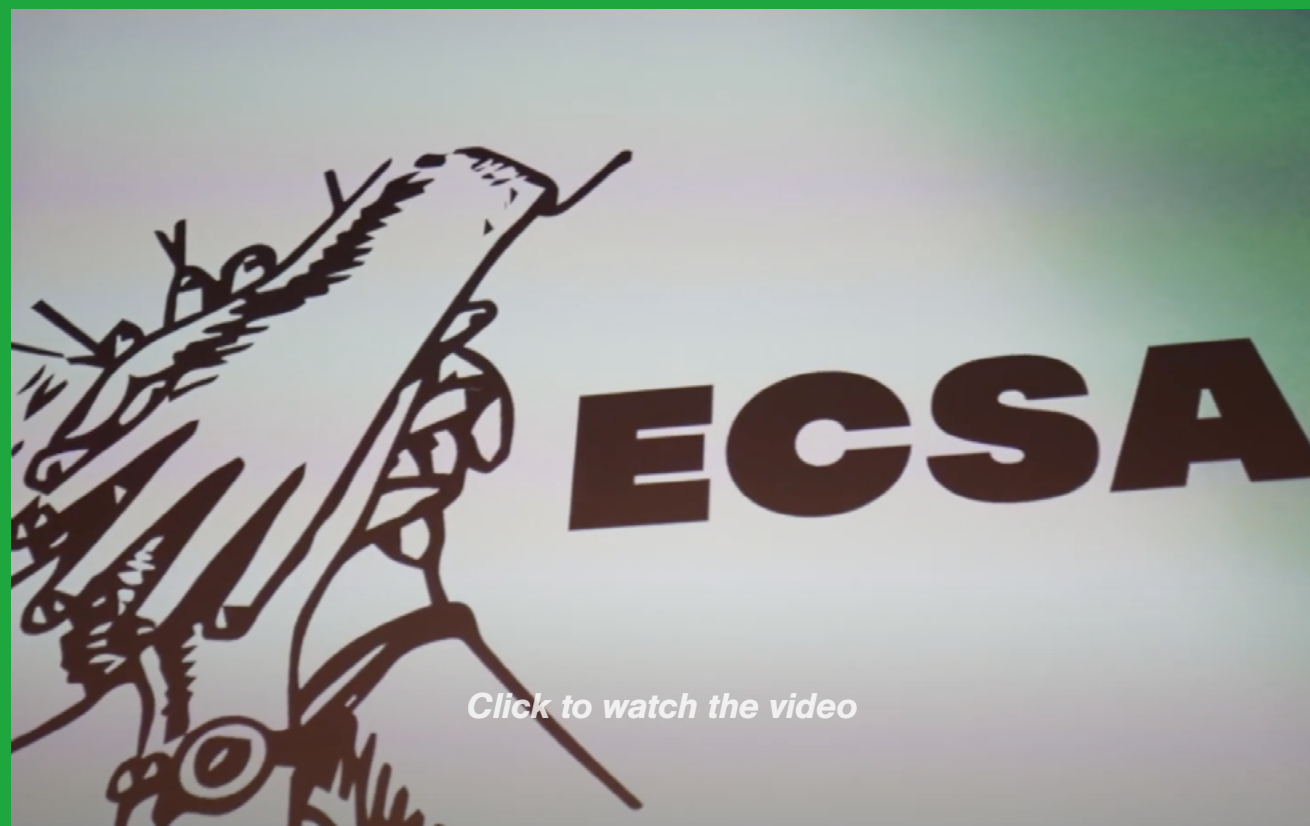
10 An EU Enlargement that reinforces democracy and a strong civil society as prerequisites for membership in the EU, involving citizens both in the accession countries and in the EU in the accession process through citizens assemblies and other forms of participation and deliberation.

Citizens Takeover Europe is a coalition of civil society actors promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of citizens and residents in European politics through advocating democratic reform and empowering civic practices. European Alternatives is a member of the coalition.

Creating a European Common Space for Alternatives

Seema Syeda on an ongoing translocal initiative converging social movement actors to build concerted people-power.

by Seema Syeda, ECSA



At the ECSA in Marseille.
Credit: Isis Mecheraf



Credit: Isis Mecheraf

The European Common Space for Alternatives (ECSA) is a horizontal initiative co-organised by over 60 social movement organisations. Its aim is to build people power by fostering the convergence of social movements for more united action. It has an open steering group which anyone can join.

The ECSA launch event took place in Marseille from 26-28 April 2024 and was based on a simple premise: *To challenge the far right and neoliberalism, we need a social, feminist, antiracist, ecological, peaceful and democratic Europe.*

The programme was organised around four 'containers' of convergence, discussed in plenaries:

- **'Emancipation & Solidarity'** was themed around intersectional resistance to the capitalist, colonial and militarised system of exploitation and violence against marginalised populations.
- **'Power to the People'** focused on democracy from the perspective that real democracy is not only a historical, social and political exigence but also a necessary condition to defeat authoritarianism and the far-right forces that are rising across Europe and the globe.
- **'There is no Planet B'** explored Europe's role in the nexus of climate/extractivism and militarism, discussing strategies to collectively dismantle fossil capitalism, colonialism, and countering far-right agendas on war and climate change.
- **'Struggle and Win Together'** presented and discussed key lessons from previous attempts at building strong movements and organizing common mobilisations across national borders. It also explored key political moments for future Europe-wide mobilisations in 2024 and 2025.

The event was organised using a bottom-up approach, giving everyone the possibility to express themselves and to organise discussions and actions. It's in this spirit that the ECSA will continue and we invite all social movement organisations and actors to join us in the years to come.

“We need to exit our silos and converge our movements to multiply our power.”

Why Marseille? La Ville Rebelle

This Spring in Marseille, at the iconic cultural and community hub Friche La Belle De Mai, the ECSA initiative bringing together social movement and civil society actors from across the continent and the Mediterranean began to bud.

Marseille is a unique city on the Mediterranean sea, a porous space open to the land masses we call Africa, Asia and the Americas (or Turtle Island) and whose ancient history has incorporated it into all of these imagined spaces, whilst also now formally being part of the European Union.

Yet it also defies categorisation and embraces its own self-made identity as a fiercely translocal space built on and deeply connected to many different parts of the world. In 1660, the canons of Marseille were turned to face towards the city as authoritarian monarchs and despots feared its independent spirit and potential to rebel.



Academic and Activist Shahd Hammouri speaks at an ECSA plenary on European complicity with Israel's genocide. Credit: Isis Mecheraf

Yet Marseille has also been instrumental in France's colonial project, as a key port through which French settler-colonialism was established in much of the African continent and across other parts of the world. This continuing legacy also roosts in Marseille and the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, where many pieds-noirs historically settled after Algerian liberation. In his 1950 *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire has written of the ideological continuity between colonialism and fascism, and Marseille was also the site of deportation of its Jewish community to German concentration camps in the 1940s.

“How can we deal with Europe’s continuing coloniality, currently brutally exemplified in the continuing genocide in Gaza?”

It is here that the fascist Rassemblement National launched its 2024 EU election campaign and where Eric Zemmour made his tour for support for his party Reconquête. Thus, the tensions of a rising far right and continuing coloniality in a city that also harbours huge

numbers of social movement actors; racialised groups; trade unionists; anti-imperialists; and an over-exploited working class bubble across the city and are even reflected on its walls, where different parties across the political spectrum vie for space on the *affiche-libre* panels.

Also reflected in its architecture are the signs of the Europe-wide housing crisis that echo from the scorched tomb of Grenfell Tower in London to the toxic waste dumps of Pata Rat, Cluj, from the collapsed building on Rue D'Aubagne to the apartments destroyed in a gas explosion in Thiers. It is here, too, in the Mediterranean Sea, where Europe's mass grave and militarised borders begin, its tenacious fingers reaching far south to Sudan, where EU attempts to stem migration have funded the groups now fanning the flames of civil war, genocide and dictatorship.

European Common Space For Alternatives

It is in this context that the European Common Space for Alternatives came to Marseille. The contradictions of Marseille are the contradictions of Europe and the world. How can we deal with Europe's continuing coloniality, currently brutally exemplified in the continuing genocide in Gaza, funded by and explicitly supported by some of the most powerful states in Europe? What about the global debt structures and

continued labour and resource extraction that Hoover up and decimate all prosperity for Global South and global majority peoples, concentrating them in the imperial core?

What about the drudgery, exploitation and insecurity of life for millions of workers across Europe, as they are exploited by big capital and the fossil fuel industry - causing huge spikes in energy and housing costs? What about the war in Ukraine and the rising spectre of authoritarianism inside and outside Europe? What about the contradictions of big transnational organisations when they collide with the reality of the local, as when European civil society lands in Marseille?

Many social movement actors have theorised, written and spoken about the solutions to these crises. Many of us have also imagined radical alternatives over the centuries, and many groups around the world are enacting alternatives in their localities. Yet we need something more for our alternatives to win victory: we need to exit our silos and converge our movements to multiply our power.

This is what the European Common Space for Alternatives seeks to do. Bringing together almost a

hundred different social movement actors locally and transnationally, we've kick-started a process where we

“We are far from perfect, and the process has only just begun – but to give up trying is to give up hope.”

can know and learn our commonalities and differences, identify joint routes forward for action, and build our power to change the world. We are far from perfect, and the process has only just begun – but to give up trying is to give up hope, and to give up faith in the possibility of co-constructing our desired future. So join us as we approach the European Elections 2024 and start the long, challenging and joyous struggle in the years of collaboration and transformation ahead.

You can sign up and stay updated with the ECSA at spaceforalternatives.eu



ECSA co-facilitator Myriam Zekagh hands over to Aurore from the ECSA care team. Credit: Isis Mecheraf



ECSA participants. Credit: Isis Mecheraf

Seema Syeda is Head of Communications at European Alternatives.

Justice

and

Equity

Our Demands: Justice and Equity

The fourth set of demands centres the need to empower minoritised communities and end all discrimination across Europe.

by European Alternatives



We call for a EU-wide law on anti-discrimination which includes specific and intersectional grounds on: gender-based violence, LGBTQI+ discrimination, exclusion based on race, ethnicity, and nationality, and religion (including Islamophobia). Europe should work internally and in the world against discrimination and all forms of domination.

Like our other demands, our campaign for justice and equity is built on years of engagement with different struggles across the continent. Our Holding Spaces documentary series brings together activists across Europe fighting for the rights of a diverse range of people, at a training programme that took place in Sofia. Watch the episode Spaces for Training.

- Women's rights must be guaranteed, promoted and protected, including the right to abortion and reproductive autonomy
- Comprehensive sex education for all young people in Europe for an informed and empowered generation, with an understanding and respect of gender and sexual diversity
- A reinforced European Feminist Network to stop the anti-gender movement
- Ensuring the same rights for LGBTQIA+ people and families across Europe, including marriage, adoption, having children, access to healthcare and education and ending discrimination
- We must immediately address and protect the significant disparities in suicidality and severe mental health challenges that disproportionately affect LGBTQIA+ youth
- The EU must urgently address rising Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism; providing funding and resources for community safety and tackling hate crime; guaranteeing women's rights to bodily autonomy and freedom to choose what to wear, and freedom of expression and belief
- The EU must acknowledge the historic role of European countries in colonialism, including genocides, apartheid, violence and extraction, that continue to this day
- There can be no durable justice in Europe without justice in the world. This means the EU must support Ukrainians to resist Russian imperial aggression, bring about an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, and reinforce the work of the International Criminal Court to prosecute crimes against humanity and establish international law as the peaceful alternative to a world of military force.

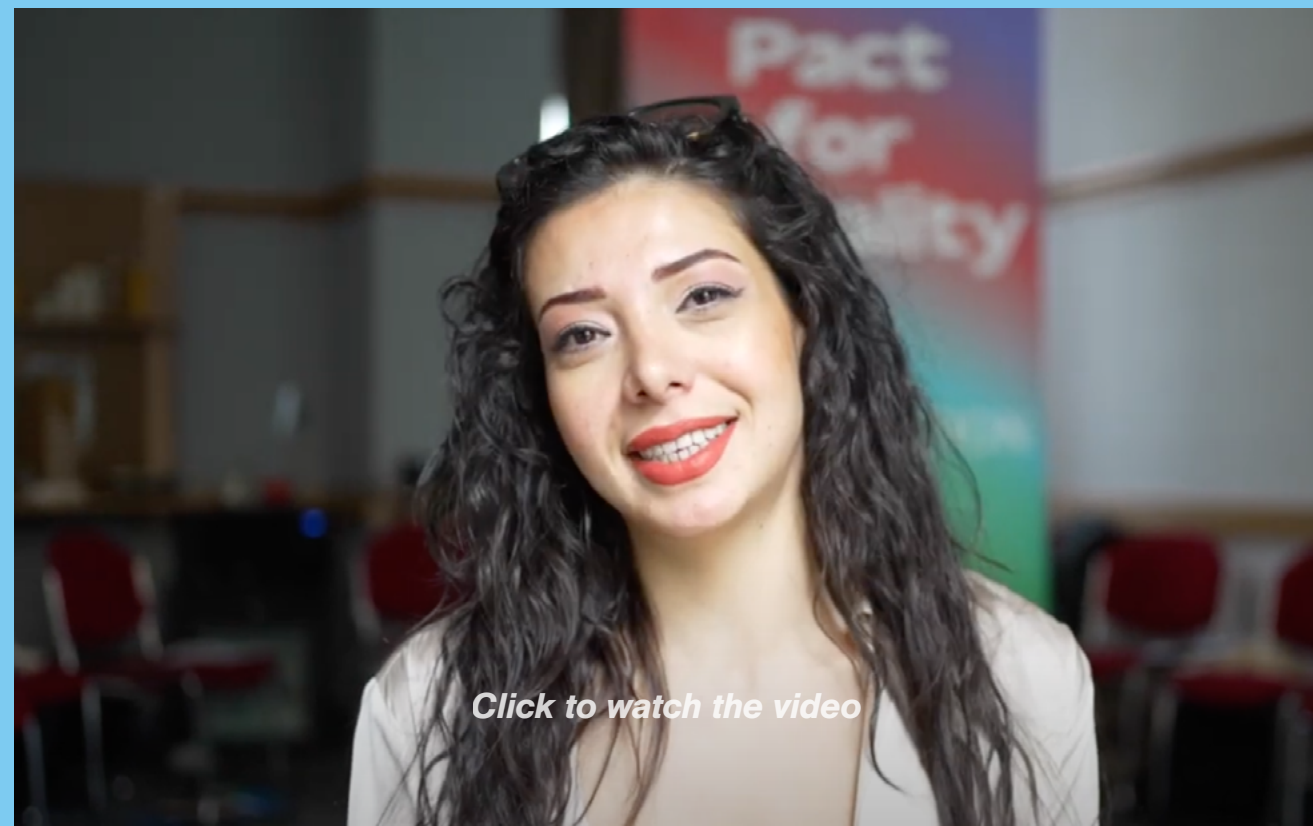


Credit: European Alternatives

Pact for Equality

We introduce the Pact for Equality, a migrant-led initiative to end all forms of racism and discrimination across the EU.

by European Alternatives



Click to watch the video

“The EU is not the human rights example it claims to be.”

Our principles

The EU is not the human rights example it claims to be. Discrimination and structural racism are rife – from profiling, exclusion, to violence and death – and after these elections, likely to rise for migrants*, refugees, and racialised people**.

In 2022 the Fundamental Rights Agency survey on **Being Black in the EU** found that within a year, “racial discrimination [had] risen from 24% to 34%. It has increased the most when searching for accommodation, looking for a job, at work and in education.”

In December 2023, the **EU Barometer survey** found rising discrimination across the EU, most commonly due to ethnicity, race, gender identity and sexual orientation. Most instances of discrimination took place at work or in public spaces.

Yet, our communities have never been more interconnected. Europe is becoming increasingly diverse and aware of its multiple identities and histories. We can use our connections in this crucial time to create an equal, inclusive, representative, and vibrant Europe together.

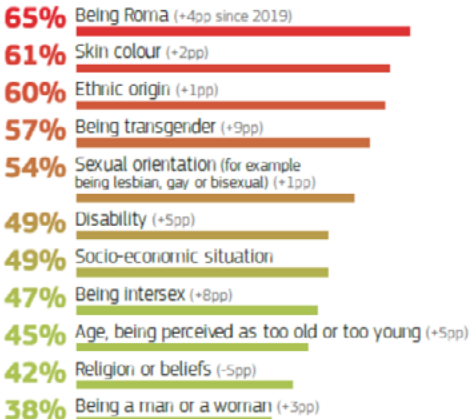
Let’s make a Europe of human rights a reality – not just a slogan.

Acknowledge our agency and recognise our shared humanity and common values.

Join the Pact for Equality today and join the fight for a future of equality in Europe!

Over half of EU citizens say **discrimination is widespread** on the basis of being Roma, skin colour, ethnic origin, gender identity (being transgender) and sexual orientation

DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF...



Who we are

As a group of anti-racism, migration, and anti-discrimination advocates, all politically active in our communities, we mobilised our expertise to formulate the Pact for Equality’s principles and demands over two days of deliberation in Marseille, April 2024.

This Pact is shaped by our personal experiences of exclusion and discrimination, as well as our strong links with local communities.

Our mission statement:

“We have the privilege of speaking on behalf of ourselves and drawing attention to similar struggles faced by our communities. We want to use our skills, unique perspectives, and expertise to demand people in positions of power change the reality faced by migrants*, refugees and racialised people in Europe**, and contribute to ending all forms of discrimination.”

“This Pact is shaped by our personal experiences of exclusion and discrimination.”

Meet Pact for Equality advocates

Christian Agbor



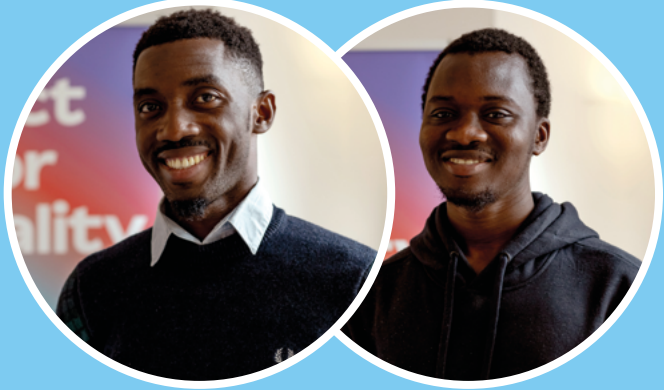
“Could you imagine Europe without equality? Because millions won’t imagine it – they will live it. And it will happen under your watch.”

Maguy Ikulu



“En tant que femmes racisées, nous vivons deux des discriminations les plus longues et les plus universelles de l’histoire de l’humanité : les discriminations de genre et les discriminations raciales. En tant que personnes concernées, nous voulons offrir une solution concrète pour pouvoir construire, enfin, un monde égalitaire. Cette solution, c’est le Pacte pour l’Egalité. On dit que le futur est féminin, n’est-ce pas ? En vous joignant à nous, en vous joignant au Pacte pour l’égalité, vous offrez une chance à vous-même, mais aussi à l’humanité toute entière, d’avoir un avenir plus radieux.”

Moussa Sangare & Muhammed Jammeh



“We live in a society where our rights are not equal. People are dying in the sea from our discriminatory policies, we should do something about it now. So, join our Pact for equality to ensure that Europe is for all. With this Pact, we will have equal rights and equal opportunities.”

Sandra Alloush



“Every human deserves their fundamental human rights, no matter where they come from, their religion, their race, their sexuality, their age. We all deserve equal rights.”

Our demands

Anti-discrimination and equality

1. Expansion of equality or anti-discrimination frameworks to all EU policies
2. Awareness-raising and education on racism and discrimination
3. An EU anti-racism law that addresses the gaps in the Race Equality Directive for comprehensive protection from discrimination
4. Investment and incentives for Corporate Social Responsibility programmes specifically on issues on discrimination and equality
5. Structural investment in civil society organisations, primarily those led by racialised people
6. Mandated collection of disaggregated data, with clear and broad categories for self-identification encompassing race, ethnicity, country of origin, nationality, and religion, as well as gender, sexuality, and ability
7. Equal and fair recognition of university degrees or technical qualifications with EU academic institutions, regardless of country of origin or sponsorship.

Migration and Asylum

8. Provide safe migration routes to Europe, with universal access regardless of country of origin
9. End EU externalisation policies
10. End deportations of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
11. End racial profiling at the borders and in society
12. Equal civic, political and social rights for all migrants
13. Complementary routes to arrival, including but not limited to expanded student and worker visas, humanitarian visas, family reunification, and private sponsorship

Democracy and citizenship

14. The right of everyone born in the EU to acquire citizenship (jus soli)
15. Pathways to naturalisation without racist and discriminatory criteria based on nationality, country of origin, ethnicity or race, or socio-economic status
16. The right of everyone to acquire an EU citizenship that is not tied to a specific Member State
17. The right to vote for all EU residents, regardless of citizenship or migration status, for local and EU elections
18. A guarantee that EU citizenship acquired from a Member State or the EU can never be revoked, even for those with dual or multiple nationality
19. The EU to acknowledge colonial responsibility in excluding racialised people in participative democratic system and to work towards greater inclusion, representation and (meaningful) participation
20. A harmonised EU citizenship system and the uniform application of the 1997 Citizenship Directive

“We believe MEPs have the power to reverse the trend of rising hatred and discrimination in Europe.”



MEP Pledge

The Pact for Equality is a commitment between civil society organisations, racialised communities, trade unions, and MEPs to engage in a regular formal dialogue process during the next five years and beyond.

We believe MEPs have the power to reverse the trend of rising hatred and discrimination in Europe, as well as address the shrinking avenues for dialogue with civil society actors and local communities in the policy-making process.

For MEP candidates, the 2024 European Parliament elections represent a unique opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to the founding values of the Union and to its anti-discrimination framework.

Find out more at euroalter.com/pactforequality

By signing the Pact for Equality, once elected as an MEP I pledge to:

- Reaffirm and call for a strengthening of the EU anti-discrimination framework, through an expansion of its key instruments and monitoring their proper implementation by Member States
- Closely monitor developments around the current anti-discrimination framework to better address the specific challenges of structural racism and intersectional discrimination affecting both EU and non-EU citizens, across all EU policy areas (notably migration and asylum) and social groups in the Euro- Mediterranean region
- Base my voting decisions on inclusive and participatory processes, primarily through consultation of individuals and movements directly impacted by racism and discrimination, as well as civil society, academia, and other relevant stakeholders providing evidence and expertise on discrimination in and by the EU
- Foster a positive narrative and policy shift away from securitised, criminalising, Islamophobic and stigmatising discourses about racialised people – regardless of citizenship – as well as the organisations, human rights defenders, and general public who act in solidarity towards these groups
- Request concrete EU measures and policy changes in favour of equality, anti-discrimination, and anti-racism
- Address post-colonial legacies and inequalities notably by fostering a relationship of reciprocity between the North and South of the Mediterranean
- Work with national equality bodies to promote awareness of the legal means available to victims, the collection of high-quality, disaggregated data on racism and discrimination, holding national authorities accountable, and pushing for the implementation of the Directive on standards for equality bodies
- Work with local authorities to promote best practices and monitor the implementation of the EU anti-discrimination framework at national level, as well as the adoption and application of national anti-racism action plans.

Five FIERCE Claims for a Feminist Europe

We present the campaign demands of our feminist research project FIERCE* ahead of the EU Elections 2024.

by FIERCE



1. A Recognised European Feminist Network to Stop the Antifeminist and Anti-Gender Movement

Establish a collaborative process that facilitates networking and alliance-building opportunities among existing national and transnational feminist movements and NGOs. Amplify feminist voices and foster intersectional solidarity. Build a STRONG front that the European Parliament systematically supports and empowers.

1.1: Redirect the funding to secure sustainable and transparent feminist networking

TURN THE TIDE from financing antifeminist and anti-gender movements to consolidating a durable feminist network by assuring the following:

- Funding monitoring and exposing antifeminist and anti-gender movements: document economic flows and schemes with evidence and data to disclose the narratives and networks behind non-democratic movements. Include funding indicators of antifeminist and anti-gender actors and organisations in annual reports accessible to the public.
- Funding sustainability and long-term functionality: guarantee constant core funding (not exclusively project-based) for feminist activists and rights advocacy organisations, movements, and networks to secure their actions and move beyond the uncertainty of volunteering.

1.2: Confront online democracy threats such as disinformation and hate speech

- Document and expose gender biases in technology AI and social media algorithms. Promote using tools and systems that foster algorithmic justice.
- Regulate digital platforms' criteria for identifying non-democratic threats and guarantee that the algorithm-building process respects European values, using fair and transparent algorithm management tools.
- Advocate intersectional criteria in the analysis of information presented by the media so its coverage shifts towards diversity, considering gender, ethnicity, religion, ideology, and other identity markers.

1.3: Words Matter: "Words shape worlds."

The European Parliament can participate in shaping an EQUAL WORLD and create an open discourse with feminist networks to amplify their words and address fake and non-scientific harmful speech.

- Anti-gender and antifeminist discourse is responsible for online and offline violence of many people when threats escalate to a personal level. Political discourse should create a narrative that directly connects the feminist agenda and democracy.
- Systematically monitor and denounce hate speech based on anti-gender and antifeminist rhetoric, which includes violent discourse against women, misogynistic attacks on female politicians, gender-based threats against female journalists, women human rights defenders, discrimination attacks on LGBTIQ+, hatred against marginalised groups, etc.

2: Social, Economic and Reproductive Justice

2.1: Achieve reproductive justice NOW

Reproductive justice goes beyond fundamental reproductive rights, encompassing aspects such as maintaining personal bodily autonomy, freedom of choice in childbearing (including LGBTIQ+ people) and the right to abortion, access to childcare, and issues related to adoption. These vital rights must be accessible to racialised and minoritised women, women with disabilities, those affected by poverty, and any other inequalities. The reason behind this inequality is simple - marginal groups don't have full access to their rights. A particular emphasis should be put on female genital mutilation (FGM) and combating forced sterilisation, one of the most serious human rights violations that have been documented regarding Romani women and LGBTIQ+ people. JUSTICE means JUSTICE FOR EVERYBODY as a universal model, and no specific population group should be excluded.

- Institute universal health coverage and guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health care services (contraception, abortion, maternal health, accessibility to free medical care, cervical and breast cancer prevention, menstrual hygiene facilities and products etc.), regardless of nationality and citizenship.
- Activate evidence-based decision-making processes based on research and specifically collected data at the European and Member States levels. Use this

“Institute universal health coverage and guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health care services.”

information to monitor and strengthen sanctioning mechanisms to protect sexual and reproductive rights.

- Combat gender-based physical, verbal and structural violence in the healthcare system—e.g., gynaecological and obstetric violence, primarily including forced sterilisation based on discrimination e.g. of Romani women, LGBTIQ+ people, as well as the denial of abortion care, that violates the universal concept “MY BODY, MY CHOICE.”
- Produce guidelines and design training programmes for healthcare professionals on intersectionality and gender-sensitive treatment, so specialists know how to address and help patients regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, or identity.
- Constitutionalise reproductive rights at the EU level and modify the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), in line with the European Parliament proposals. Ensure the EU is up-to-date with the latest reproductive issues in the Member States (MS) and that legislation is modified accordingly.
- Encourage Member States to focus on the implementation of a basic minimum health insurance (taking into account the socio-economic aspects) to prevent and treat cervical and other types of cancer among women and reduce the percentage of deaths occurring during childbirth and pregnancy.

2.2: Dignify and recognise care work as the cornerstone of life

“EP candidates, your daily life happens because of people who stay in the background and care for your infants, school-age children, ill, disabled, and elderly people. Next time, look at them Properly! They are the people who work A LOT and receive LITTLE!”

- Care is a public matter!
 - Create a European Public Care system that addresses the universal need for care, guarantees access to public and quality services, particularly for migrant and marginalised people based on their country of origin, social status (undocumented,

“Eliminate detention centres for immigrants and asylum seekers.”

refugees, indigenous people, etc.), and valorises the work of carers. Offer reasonable inclusive care opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, political choice, citizenship, etc.

- Turn care into a universal right: TO CARE FOR SOMEONE and TO BE THE SUBJECT OF CARE!
 - Build up on the European Care Strategy to promote a non-profit, relationship-centred quality care model that avoids privatisation and does not dismantle public services.
 - Stop the “uberization” of home care services through platforms that dehumanise and impersonalise the employer-worker relationship. Technology should facilitate working processes and simplify daily tasks, not undermine common interpersonal relationships.
- Care work must be decent work!
 - Recognise the rights of care and domestic workers, regardless of their administrative status (citizen, regular or irregular migrant). Focus on providing equal opportunities, especially pay equity.
 - Recognise specific rights of care and domestic workers, such as providing specific treatment for professional diseases, regulating the second shift of live-in domestic workers, guaranteeing protection against discrimination, providing maternity protection during maternity leave, and claiming childcare benefits, among other things.
 - Recognise the time spent in care activities for pension rights regardless of the workers’ legal status (citizen, documented or undocumented migrant).
 - Ratify and implement the ILO’s Convention 189 to provide fair and acceptable working conditions for domestic workers.

2.3: Decent work for all: Decent conditions! Decent opportunities! Decent legislation!

- Guarantee everyone’s access to quality jobs considering dignity and equality, with proper working

conditions and a fair income (access to decent work according to the ILO’s standards). Address the problem of migrant women’s work opportunities, who have the least paid jobs but are most needed in the EU. Create mechanisms to protect workers from discrimination considering their de facto subordinate position in the working relationships.

- Protect workers from all forms of exploitation (verbal harassment, physical violence, minimum wages, unregistered employment, extended work hours, etc).
- Guarantee social protection rights, such as access to social security, healthcare, and retirement benefits.

3: Fighting Against SGBV (Sexual and Gender-Based Violence)

3.1: Implement and improve the EU directive on violence against women (VAW) and visualise the bigger picture - institutional violence that creates structural discrimination

The EU Directive on VAW and domestic violence has been an important first step in addressing and tackling sexual and gender-based violence. The Directive needs content improvements and effective implementation according to the document’s original proposal, which is an achievable goal for EP candidates.

- Add modifications to the directive and implement a consent-based definition of rape, as well as intersex genital mutilation/coercive medicalisation and forced sterilisation as forms of SGBV.
- Avoid an instrumentalisation of the directive by ensuring the complete implementation of each of its components. Go beyond criminalisation and emphasise prevention, considering additionally the content of the Victim’s Rights Directive and the Istanbul Convention. Adopt a victim-centred approach to address the underlying

issues and provide adequate victim support.

- Guarantee national and local implementation of the directive by sharing examples of successful case studies using cross-checked facts, data, functional tools for combating SGBV, legislative precedents, and media coverage.
- Add gender-based violence to the EU Treaties Article 83.1 TFEU to recognise it as a serious crime that needs a common combating approach.
- Address the perpetration of the SGBV by the state institutions (non-recognition of the victims of SGBV, corruption, obstetrical and gynaecological violence, reduced access to basic health care, etc.).
- Address SGBV as a transnational problem by periodically reporting on selected indicators (e.g., femicides, cyber-harassment) and applying an intersectional approach to data collection and analysis. Use media coverage as a tool to increase awareness.
- Stop harmful practices like female genital mutilation and promote dignified menstruation, contrasting social stigma, limitations, mistreatment, aggression, and the denial of access to essential services and resources.

3.2: Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) for all young people in Europe: An informed and empowered generation

Address gender-based violence as a cultural problem for all nationalities, promoting prevention through education and raising awareness of sexism. Guarantee that age-appropriate material for comprehensive sex education and a curriculum spanning all life stages and well-trained educators are available to all public and private institutions, including pre-schools, schools, universities, colleges, vocational training institutes, adult educational centres, and others.

- Mandatory and standardised CSE materials for children in the EU countries, addressing consent, gender norms, intersectional discrimination, LGBTIQ+ rights, SGBV, and sexual violence against children, including incest and other issues with real case studies.

“Prevent any national or international conflict from turning into genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity and take international measures against actors that commit these crimes.”

- Guarantee constant EU funding and allocation of resources for CSE material development and implementation.
- Introduce specific training courses and materials for teachers and educators highlighting CSE themes and giving valid examples of problem-solving.
- Consider an intersectional perspective on CSE that includes the sexual rights of people with disabilities and the complexity of discrimination based on identity markers (gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.).
- Support and fund cooperation programs with civil society in countries where LGBTIQ+ rights are under attack. Provide assistance, protection, and advocacy for LGBTIQ+ communities that face constant threats.
- Foresee binding clauses dedicated to human rights protection in Trade Agreements.
- Oblige parties to adhere to human rights standards and principles by promoting accountability, transparency, and protecting fundamental rights.

4: Protect LGBTIQ+ Rights

4.1: Legal protection of LGBTIQ+ rights

Advocate and push for an anti-discrimination law to criminalise homo-transphobia and close the legal gap in the protection of LGBTIQ+ people's rights, who are one of the most discriminated and marginalised population groups in Europe.

- Extend efforts beyond the EC LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and promote an EU anti-discrimination law to ensure LGBTIQ+ rights.
- Improve current legislation on human rights and anti-discrimination to foster greater inclusivity for the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Address intersectionality within LGBTIQ+ rights based on multiple identity markers (gender, ethnicity, religion, ideology, etc.).
- Include the rights of LGBTIQ+ families (adoption rights, marriage equality, anti-discrimination protections, healthcare access, inclusive environment, etc.).

4.2: Integrate LGBTIQ+ rights into foreign policies

- Make LGBTIQ+ rights protection a criterion in the EU enlargement and accession processes by promoting diversity and combating discrimination.

5: Global Development, Peace and Feminist Foreign Policy

Build a global system where solidarity is not barred by political boundaries. Change the current justice landscape to eliminate inequalities and prioritise peaceful conflict resolutions implementing a feminist foreign policy. Recognise women as critical agents of change in globalisation.

5.1: Adjusting the EU's soft power to build a global institutional framework for peace, development, and sustainability by appealing to its core values, policies, and institutions

- Set up an independent foreign policy, based on feminist foreign policy principles, that prioritises the peace agenda against all wars using a diplomatic and peaceful resolution commitment.
- Strengthen the EU's role in advocating for a UN system reform that aligns with its original mandate and mission by addressing global challenges.
- Revisit the EU's financial rules and budget-assigning criteria to stop financing authoritarian regimes and involve women and organisations supporting gender equality in decision-making processes.

FIERCE is a research project which analyses feminist and anti-gender movements in various countries. *FIERCE has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 101061748. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not

necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor European Research Executive Agency can be held responsible for them.



Funded by the European Union

5.2: Ceasefire everywhere NOW!

- Prevent any national or international conflict from turning into genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity and take international measures against actors that commit these crimes. Identify potential targets during the conflict's early stages and ensure protective measures.
- Respect the ICJ's (International Court of Justice) decisions and avoid complicity in these crimes.
- Improve and ensure a concrete action plan for implementing the women's peace and security agenda (UN1325).

5.3: Climate, justice and economic governance

- Put people's rights (individuals and communities) in the centre and prioritise them over corporate interests in economic decision-making processes and governance.
- Modify the debt policy to promote debt restructuring and cancellation models in economically disadvantaged countries.
- Modify tax policies to foster progressive taxation systems, establish a common tax policy, set international tax standards, and eliminate tax havens.
- Stop promoting privatisation and liberalisation of public goods and services through trade policy, which limits access to public services and increases the unpaid care burden—a burden that falls heavily on women.
- Recognise the climate justice demands by accepting the disproportionate impact of climate change on women, girls, and gender-diverse people. It is essential to address existing gender inequalities within climate policies.
- Feminist climate action asserts that women are at the frontline of climate governance. Empowering women economically, socially, and politically is crucial for building resilient communities and fostering sustainable development

5.4: Europe without borders

- Equal rights to all migrants (special focus on refugees and undocumented people).
 - Stop racist narratives towards migrants.
 - Valorise migrants' work.
 - Regularise the situation of migrant workers currently in irregular employment.
 - Offer unrestricted access to public services regardless of administrative asylum status.
 - Facilitate the recognition process of country-of-origin qualifications.
- Stop institutional violence and racism towards all migrants (special focus on refugees, undocumented people and racialised minorities [e.g. Roma people]).
 - Fight restrictions against freedom of movement.
 - Eliminate detention centres for immigrants and asylum seekers.
 - Address the global roots of the refugee crisis, including climate disasters, pollution, threats, violent conflicts, and economic precarity.
- Rights for refugee women.
 - Revise all EU refugee deals with authoritarian governments to ensure they align with EU values, human rights standards, and ethical considerations.
 - Guarantee refugee rights for all refugee women (special focus on victims of SGBV) to promote and facilitate their economic independence, which is key to ensuring their full inclusion.

A Digital Revolution that Serves the People

Our Demands: A Digital Revolution That Serves The People

Our fifth demand is for transformation and democratization of the digital world.

by European Alternatives



Technology should ease human suffering and serve human flourishing and creativity. It should not be used as a tool of control or profit. Instead, surveillance technology is becoming increasingly widespread, disproportionately impacting human rights defenders, racialised people and migrants. Private data is bought and sold in the name of corporate interests.

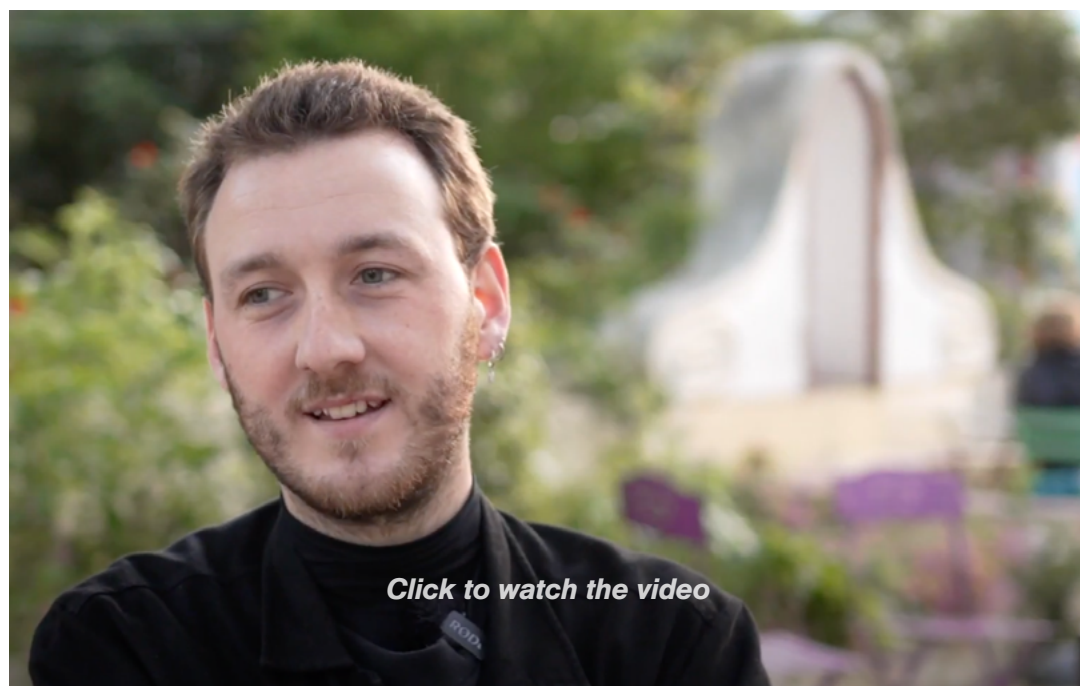
We want tech built for people, not profit. We must democratise ownership of tech tools and data. Our digital lives are intertwined with our physical lives: everyone must be empowered and equipped to participate and co-create digital life, protected against exploitation online.

- Citizens must have control over who stores their personal data and be able to delete them at any time. The EU must implement systems for individual control over the storing of personal data, the right to delete your own data, and the right to privacy online
- Private data must be protected from being bought and sold by private companies without consent, transparency or protection of the individual
- The EU must take unified legal protection against discrimination and violence by Artificial Intelligence, and develop a planetary model of advanced technology which facilitates human flourishing and collaboration rather than profit-making or domination
- The EU must investigate and dismantle systemic discrimination, violence and repression, online and offline, towards women, trans and LGBTQIA+, migrants, racialised communities, human rights defenders, journalists, and ordinary people
- A democratic online space that protects freedom of speech as well as the rights of women, children, racialised people and the LGBTQIA community to thrive and participate in digital life.

Our demands for digital transformation stem from our varied work on this topic, including our Artsformation project, which used the arts to explore inclusive digital transformation. Watch the video below to find out more:



Watch Jacc explain what By The Many means to them and how digital movement building is crucial to transnational organising.



Digital futures for all

Viktoria Tomova and Shubham Kaushik on the European Digital Rights (EDRi) network's transformative narrative and positive vision for EU digital policy.

by European Alternatives



In recent years, protecting and advancing digital rights feels like a never-ending battle as more and more of our lives get entangled with the digital world. Challenges to our freedoms online and offline continue to pile up as we face tech corporations with ginormous budgets and states with *carte blanche* to do anything for 'national security' reasons.

In the last five years, EU lawmakers moved one step forward, and three steps back when it came to putting people first in their tech legislation. They passed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) law that did not center people's rights, proposed full-fledged attacks on the confidentiality of our communications and passed a lukewarm law to regulate platforms like Facebook and Instagram.

The war in Ukraine and the siege against Gaza have heightened everyone's appetites for securitisation narratives. At the same time, winds are blowing in the direction of AI hype, leaving important human rights considerations in the dust.

In this context, together with broader social movements, European Digital Rights (EDRi) has been challenging power imbalances and protecting digital rights. Throughout the last 20 years, EDRi has served as the backbone of Europe's digital rights movement – and we're determined to continue in the face of all obstacles and changing contexts.

“At the heart of all our efforts were the interests of communities who would be most harmed by feckless regulation.”

And the context is about to change. 2024 will see many elections throughout the world, but also in Europe. The June EU elections are an opportunity to get our message to newly-elected politicians, and to turn our vision of people-centred democratic future into reality.

Nothing changes if nothing changes: Imagining alternatives through collective positive narratives

One of the key ways to affect change on EU digital policies is through changing the narrative around technology and digital spaces. EDRi has been doing transformative narrative work along with racial and social justice organisations through a decolonial approach to digital policy, stories about communities, and by developing a positive vision for our digital futures.

Allowing people to imagine alternatives gives all of us a common goal to collectively work towards. We have seen the impact of this in the work we have done in two of the most debated digital laws in the recent years: the AI Act and the fight to defend confidentiality of communication in the Child Sexual Abuse Regulation (CSAR) file.

“We publicly scrutinised the lack of transparency, inclusion and accountability in the EU institutions responsible for the legislative process.”

Putting people and empowering narratives at the heart of AI Act advocacy

EDRi and our partners tenaciously advocated for an AI Act that prioritises people from the very beginning of the legislative process. When the law was initially proposed by the Commission in 2020, protecting our fundamental rights seemed to be more lip service than reality. Together with a broad range of digital, human rights and social justice organisations, we influenced the conversation through our collective vision.

Our positive values-based framing was also reflected in our Reclaim Your Face campaign, which explained to people what's at stake in clear, easy-to-understand terms. Supported by 80 organisations around Europe, we put banning biometric mass surveillance on the lawmakers' agenda, and mobilised over 250,000 people to support us in this effort.



EDRi and partners bringing the voices of over 250,000 supporters to key policymakers involved in the AI Act in June 2023

EDRi also convened a variety of civil society and expert voices to develop a collective narrative about the AI Act. We did this to challenge the dominant state and industry driven narratives which centre technosolutionism and innovation-at-all-costs. At the heart of all our efforts were the interests of communities who would be most harmed by feckless regulation. We listened to stories of people with a migration background, racialised communities, people with disabilities, and other groups who have lived experiences of technological harms.

Our work on transforming narratives helped us face many challenges. We overcame some of the lack of political will by lawmakers, who were being pulled by the billions of euros spent by tech lobbies to water down the AI Act for the sake of their profits. Our work made the pitfalls of going down the 'innovation at any cost' rabbit hole clear to decision-makers and the public.

Envisioning encryption: Positive spin on privacy and child safety

Similarly, the Stop Scanning Me campaign led by EDRi and our members used narrative change to turn the political debate on encryption 180 degrees.

Some of the key challenges we faced during the legislative process were administrative malpractices and abuses of power stemming from the European Commission's Department leading the CSAR law (DG HOME) and its Commissioner, Ylva Johansson. We publicly scrutinised the lack of transparency, inclusion and accountability in the EU institutions responsible for the legislative process. To do this, we developed a consistent and coordinated dissemination of a positive framing around encryption, prioritising the lived experiences of those most impacted by the law.

“By framing encryption as essential to everyone's security, we made it politically difficult for the opposition's technosolutionist argument to be used as a justification for legalising mass surveillance.”

Our online communication centered values-based testimonies from academics, journalists, tech experts, privacy-protecting companies, young activists, lawyers, and child rights groups. Given how deeply encryption affects people from different walks of lives, we brought some of these people to Brussels to meet with key EU policymakers. By framing encryption as essential to



Stop Scanning Me activists from across Europe met with key policymakers at the European Parliament in October 2023

everyone's security, we made it politically difficult for the opposition's technosolutionist argument to be used as a justification for legalising mass surveillance.

Furthermore, in our narrative, we tackled the securitisation push disguised behind children's rights. We created alternative solutions that moved the political focus from weakening privacy and increasing mass surveillance to developing more sustainable measures.

From vision to reality: a positive digital future is within reach

The critical work the EDRi network has been doing on protecting people's privacy through narrative change and a people-focused policy approach has been instrumental in impacting EU policy-making.

EDRi along with DFF have led a two-year process for building a programme to decolonise digital rights field in Europe. The programme – which was developed with over 30 social and racial justice movements – aims to address power dynamics in the field and imagine a vision for anti-colonial digital futures.

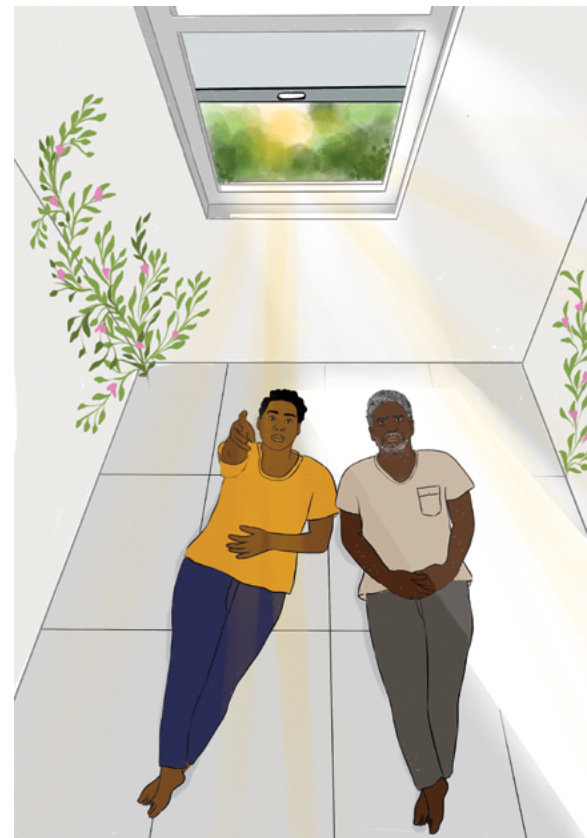
Additionally, we co-developed *The Future Is Now: a series of short utopian fictional stories* which help us reimagine and reinforce healthy alternatives to the current systems. Through these, we envisioned a future in which people, the planet and technology connect to build digital spaces where we can all thrive.

Drawing on all of our previous efforts, EDRi published a manifesto that establishes a positive vision for our digital futures. We've set ambitious goals, which are achievable if we unite in our struggles – from digital to climate to social to democratic justice. This manifesto is a guiding light for influencing the agenda of the upcoming elections and EU's digital policies in the next years.

Help us re-write the story of digital rights by joining our narrative change efforts ahead of the EU elections and beyond.



Disclosure



13 ways of looking at a CCTV



ATLR and The Great Reckoning'

Artist: Vidushi Yadav
Instagram: [@vidushiy](https://www.instagram.com/vidushiy)



Algorithm of grief

Shubham Kaushik is Communications and Media Officer at EDRI. She leads EDRI's campaigns and communications on AI, biometrics, migration and tech, and climate justice. She has experience as an independent journalist in India and comes from an academic background in social science.

Viktoria Tomova is Communications and Media Officer at EDRI. Viktoria leads EDRI's campaigns and communications on encryption, CSAB, age verification, platform power, decolonising the digital rights field process and a positive vision for digital futures. She is also a Public Voices Fellow on Technology in the Public Interest with The OpEd Project & The MacArthur Foundation.

