



## **WeMove Europe gGmbH - Activity report 2022**

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## Foundation

WeMove Europe gGmbH was founded in March 2016 as a 100% daughter organisation of WeMove Europe SCE mbH.

The non-profit “We Move Europe gGmbH” is a society for EU-wide education, democracy, international understanding and environmental protection. It fosters action in these fields, within the European community, and promotes European political discourse for, and by, European citizens. Indeed, the EU works best when its citizens are engaged and address European institutions through instruments of citizen participation, like for example the European citizens initiative, made available by the European Commission. Citizens’ assemblies are also another illustration: recent experiences in Europe have shown how powerful they can be, for addressing important issues like the right to fair housing or climate change.

WeMove Europe gGmbH empowers citizens, and enables them to learn about and directly engage and communicate with European institutions.

## Visual identity

In the beginning of 2022, the new visual identity was officially launched. Work has been conducted to maintain the new website and implement the new logo. The new website has been updated on a regular basis with the new WeMove Europe gGmbH campaigns and partnerships. The new website reflects our new visual identity for communicating our history, experience and expertise in the European digital campaigning space. The new brand reflects cooperation and is meant to solidify and make it easier to navigate the visual identity relation between WeMove Europe gGmbH and its legal partner WeMove Europe SCE.



# Activities & Charitable causes

## Introduction

Through communications and a series of online and offline tools, WeMove Europe gGmbH promotes the participation of citizens in the creation of the European political discourse and involves them actively in the European political agenda. Our YouMove platform offers Europeans the opportunity to create their own campaigns, disseminate them to a wider audience and bring upon real sustainable change .

Through internet-based educational formats, we are able to make some challenging topics accessible and understandable for all citizens. This year we informed them about fundamental EU environmental issues, like the improvement of air quality standards, how to save our forest in order to prevent climate change, the importance of implementing urgent actions to reduce planet heating, biodiversity preservation from gene drives and the replacing of plastic products with reusable systems.

People from all over Europe got involved in these campaigns, sharing ideas in webinars and taking action through signing petitions or writing to their local representatives. All these possibilities have been promoted by WeMove Europe gGmbH, to enable people to play their part in the European democratic space.

In 2022, WeMove Europe gGmbH developed new participatory projects, often with partners from civil society. Through webinars information was spread about the wrongdoing of the logging industry and how collectively we can act to prevent the industry from destroying the remaining European forests. We have learned throughout the years that some initiatives to be effective need sustained efforts over time and therefore scaled up three of our 2021 campaigns - related to biodiversity, the end of single-plastic use and how to protect our health by campaigning for clean air.

On the verge of the war in Ukraine, WeMove Europe gGmbH launched a survey to spread hope and give people a voice to show how common citizens all over Europe actively help and support refugees in their countries.



WeMove Europe gGmbH continued in 2022 to put its expertise at the service of the European Citizens' assembly in Spain. Since June 2021, we have been coordinating the campaigning work around the Climate Citizens' Assembly in Spain. What is at stake here is civil society's awareness and involvement in solving the climate crisis. Citizens want to be heard by their political representatives, and WeMove Europe gGmbH is focusing on making this moment of strong civic engagement a model success story to be emulated in other European countries.

Furthermore, WeMove Europe gGmbH worked to build bridges between climate activists and farming communities in Poland to promote sustainable practices and to create a long lasting dialogue, based on cooperation, between different sectors of the civil society. A constant flow of exchange has led to the creation of workshops and webinars where best practices of sustainable farming have been disseminated. Climate activists and farmers have protested together for a more just and sustainable agriculture and published a handbook connecting climate and farming narratives and best practices on how to create positive change.

Here is a detailed presentation of the outcomes of our activities in 2022, displayed following the missions reflected in our statutory purpose.

## Purpose: Education

WeMove Europe gGmbH contributes to citizenship education by informing its members about the political decision-making processes at EU level. In 2022, again, we used internet-based educational tools such as webinars and online petitions. We designed and hosted public information events, and disseminated information online in order to generate citizens' expression and participation on pressing environmental issues.

### Webinar: “Europe’s forests are burning and what we can do to stop it”

WeMove Europe gGmbH organised a [public webinar](#) to connect our community from across Germany to learn about how wood is being logged, legally and illegally, from the remaining European forests to produce energy while often being labelled as “renewable”. The webinar was a way for us to engage our members and answer their most pressing questions about why European forests are burning and what we can do to stop it, with the help of three experts speakers: Karl Wagner, Jana Ballenthien and Annemarie Botzki representing respectively: StopFake Renewables, RobinWood and WeMove Europe. Their experience demonstrated and allowed us to spread awareness about the dangers of burning wood for energy which is so often “green-washed” in the public narrative.





More than 1,200 German members signed up for the webinar and around 350 members participated. Throughout the webinar there was a very high level of engagement, with the possibility for members to openly engage in discussion with the experts. Sustainable solutions have been presented and we received many requests after the webinar on how to connect with the experts to collectively become more active.

The webinar allowed us to spread awareness about the dangers of burning wood for energy, present sustainable alternatives, inspire ways of collective action, citizens engagement and connect our members directly with experts. Members who couldn't participate in the webinar received a report back with information, educational material and a link to the recording of the webinar, which has recorded more than 1900 views.

## Moratorium on Gene Drive Organisms

Our "[Stop Gene Drives](#)" campaign continues to inform civil society and decision makers about the risks and unanswered questions surrounding the environmental release of gene drive organisms. Gene drive technology has emerged as a new genetic technique of engineering living organisms however when released in nature, they can replace their natural counterparts until they're eradicated, thus harming biodiversity, human health, agriculture and peace.



During the first phase of this campaign in 2021, our members funded an [opinion poll](#) which highlighted that the majority of Europeans wanted to ban this specific technology. Combining education and online tools, we promoted what citizens expected from politicians in terms of protection of nature and the environment.

Our members were given the opportunity to send tweets, emails and personal messages to their representatives, drawing their attention to the implications of releasing any gene drive organisms into nature before we understand and know how to avoid the risks. In total, more than 35,000 mails and around 6,000 tweets have been sent to our ministers.



Over 300,000 European citizens signed the petition to call for a [Moratorium on Gene Drive Organisms](#) to give experts time to find out if Gene Drives are safe. WeMove Europe gGmbH, together with its partners, collected and delivered the signatures to environment and agriculture ministers of different EU countries ahead of the UN COP15 conference on biodiversity which took place in Montreal in December 2022.

## Purpose: Democratic State

WeMove Europe gGmbH launches campaigns aiming at the political participation of citizens in the EU political decision-making processes. With a simple petition, European citizens have a window to express what they expect from their own political systems. As the role of our platform is to promote democratic principles, we provide European citizens tools so that they can fully participate in all aspects of their lives.



### Protect our health. Clean air now!

Combining health and environmental aspects, our campaign "[Clean air for all](#)" reflects the needs of European citizens on the issue of air pollution that affects their lives daily. Air pollution causes asthma, cancers, and chronic diseases and leads to hundreds of thousands of deaths in Europe every year.

Current EU air quality standards don't meet the science-based air quality recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO). In 2021 we launched a campaign together with the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) to promote that the Commission's proposal for improving EU air quality standards should meet the recommendations of WHO.

More than 120,000 Europeans decided to take part in the participatory process by signing our petition "[Clean air for all](#)". In October 2022, after running an impact assessment, the European Commission published its legislative proposal which still is not in line with the World Health Organisation s' guidelines. WeMove Europe gGmbH will continue to demonstrate to the European Parliament that its citizens want air quality standards that are aligned with the science-based recommendations of the WHO.



## Keep GMO food regulated and labelled!

In Europe, for our safety and transparency, we have strict regulations on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In 2022 the European Commission published a proposal for the deregulation of GMO foods. WeMove Europe gGmbH, together with a strong coalition of partners, responded by creating a campaign calling to keep GMO food regulated and labelled.

Keep GMO food regulated and labelled!



The campaign "[Keep GMO food regulated and labelled](#)" gives European citizens the possibility to participate directly in the democratic process by giving resonance to their concerns about losing the right to safe, healthy and transparent food. Furthermore it promotes existing alternatives and really sustainable farming practices which have been well researched like agroecology and permaculture.



We produced an explanatory video on the European commission's proposal and the threats of deregulating GMOs. Together with partners, we promoted and participated in a [public consultation of](#)

[the European commission](#) which sought to receive citizens' and stakeholders' views on the functioning of the current GMO legislation and lay down the options for a new framework.

WeMove Europe gGmbH alone has collected over 100,000 signatures and altogether the coalition has collected more than 400,000 signatures. In the beginning of 2023, a public manifestation will be organised for the handover of the petition, to send a strong message to the European Commission and EU governments that people all over Europe want to keep GMO foods regulated and that deregulating GMOs would be a huge step backward for farming communities, people and the environment.

## Purpose: protection of the environment

WeMove Europe gGmbH works actively on the promotion and dissemination of campaigns to protect the environment. The aim is to raise awareness towards the degradation of our natural ecosystem, contribute to citizens participation in the decision-making process at EU level and create solid and lasting collaborations to fasten the adoption of pivotal measures on pressing environmental issues.

### Rethink packaging



Together with expert partners on plastics, WeMove Europe gGmbH continued in 2022 to promote the most environmentally friendly way we can deal with waste. The "[Choose reuse](#)" campaign promotes replacing all single-use plastics with reusable systems, including the collection, cleaning and reusing of packaging. It is the follow-up of the campaign "[Act now: single-use plastics ban under threat](#)" launched in 2020, and the petition [Rethink Packaging](#) launched in June 2021, calling on the European Union to go beyond banning single-use plastics and transition all of the European Union to reusable systems.

The campaign reached a major milestone on 12th October 2022 when the petition signatures and message of thousands of engaged citizens who want to protect the environment was successfully and directly brought to our decision-makers.



The review of the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive was published in November 2022. The proposal sets reusable packaging targets and proposes a phase-out of single-use plastic items.

The Commission proposal will need to be approved by the European Parliament and EU governments to become law. We will continue to follow developments closely, as the reduction of waste and harmful substances represents a major contribution to environmental protection.

## Europe: last chance for climate action

[“Europe, your last chance for climate action”](#) was a rapid response campaign to highlight the extreme weather conditions we experienced all over Europe during summer 2022. The aim with the campaign was to reinforce the message that climate change is causing wildfires and deadly heat waves and call on the EU and European governments to take the climate crisis seriously by protecting our forests and planet before it’s too late.

### Europe, your last chance for climate action

ENGLISH -



Europe has been among the fastest growing “hot spots” in the world. We need to treat this as the emergency that it is and push for urgent action. It is in our and our governments' hands to limit the disruption and stay on course to avoid the worst-case climate scenarios

and reduce gas emissions to meet the target agreed in the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

From the many hundreds of emails and comments from our members on our campaign, we can clearly tell that people are worried. Here some comments from our members:

*“Es macht mich beinahe sprachlos, wie sogenannte VolksvertreterInnen am Willen der BürgerInnen vorbei agieren, ohne Gewissen und ohne Rücksicht und ohne Vorausschau. So als gäbe es noch eine zweite Erde. Eine Partei bzw. VertreterIn schiebt der anderen Vorgänger-Legislatur die Schuld zu und wäscht am Ende die Hände in Unschuld. Es wird Zeit, daß Demokratie wieder zum Mehrheitsrecht votiert und PolitikerInnen Verantwortung übernehmen - dauerhaft, rückwirkend und finanziell sanktioniert.”* Monika from Germany

*“Klimaschutz ist über Lebens wichtig. Es gibt dazu keine Alternative.”* Andrea from Germany

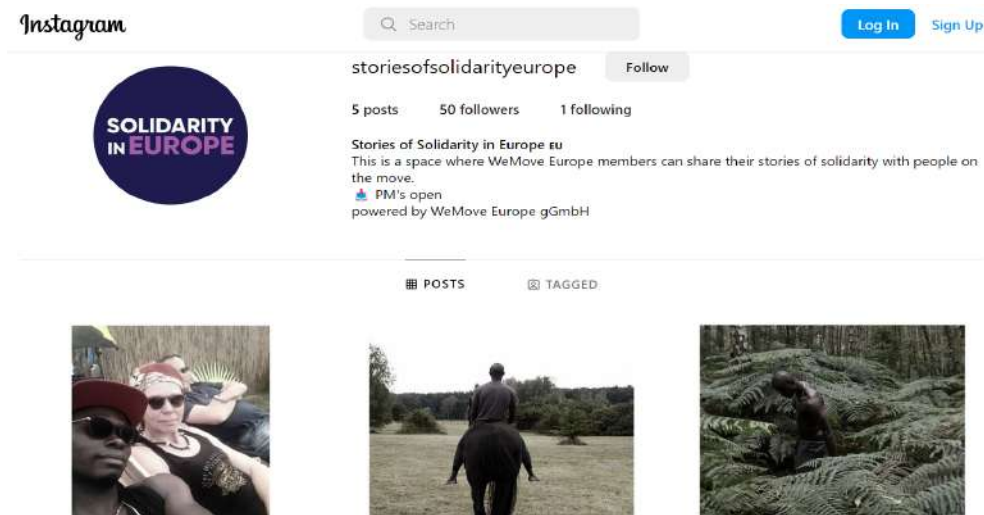
## Purpose: Internationalism and Tolerance

WeMove Europe gGmbH proposes activities creating connections among cultures, and promoting internationalism and tolerance. In 2022 with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine we wanted to spread the stories of hope and give voice to the international spirit of solidarity and tolerance of the many European citizens who are welcoming people on the move.



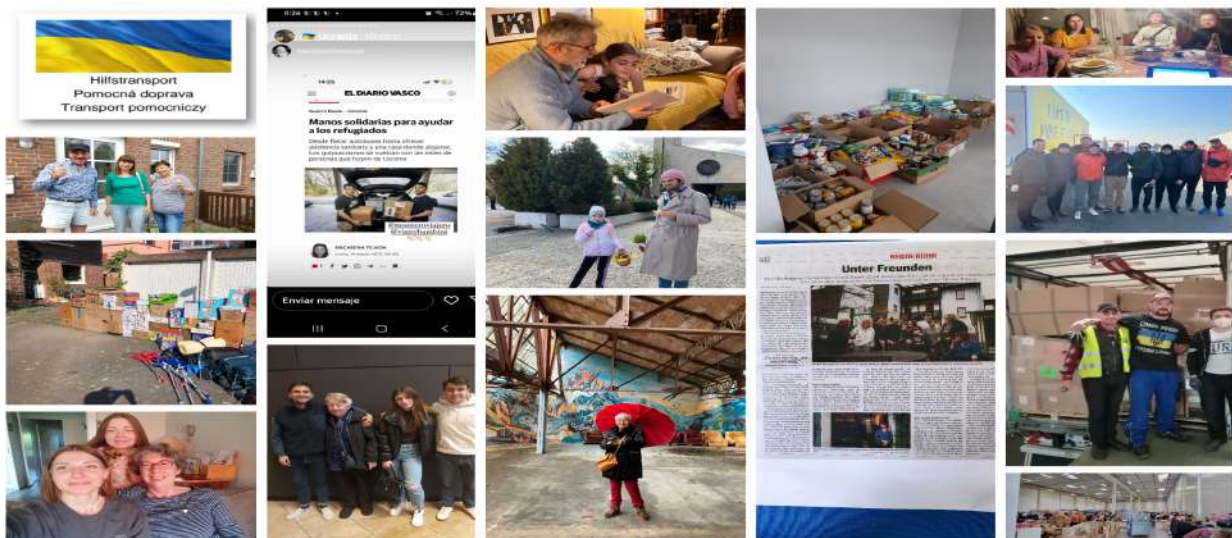
## People on the Move

WeMove Europe gGmbH has participated in the unique project of using digital tools to give voice to personal stories about helping and supporting refugees in the countries and towns where they arrive. The campaign *“People on the Move”*, a joint project between WeMove Europe gGmbH and WeMove Europe SCE, shares hopeful stories with members, lifting their spirits and motivating them to act for refugee rights.



We created an [Instagram account](#) to showcase the amazing stories of solidarity of people in Europe towards people fleeing from hardship, war and inhuman living conditions.

The *“People on the move”* campaign shows that solidarity and tolerance is a widespread and living spirit within our community, and we were honoured to have the opportunity to share their stories of support.





## Purpose: Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is one of the core values of WeMove Europe gGmbH. Throughout the years we have developed and implemented various projects to foster the participation of ordinary citizens in the political decision making process of the European legislative institutions, through educating and making tools available for participation and citizens' meetings.

## Citizens' Assembly for Climate in Spain

In November 2021, a government-led Climate Citizens' Assembly (CCA) process started in Spain. One hundred Spanish citizens started discussing the question "A safer Spain in the face of climate change - how do we do it?". Wemove Europe gGmbH participated to promote awareness about the project and increase the participation of ordinary citizens.

This campaign comprised different approaches to engage allies and citizens in making the Spanish CCA a success story. In 2022 monthly online sessions were held, in combination with in-person meetings and manifestations. These organised efforts contributed to give visibility and inform about the CAA's progress, resulting in national coverage.

This attention brought a change in the narrative of many green organisations in 2022, resulting in different activities together with partners Greenpeace, XR, Stop Ecocidio and Ecologistas en Acción, including a [press release](#), a [Twitterstorm](#), press articles in the state wide paper [ElDiario.es](#) and a promotion video "*Hope! En pie por el planeta*".

More than 2500 tweets were sent to the ministry, more than 15,000 people read one of the three commissioned articles and more than 73,000 people watched [Hope's video on you tube](#).



WeMove Europe gGmbH followed this process until the end of 2022. The campaign and its associated grassroots movements are continuing autonomously and we achieved our goal to help kick-start this movement and let it become independent and self-sustaining.

## Farmer's project in Poland

WeMove Europe gGmbH initiated and supported a project to establish relationships and create an alliance between climate activists and farming communities in Poland.

Organised by a local working group of climate activists, Polish small-scale farmers and climate volunteers have been equipped with the resources and networks to communicate with each other more effectively, in their joint cause for climate-friendly farming in Poland. To build bridges and trust-based supporting relations between these communities, in-person and online meetings were organised, culminating in trainings on topics ranging from methods of self organising to working with narratives on issues around climate and farming.



Learnings from the project have been shared with the wider European climate communities through the project's own [web page](#) and [facebook page](#). One of the milestones was the publication of a [handbook](#), in English and Polish, connecting climate and farming narratives.

The handbook presents in a succinct way regenerative or agroecological methods to do farming in a better way and plenty of guidance for climate activists on how to initiate and develop long-term relations with farmers.



WeMove Europe gGmbH was represented through the farmer's project at the [European Summer of Social Movements 2022](#) in Mönchengladbach, with the workshop "Lessons from mobilising farming communities on climate: How to have climate activists and farming communities converge in a struggle against climate change and for better farming".

We continue to follow the Polish farmer's project in 2023.





## YouMove Europe

The YouMove platform enables committed citizens from all over Europe, as well as organisations, to publish their own petitions related to European policies, sign petitions and disseminate them, thus contributing to the public debate. WeMove Europe gGmbH ensures both continuous maintenance of this platform and technical support and advice for any person or group who wants to run a campaign in the European sphere.

YouMove is especially effective in that the Europe-wide petitions are in multiple languages. The aim of this is to promote stronger citizen engagement and participation in the formation of political processes in Europe.

In total 95 new campaigns were launched in 2022 in 15 different languages. YouMove petitions collected about 280,000 signatures (in 2021: 713,000 signatures) and we received 152,000 new contacts (in 2021: 343,000). As more people engaged in campaigns and more partners initiated campaigns, it strengthened our ability to campaign on issues that citizens find important.

Petitions in which the expected or measured interest of the citizens is particularly high are disseminated by WeMove Europe gGmbH to a wide range of interested parties. This brought impressive successes, for example for the following campaigns: [“Save the Baltic harbour porpoise”](#), [“Russia, Belarus, Ukraine: Protection and asylum for deserters and conscientious objectors to military service”](#), and [“Aus Ahrtal wird SOLahrtal”](#).

End of 2022, WeMove Europe gGmbH strengthened its dedicated YouMove team with a full time campaigner. To enlarge the YouMove team is a strategic investment to enable further developments of the YouMove platform in the next year, such as launching explanatory videos to make the user journey friendlier, instruction videos on how to create a successful campaign on the YouMove platform and how to reach out to national media agencies.



## **The team**

The biggest change to the WeMove Europe gGmbH team in 2022 was the addition of a full time lead role for the YouMove project and the creation of a solid sub-team focusing on the developments of the YouMove platform.

We were happy to host yet another project in 2022 promoting civic engagement and while the Citizens' Assembly project in Spain ended, including the coordinator role of that project, we contracted another project coordinator to manage the Farmer's project in Poland.

## **Financial Development**

Income in 2022 amounted to 372,000 euros, with support from individual donors and the European Climate Foundation. This income allowed us to expand our campaigns and projects in 2022, including the expansion of the YouMove team. We increased our general reserves with 56,000 euro in 2022.