



WeMove Europe gGmbH - Activity report 2019

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Foundation

WeMove Europe gGmbH was founded on 11.03.2016 as a 100% subsidiary organization of WeMove Europe SCE mbH.

The non-profit "We Move Europe gGmbH" - Society for EU-wide Education, Democracy, International Understanding and Environmental Protection - promotes education, democratic principles, European political discourse, for and by European citizens and advocates international understanding and international action within the European community on issues such as climate change.

With the newly elected European Commission proposing a European Green Deal, it is even more important that European citizens are educated about and have access to the tools of democracy so that their voices are heard when it comes to protecting the environment. The EU works best when citizens are engaged, for example by creating their own petitions to the European institutions through citizen participation tools provided by the European Commission.

This gives citizens the opportunity to directly criticize and learn more about the European institutions.

Activities

WeMove Europe gGmbH's main focus in 2019 was working with our European coalition to increase voter turnout in the European elections. In addition, WeMove Europe gGmbH engaged in a number of activities, including: a major campaign advocating for an EU climate president; a campaign advocating for an end to overfishing of EU seas; a campaign to save a valuable nature reserve in the Kresna Gorge in Bulgaria; a campaign to protect endemic biodiversity in Georgia threatened by the creation of a hydro power project; a campaign to save wilderness habitats in Antarctica; and a campaign advocating for more decisive climate action by reducing the EU's target emissions line.

No to hate, yes to change - one Europe for all

On the initiative of a broad coalition of NGOs, coordinated by WeMove Europe gGmbH and the Open Network, over 200,000 people gathered across Europe on May 19, 2019 as part of a citizen mobilization under the slogan "No to Hate, Yes to Change: A Europe for All", aimed at increasing voter turnout and making the movement for more civic participation in the EU widely visible - to the movement itself and to outsiders (politicians, media, the general public). More than 2000 media publications around the world mentioned the mobilizations, including the New York Times, The Guardian, Reuters, AP, Japan Times and many others (see link below). For a successful and loud day of citizen action, people came to the streets to say, "We are here and we care what is happening around us" and at least 51 cities across Europe participated in the mobilizations.

We need an EU climate president

We launched a large-scale campaign calling on the new European leaders - Members of the European Parliament and the new European Commission, including President Ursula von der Leyen and Frans Timmermans, who are responsible for the European Green Deal, a plan to launch a green transition in Europe - to really tackle climate change and launch a just transition to a green Europe, for the planet and the people. Working with members, WeMove Europe gGmbH mobilized citizens to contact European leaders through hundreds of phone calls, thousands of emails and tweets.

WeMove Europe gGmbH helped open doors for young people to meet MEPs and Commissioners in the lobby of the European Parliament building in Brussels and begin an engaging debate about how to save the environment from the threats of climate change. These forms of outreach contributed to the European Parliament declaring a climate emergency, and the European Commission committing to making climate change an official top priority by issuing a Green Deal within its first 100 years in office.

The Alliance collected more than 76,000 signatures.

Save our Seas

"Save our Seas" is a campaign we have been involved in since 2017. In alliance with our partners, we have continuously called for an end to overfishing and to declare that fish is not a waste product and should not be thrown back dead into the sea. At least 30% of EU

seas must be declared marine protected areas. In 2019, our broad coalition of partners from 18 organizations across Europe delivered nearly 500,000 signatures to the European Council and the new EU Commissioner for Oceans and Environment, Virginijus Sinkevičius. Our WeMove community contributed nearly 220,000 signatures to the crowd. We joined actions and protests whenever important meetings of agriculture and fish ministers took place in Sofia or Brussels.

Save the Kresna Gorge

In 2019, we created a video about the impact of road construction on the habitat of bears, eagles and turtles in the Kresna Gorge in Bulgaria. The role of WeMove Europe gGmbH was to provide information to our partners so that they can increase pressure on the European Commission and call on Frans Timmermans and the Commission to stop the destruction and stop the construction of a highway through the Kresna Gorge.

The alliance has collected over 211,000 signatures.

Stop Nenskra

WeMove Europe gGmbH worked with CEE Bankwatch in July 2019 to call on Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), and Sir Suma Chakrabarti, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), not to sign the loan agreement for the Nenskra hydro power project in Georgia. Although hydro power is a renewable energy source, the project itself would threaten endemic biodiversity, such as lynx, Caucasian leopards and butterflies, as well as the livelihoods of local villagers.

The alliance collected nearly 96,000 signatures.

Sanctuary Antarctic Ocean

In collaboration with our partners, the "Save Antarctic Penguin Chicks from Starvation!" campaign was launched with the goal of providing information to help our partners urge the European Commission to act to save wildlife habitats for penguins, whales and other species in Antarctica. On September 19, we and our partner PEW Trusts delivered a call

to Donald Tusk's cabinet to protect penguins and other species from industrial agriculture in the Antarctic Ocean via marine protected areas.

The campaign collected more than 148,000 signatures.

Act, like it is an emergency!

In 2019, the partners of WeMove Europe gGmbH launched the campaign "Act, like it is an emergency!" to push for more drastic climate action by reducing the EU's emissions target.

The campaign calls for a series of bold actions to drive a just, economic and environmental transformation to drastically reduce emissions in line with the latest science. The goal: to limit warming to 1.5°C by transitioning our societies to 100% renewable energy. This means adopting a binding target of 65% emissions reduction in 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2040. To achieve this, we need immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The overarching campaign of the petition is to call on EU leaders to take a stronger leadership role in combating climate change.

WeMove Europe gGmbH helped provide information highlighting scientific evidence that suggests climate action requires more binding targets.

The campaign has collected over 85,000 signatures.

Campaign against "fashion victims"

Viscose is a common ingredient in the clothes we wear and is often produced using dangerous chemicals that are dumped into lakes and rivers, posing a health risk to textile workers* and locals in affected areas. WeMove Europe gGmbH and our partners have mobilized hundreds of thousands of European citizens to clean up the textile industry.

And our outcry has worked: Recently, H&M and Zara promised to do just that! Since then, fashion giants Marks & Spencers, Tesco and ASOS have also publicly committed to sourcing viscose exclusively from factories that do not discharge toxic water into rivers and streams.

The campaign has collected over 300,000 signatures.

YouMove

In 2019, the number of petitions created and circulated by engaged citizens and organizations on our YouMove platform (<https://www.wemove.eu/you/your-campaign-starts-here>) continued to grow. Our YouMove petitions were signed around 806,000 times in 2019. Through WeMove SCE mbH, WeMove Europe gGmbH gained 564,300 new contacts for the YouMove platform.

The feedback we receive from the platform's users flows into development of technical improvements, which has continued in 2019. In this way, we make the platform more user-friendly. In this way, we encourage petitioning and collaboration across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Website

On www.wemove-charity.eu we regularly inform about our activities.

Research & Investigations

European Citizens' Initiatives (ECI)

The ECI regulations of the European Commission are currently under review and may be revised. This has potential implications for signature and email collection and the future use of this direct democracy tool. In order to find out how to deal with ECIs in the coming years, research was conducted to understand the political implications of the ECI reform regulation and the organizational implications this might have for WeMove Europe gGmbH.

Campaign research on systemic change

To advance our strategy for systemic change, research was conducted to develop a comprehensive understanding of systemic change campaigns and the concept of "leverage points" in this context. The research findings were shared in several internal

trainings on identifying leverage points and approaching campaigns that could initiate systemic change.

Our team

The increase in activities and campaigns carried out by WeMove Europe gGmbH in 2019 was supported by a temporary expansion of the WeMove Europe gGmbH team, with at one point three senior campaigners and part-time technicians working on the implementation of key projects during the year. At the end of the year, the team consisted of a senior YouMove staff member, a part-time technical staff member, and the New Funding Manager, who maintained relationships with our major donors.

Financial development

In 2019, we generated 547,000 euros.

Certain projects carried out in 2019 were covered by the earmarked reserves (European Parliament election campaign, research on European Citizens' Initiatives, development of the YouMove platform). In 2019, an amount of 132,000 euros was drawn from the project reserves. The remaining project reserves are intended to further increase the reach and visibility of the YouMove project. The free reserves and capital reserves remain at the same level.

Laura Sullivan

Executive Director