

Application Package

October 2025



Dear NGO colleague,

Thank you for your interest in joining Climate Action Network Europe.

We always welcome new, dedicated members – and we can use all the additional support in the fight to tackle the climate crisis.

This document contains background information to aid you in your consideration of an application for membership in CAN Europe. It lays out the mutual rights and responsibilities, the application process, and contains all necessary documents in the Annex.

Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact our Network Development Coordinator, Joe Inwood – joe.inwood@caneurope.org.

We look forward to collaborating with you, regardless of the form in which we decide to join forces.

Chiara Martinelli
Director, Climate Action Network Europe

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What is CAN Europe

Climate Action Network is a global network of more than 1900 civil society organisations in over 130 countries. Its European regional node, CAN Europe, represents over 215 of those organisations in 37 countries. Our impact in Europe is part of a united, global effort to drive a just ecological transition. We work and act within a global movement for change based on care, respect for human rights and for planetary boundaries. Our strategic coordination is a key element in our success. CAN Europe has a rich history of advocating for strong climate and energy policy across Europe, with a number of clear successes.

Member organisations are very diverse in their origin and nature, from large umbrella networks to small local organisations. Some work on policy and advocacy only; some also carry out hands-on projects, e.g. in schools or in developing countries. Some develop campaigns or conduct mobilisation activities. Many come from the development spectrum and many others belong to the environmental NGO community. At the same time, CAN Europe's advantage lies in the coherence of the political views of the member organisations, allowing for a strong common voice.

What unites all organisations is our joint vision of a world actively fighting the climate emergency and its adverse impacts on people and planet in a manner that promotes equity and social justice.

We know that to achieve political change we need to broaden the political support for ambitious action, which requires alliances of different stakeholders but also the incorporation of an intersectional and decolonial lens in the way we operate and look at the world. We are open to all kinds of organisations becoming members of the network, and we seek to further widen our political alliances and amplify the voices of communities affected by different systems of oppression. Collaboration with other groups can take various forms of interaction and is not limited to membership.

Our strategic approach intends to see our Network face the challenges ahead of us whilst harnessing the power and collective strength we have at our disposal. That strength is impressive and yet we understand the need to continue building power in our Network and in the wider movement to ensure change happens at the scale and pace that is necessary.

As our main operations space is Brussels, we have partnership agreements with other, similarly structured European NGO Networks and work with other organisations in coalitions, in formal ways such as in the [Green10](#) or in informal settings.

This direction is further outlined in our [Strategy](#), which is in line with the [CAN Charter](#) which is the document setting the rules and principles around which our global network is organised

For more specific information on our work and a list of current members, please visit our website at <http://www.caneurope.org>.

Membership criteria

CAN Europe expects its members to be aligned around those principles. Also, as CAN Europe is an independent network not subject to commercial, political or interests of any other kind (and especially the interests of fossil fuel or other polluting companies). Its members need to ensure this independence as well. Therefore there are a number of criteria members need to fulfil. Namely:

- The organisation must be demonstrably independent of governments, political parties and commercial interests.
- The organisation's members should be fully transparent of funding sources and their application could be evaluated on this basis.
- The organisation should be an international, national and or regional organisation representing constituencies in their respective area. It will have its headquarters/an office in Europe and have activity in the European context. In the case of members having their office in a different region but still having activity in Europe, they should be a member of the reference node first. Additional application to CAN Europe membership should be studied on a case by case basis.
- The organisation commits to [CAN charter](#).
- Organisations must be committed to actively seeking to limit/reduce human-induced climate change and its impacts and its work and objectives need to be in line with CAN Europe's [Vision and Strategy](#).
- The organisation should be working on climate-related issues on a long-term basis (minimum of 2 years), even if climate is not their only topic, and be able to demonstrate it (for example with an Annual Report, website activities, etc.)
- Commercial activity should not constitute the primary activity of any prospective CAN Europe member.
- The organisation must clarify what criteria it has in place to ensure due diligence and ethical screening, to avoid conflicting relationships with polluting, environmental damaging, human rights violating companies and entities as part of their activity, programs, campaigns, projects or funding.
- Likewise, board members or top management staff will not have conflict of interests with the above-mentioned companies.

What does being a member involve?

Before you apply for membership, please read the section below to know more about what this means – and we hope that we provide enough information in this document to allow you to judge if the CAN membership meets your expectations.

Joining the largest network fighting climate change

You will be part of the leading European and worldwide network of NGOs fighting against climate change. You're being part of the movement that brings change.

Coordination of joint lobby efforts

For important political developments, CAN Europe coordinates lobby efforts. Part of that is issuing talking points, writing joint letters to heads of state/relevant ministries and joint press releases. CAN Europe increasingly coordinates campaigns and projects with its members and allies, like on renewables, on National Energy and Climate Plans, on buildings, on just transition and more.

Linking up national work with the European policy agenda

Thus ensuring European policies push your national work forward and/or do not go against it.

Access to information on CAN European and CAN-International email lists

Members of CAN Europe are automatically members of the international network, CAN-International. That enables you to access the various email lists of both CAN Europe and CAN-International and meetings of either network.

Access to CAN Europe meetings, workshops, General Assemblies

As a member organisation, you will be able to participate in a range of meetings organised by CAN Europe, General Assemblies, Workshops, Strategy meetings and Capacity building.

CAN Europe organises two General Assemblies (GAs) per year, one in spring (usually in-person, in Brussels) and one in autumn (usually online); all of the GAs combine strategy sessions on specific policy issues, network showcasing activities, and capacity-building sessions, with a formal part that deals with work plans and finances of the organisation, as well as membership issues. All member organisations have the right to attend the General Assembly. Throughout the year, other strategy or capacity building meetings may be organised on specific issues or with specific sets of members, depending on policy processes and needs identified.

Coordination at the UNFCCC level

If you are attending UNFCCC sessions, you will benefit from the coordination of CAN Europe during those sessions. This includes daily meetings for information updates and to coordinate our strategies, and the preparation of bilaterals. We also have a separate email list.

Participation in developing and access to joint policy positions

CAN Europe develops joint policy positions, partly for internal use and partly for publication. As a member of the network, you will be able to participate in shaping those positions. Especially for those issues you do not work on in detail, it can be useful for you to get a general understanding of the respective policy position.

Links to other colleagues working on the same issue + exchange of ideas

It is necessary and enriching to work in cooperation with colleagues in other countries. Via membership in CAN Europe, you will get in contact with colleagues from EU member states and beyond and you will be able to exchange relevant ideas, concepts and information. One of the clear advantages of the network are the different angles that we analyse policy issues from.

Policy and Comms support from the CAN Europe Secretariat

Your work is supported by the CAN Europe secretariat, both in terms of content and communication. This notably includes policy briefings, communication packages and letters for ministers or MEPs. You need specific information about a topic linked to the EU's political processes? The secretariat is there to support you. The policy officers are specialists on certain issues and if we do not work on the issue, we will find someone in the network who can help you.

What we expect from you

You should be willing to invest some time into CAN Europe.

The network only lives through the participation of its members. The secretariat does its best to coordinate amongst the members, but this can only be successful if you are actively participating. The following points describe in more details what we expect from you.

At least one person subscribed to our general list, reading emails on a regular basis

The most common way of communication within the network is via our email lists. Hence, it is essential that at least one person of your organisation is subscribed as a minimum to our main list in order to stay updated on things happening in the network.

Sharing relevant information on the respective lists

During your work, you surely frequently encounter information. That could be of interest to other organisations like you. This can be a meeting with a politician, a report, news or just a personal reflection. As a member, you are invited to share this information on the relevant list. This includes giving updates on national policies or political developments; given that the secretariat is working on the European level mainly, we cannot follow everything that is happening in each of the countries. Having said that, email flows should be kept on a minimum level to avoid email overload.

Comment on information and policy discussions where relevant

Your input is very much appreciated and we invite you to comment on policy discussions or information where relevant. As for the previous point, this has to stay within a reasonable level, but the exchange of different ideas and open discussions is essential.

Respect common positions

Member organisations are expected to respect common positions taken within the network. This means that members should not work against other members from the network and that members should stay politically coherent towards the line taken by the network.

Let the secretariat know if you are attending UNFCCC sessions

In general, we send a request to know whether you are attending UNFCCC negotiations. If your organisation is attending negotiations, you are expected to link up with CAN Europe so we know who is there and how we might best collaborate.

Let the secretariat know if you need special support (strategy, talking points, training needs, etc)

We are there to support your work. If you are in need of special information or you think the network should adopt a strategy on a specific issue, you should address us directly.

Participate in General Assemblies and other meetings of CAN

As a member organisation, we would like to see you at our General Assemblies to contribute to the functioning and direction of the network. Full members should attend all General Assemblies or appoint a proxy if unable to attend the General Assembly in person.

Members should participate in our strategy meetings when relevant for their work.

Pay membership fee

CAN Europe asks a yearly membership fee from all its members. Small organisations pay less than big organisations: the fee depends on your total annual budget for work related to climate change (see membership fee structure in the Annex).

Different types of membership

CAN Europe members fall under one of three different types of membership, full, accepted or observer. Applicant organisations can only apply for observer or accepted membership, but accepted members can become full members under certain circumstances. All new members undergo a one year trial period before their membership is confirmed by the General Assembly one year after their application was first approved.

Essentially, all members enjoy the benefits described in the section “How membership can benefit you” above. Everyone has access to all information (meetings, email lists) in CAN Europe. The main difference lies in the decision-making power on very specific occasions.

Full Members

Full members are the only ones to have a vote in the formal part of the General Assembly, which decides on work plans, budgets and membership issues.

Accepted Members

Accepted members do not have voting rights at the formal part of the General Assembly. However, they can attend General Assemblies with a consultative voice. Beyond the General Assemblies, accepted members are welcome to participate in the shaping of policy positions of the Network.

Observer Members

Observer members do not have voting rights at the formal part of the General Assembly. However, they can attend General Assemblies with a consultative voice. Furthermore, they may not have a final say in the adoption of joint policy positions for the network should those be disputed, but they may of course participate in discussions and contribute information. Observer members can be excluded from CAN Europe meetings on the request of members (this has never happened so far to our knowledge).

WHAT CAN AND CANNOT DO				
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES	Attend the GA	Present information	Decide policy positions	Vote
Observer member	Green	Green	Red	Red
Accepted member	Green	Green	Green	Red
Full member	Green	Green	Green	Green

CAN DO
 CANNOT DO
 Disclaimer: this table only refers to main differences and does not reflect the whole list of things members can do

Changing Category

- Observer members cannot change unless they submit a new application.
- Once their membership has been confirmed by the GA after the one year trial period, accepted members that attend three formal sessions of our General Assemblies (GAs) out of four in a row will be invited by the secretariat to become full members, upon approval of the Board (see infographic). If once declined, any change in membership status will need to be initiated by the accepted member through a letter of interest to become a full member.
- Full members who fail to attend (either in person or by proxy) three consecutive formal sessions of our General Assemblies shall be nominated by the secretariat, subject to the approval of the Board, to become an accepted member.

Every member can withdraw from membership at any time by simply issuing a written statement to the secretariat.

How to apply for membership

Applications for membership with CAN Europe are straightforward: All you need is to submit the requested documents, including the application form, and ask colleagues from CAN Europe member organisations to write you a reference. Once this is done, you only need some patience - and be available in case of follow-up questions from our part. Read the information of this package and contact the CAN Europe secretariat for possible follow-up questions. Then submit your application as follows:

Reference Letters

Contact two existing CAN Europe member organisations that are collaborating with you already, and that are willing to write you a letter of support for your application. These reference letters are meant as official endorsements from current members to the applying organisation, to make sure they are a good fit for the network. Because of this, these reference letters need to be institutionally supported. We know that this won't be a good fit for all the organisations that are applying, so if you don't know who to ask reference letters to, please ask the network team of CAN Europe for more information.

The following criteria must be met:

- Before the organisation can write a reference letter, you have to have confirmation from the CAN Europe secretariat. This is necessary as only one organisation can issue one reference letter per General Assembly.
- Your two referees have to be members of the network.
- Only members that have already been members themselves for at least two years can make recommendations/ issues letters of support.
- The referee prepares the reference/ letter of support on letterhead from his or her organisation. The letter is based on the template in the annex to this package.

Important: Each referee can only issue one letter of support to the General Assembly to which the application is to be submitted.

Note: Greenpeace and WWF offices have a special application procedure in which they don't need to provide reference letters. If this applies for you, please contact us to receive the specific application file.

Application Form

The application form is rather straightforward, but of course you can always contact CAN Europe if you have any questions. Please make sure you provide all the information asked for in the form, because incomplete applications will not be considered for membership. In the same regard, you are responsible for ensuring that we receive your references/ letters of support before the deadline.

Other documents you need to submit

- Accounts (ideally from the last 2 years) translated into English.
- Annual report of the previous year, together with a one page summary in English.
- Copy of the Statutes or a similar legal registration document of the organisation.
- Signed template statement (legal representative of the organisation) declaring to fulfil all the membership criteria and certifying having due diligence and ethical guidance in place to avoid conflicting relationship with polluting or human rights violating interests (see template in the annexes).

Deadline

The deadline for submitting applications is:

1 March for applications to be considered at the Spring General Assembly

16 September for applications to be considered at the Autumn General Assembly

What happens with your application?

1. The CAN Europe secretariat checks whether the application is complete. We may offer you an exploratory meeting to better understand the work of your organisation and your interest in CAN Europe, as well as to answer any questions you may have about the advantages of being a CAN Europe member.
2. Once we receive your full application, we will forward it to the CAN Europe Board which examines it.

The Board of CAN Europe is the elected group of network representatives that monitor the work of the Secretariat more closely. The Board examines each application and then communicates its recommendation to the members present at the General Assembly.

3. The application is forwarded to the network for consideration prior to the General Assembly.

All decisions on membership applications will be taken by the full members of the network, not by the secretariat. Therefore, applications are sent to the Network, in order for full members to evaluate the application before the General Assembly.

4. The General Assembly takes a decision on the membership application of your organisation.

The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body of CAN Europe and it consists of all members of the Network. Full members have the right to vote on

decisions such as membership applications in the formal session of the GA. Applicant organisations are usually invited to the General Assembly where their application will be voted on (although they are asked to leave the room while the vote takes place).

First, the secretariat will briefly introduce your organisation on the basis of the information received, or invite you directly to do this. Secondly, the Board will give its recommendation to the General Assembly. Thirdly, after a short discussion, full members will vote on your application. Decisions will be taken in consideration of the membership criteria, already explained above.

There are three possible scenarios:

- I. Your application for membership will be accepted if a majority of full members present votes in favour of membership of your organisation.
 - II. Your application for membership will be rejected if a majority of full members present votes against membership of your organisation.
 - III. The decision on membership of your organisation will be postponed if a majority of full members present considers the information received as not sufficient to take a decision. In that case, you will be asked to provide further information and the application will be considered at the next General Assembly if you so desire.
5. After the General Assembly, CAN Europe will communicate the decision to you as soon as possible.

ANNEXES

Code of conduct

- I. The organisation's mission and activities should be in line with the mission statement of Climate Action Network Europe. The applicant member has to declare that it will respect and apply the statutes, support the vision, mission and Strategy and activities of CAN Europe and the CAN-International Charter.
- II. The organisation must agree to refrain from public confrontation with other groups in the network and their positions, and agrees to support common CAN positions. The organisation must also respect the confidentiality of CAN meetings and communications.

Membership fees

Criteria governing membership fees (approved by the General Assembly 10/2007)

The overriding principle governing the CAN Europe membership fee regime shall be the well-known burden-sharing formula employed by the UNFCCC: dividing between members along the lines of their "common, but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions". In concrete terms, this complex formula should translate into the following elements of a revised fee structure:

- Larger organisations pay more than small organisations.
- Organisation size is decided by budget size and not by staff numbers (which reflects positively on lower income countries).
- Where possible, budget size should reflect a members focus on climate change related work (including energy and transport and other related work).
- As the different member categories do not entail significantly different access in network services, membership fees should be applied to all members equally.
- A temporary exception clause should be applied to organisations with exceptional financial circumstances, the CAN Europe Board could decide upon request by individual members to waive the fee in such cases.
- The fees do not present a cap on the possibility of additional contributions. All members are encouraged to support the work of the Secretariat with financial contributions above their membership fee requirements. Individual members making such contributions will be exempt from the fee. There won't be any trading of the allowances.
- Additional arrangements through joint implementation of projects is encouraged, CAN Europe would like to enter into more concrete collaboration with its members.
- Any proposal to be adopted should be valid for a certain commitment period of three years, to be revised in the third year, to provide long-term stability to both members and the Secretariat.

Structure of membership fees (approved by the General Assembly 04/2014)

Estimate of the annual budget of your organisation on climate related work*	Budget	CAN Europe minimum membership fee
* This refers to both staff costs and operational costs related to climate change, including work on transport, energy, climate & development or coordination by your organisation of projects/activities related to climate change.	Up to 50.000€	120€
	Up to 100.000€	230€
	Up to 250.000€	580€
	Up to 500.000€	1.150€
	Up to 1.000.000€	2.300€
	Over 1.000.000€	3.400€

Template reference letter

Letterhead of your organisation

Dear

With this letter we, [name of your organisation], want to support the membership application of [name of applicant organisation].

To support their application we provide you with some additional information below.

- How long have you known the applicant organization?
- In which ways and on what issues have you cooperated with the applicant organization?
- How will the applying organization bring added value to the work of the wider CAN Europe network?
- Are there aspects where you think the organization would fit less in the CAN Europe network?

Contact information of the person who signs

(Note: reference letters have more weight if they are signed by Heads of Unit or above)

Place and date when the reference letter has been signed

Signature

Template declaration

Declaration to be free of conflicting interests

I, (legal representative of the organisation), as (role) of (name of the organisation), declare the following:

- Our organisation fulfils all the membership requirements stated in the CAN Europe membership criteria.
- Our organisation is an independent non-governmental organisation that is not linked to any government or any political party.
- Our organisation has enough safeguard mechanisms in place, in terms of due diligence and ethical screening, to avoid conflicting relationships with polluting, environmental damaging, or human rights conflicting companies and entities as part of our activity, programs, campaigns, projects or funding.
- The board members or top management staff in our organisation do not have a conflict of interests with the above mentioned companies and entities.

Place and date when the reference letter has been signed

Signature



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