



**CAN**

CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK  
Europe

# CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK (CAN) EUROPE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

TAKE  
ACTION

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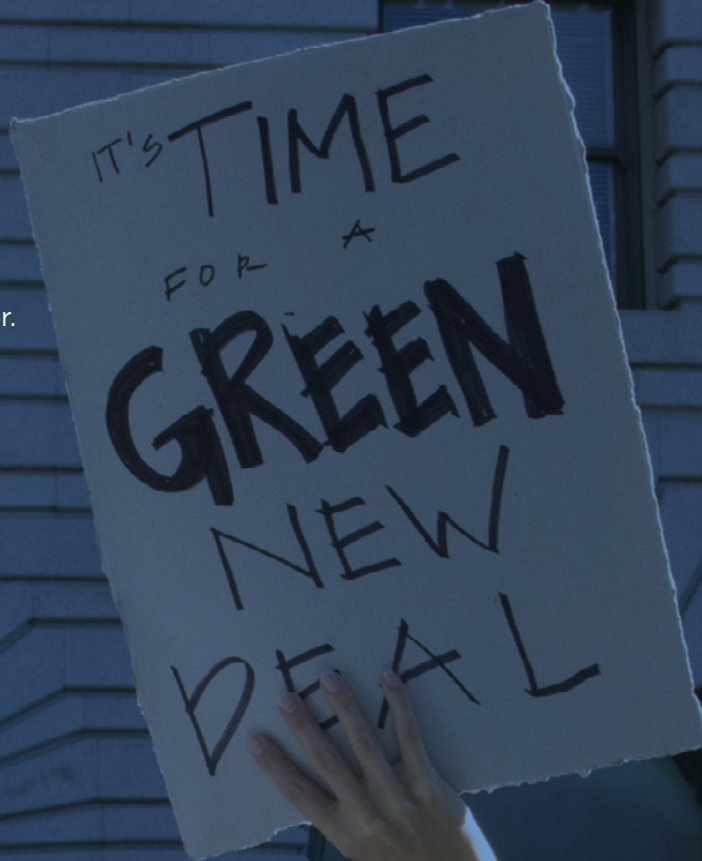
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# DIRECTOR'S REFLECTIONS

## A YEAR OF CHALLENGES — BUT WE ENTHUSIASTICALLY WAVE THE FLAG OF POSSIBILITY

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In 2023, we continued to focus our efforts towards ambitious climate action, but within the confines of a growing understanding that humanity is facing a convergence of global crises. With the impacts of the climate emergency rising, the increase of social and economic inequalities, the continuous exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation, threats to democracy, a shrinking space for civil society participation in decision making processes, war and violence, human rights violations — 2023 was a challenging year from so many perspectives.

A systemic analysis of these challenges is driving the climate movement to adapt and change. There is undoubtedly a notable shift in the movement, from calling for siloed environmental and climate policy demands, to focusing on building a holistic and transformative vision for a more just and sustainable world. A vision for people and planet. CAN Europe kicked off 2023 by committing to push this vision further.

On the EU level, we focused our efforts on the concluding phase of the EU's important legislative package, "Fit for 55", to ensure that climate ambition and social justice were moving forward, hand in hand. 2023 also saw our continued calls for the 2030 climate target to be overshot. This work spanned several legislative processes where CAN Europe put pressure on the EU to ensure the fair contribution to the Paris Agreement's goal to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C, and to aim for climate neutrality by 2040. We also advocated in 2023 for bolder efforts and investments to enable a transition towards 100% renewable energy and showcased successful practices and clearly called for an end of fossil fuels. For the first time, CAN Europe also put unprecedented efforts into influencing an EU economic governance and fiscal reform that could really tackle the climate emergency and support the most vulnerable communities.

Within our work in the global CAN network, towards COP28, and as part of the first Global stocktake since the adoption of the Paris agreement —

CAN Europe contributed to the historical mention of the urgent need to "transition away" from fossil fuels in the outcomes of the COP in Dubai. Such a mention does not match the scale and the emergency of the climate crisis, but represents a launching pad for our struggle towards climate justice to continue, and to focus on ensuring the needed climate finance for a just transition to happen both in Europe and beyond.

2023 was also marked by the adoption of CAN Europe's Strategy for Changemaking in Times of Crisis, a guiding compass for the network over the next five years. The document was the result of a rich and participatory process — with CAN Europe members and in dialogue with our main allies. The strategy represents a consolidation of the will for the network to broaden and deepen its vision and mission, to be more aware of the impacts we have as one species within nature, to uphold a clearer vision for social justice and a bolder awareness of Europe's role in the world and the responsibilities that come with it.

Throughout 2023, we witnessed a new wave of global challenges. A range of injustices across the globe. The endless Russian war in Ukraine. An unprecedented escalation of violence in Palestine and Israel following the Hamas attack on 7th October. CAN Europe called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and stands in solidarity with all victims of wars and injustices, whilst calling on the EU to play a critical role towards peace.

We also saw the European political context being dominated by a continuous disinformation campaign that painted climate and energy policies as the cause of inequalities and responsible for the increased cost of living. We enter 2024 therefore, the year of the European elections, with a clearer and louder message than ever: a fossil-free, socially just, and climate neutral European Union is the only way forward. To this message, CAN Europe remains committed to be the anchor in the rough sea of despair — enthusiastically waiving the flag of possibility.

**Chiara Martinelli, CAN Europe Director**

“ECOLISE GREATLY VALUES BEING A MEMBER OF CAN EUROPE. **THE COOPERATION WITH THE TEAM AND MEMBERS IS A CENTRAL PART OF ECOLISE ADVOCACY WORK**, AND SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION ON PROJECTS AND FUNDING IS ALSO ALLOWING US TO STRENGTHEN SUPPORT TO OUR MEMBERS AND COMMUNITIES. THE NEW FOCUS IN CAN EUROPE’S STRATEGY ON GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES, AND ON THE NEED FOR A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL IN ORDER TO ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES OF THE PLANETARY CRISIS, ALIGNS VERY WELL WITH OUR WORK. ECOLISE LOOKS FORWARD TO BUILDING ON THIS EXPERIENCE TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION IN THE FUTURE, INCLUDING ON OUR UPCOMING ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN AND CAN EUROPE’S JOINT CAMPAIGN WITH MAJOR EUROPEAN META-NETWORKS/ NGOS!”

*NINA KLEIN, ECOLISE*

“**MOBILISING YOUNG PEOPLE IN CYPRUS THROUGH THE CLIMACT PROJECT WAS TRULY MOTIVATING AND REWARDING**. IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE GUIDING YOUNG STUDENTS IN DEBATING WITH POLITICIANS ON NATIONAL AND EU LEVEL, WATCHING THEM REPRESENTING THEIR SCHOOLS AND DEMANDING MORE AND IMMEDIATE CLIMATE ACTION. MORE THAN 500 PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WERE EDUCATED ON CLIMATE ACTION IN A YEAR BY OUR TEAM AND MANY OF THOSE STUDENTS WERE MOTIVATED THROUGH THE PROJECT AND ORGANISED ACTIONS OF THEIR OWN. IT WAS ALSO GREAT TO MEET OTHER MEMBER ORGANISATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT, WHICH WE DREW INSPIRATION FROM FOR OUR OWN PROJECT HERE IN CYPRUS.”

*ORESTIS KARGHOTIS, TERRA CYPRIA*

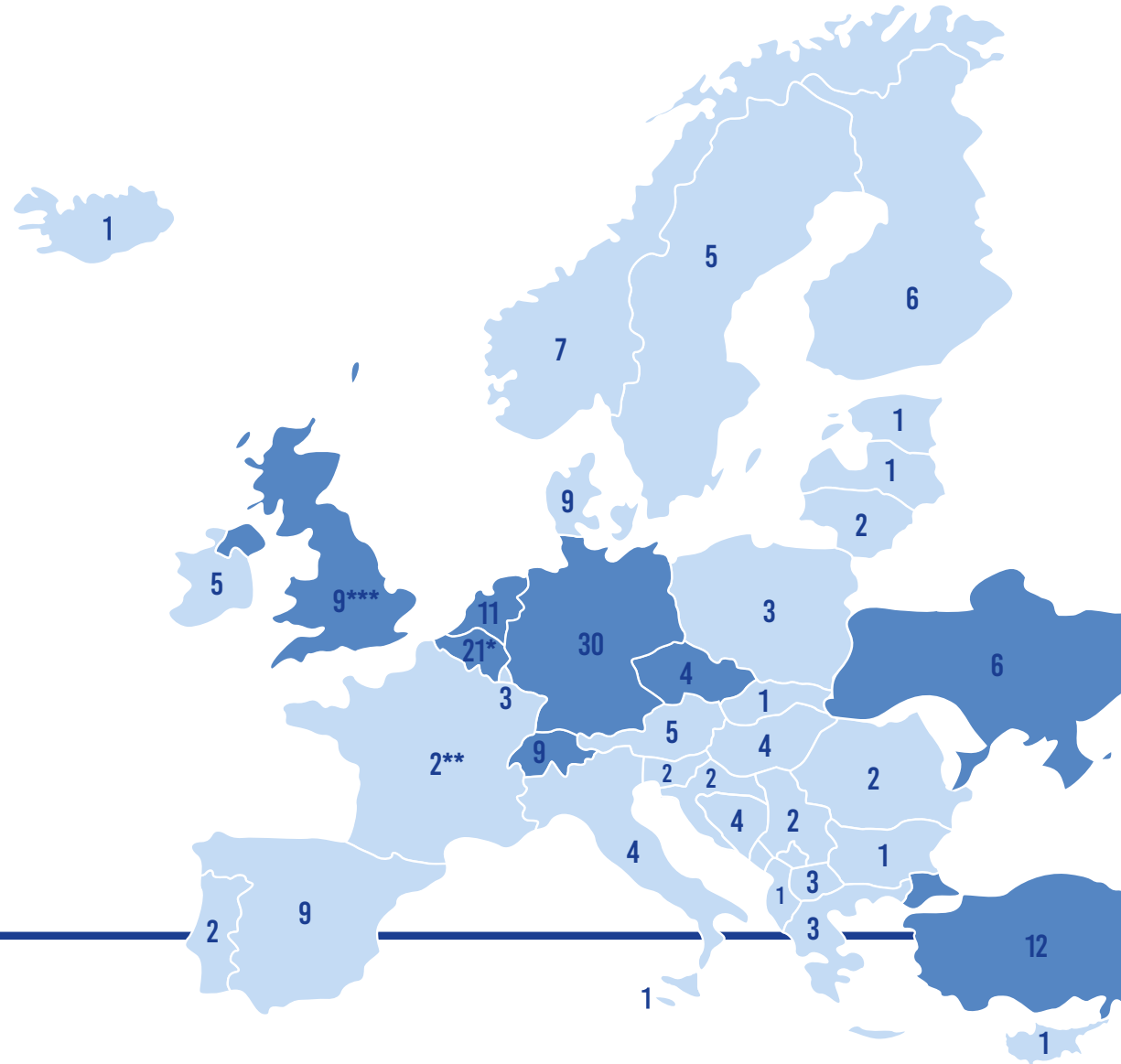
# MEMBERSHIP

“**IT WAS A REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE COLLABORATING WITH OXFAM AND CAN EUROPE IN THE SPARK PROJECT**. FRIENDS OF THE EARTH HUNGARY AND CLIMATE ALLIANCE HAVE ORGANISED STUNTS IN 97 SCHOOLS MOBILISING 22,000 YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION ON LIFESTYLE CHANGE AND FORM MESSAGES FOR COP28 DECISION MAKERS. A 10-METRE-LONG BOOKLET WITH ACTION PICTURES WAS DELIVERED TO THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENT AND CLIMATE NEGOTIATORS AT THE COP IN DUBAI.”

*DORKA FARKAS, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH HUNGARY*

## 200 ORGANISATIONS IN 40 COUNTRIES, 21 NEW MEMBERS

- + Generation Climate Europe, Belgium/EU
- + IPES-Food, Belgium/EU
- + Greenpeace Czechia, Czech Republic
- + People in Need, Czech Republic
- + ADRA Deutschland, Germany
- + Fairtrade International, International/Germany
- + Protect the Planet, Germany
- + New Climate Institute, Germany
- + Climate Catalyst, International
- + Recourse, The Netherlands
- + Simavi, The Netherlands
- + TAPP Coalition, The Netherlands
- + Fastenaktion, Switzerland
- + Mekanda Adalet Derneği / Centre for Spatial Justice, Turkey
- + Ecoaction, Ukraine
- + Ecoclub, Ukraine
- + Green Wave, Ukraine
- + Khmelnytskyi Energy Cluster, Ukraine
- + National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU), Ukraine
- + Razom We Stand, Ukraine
- + United for Global Mental Health, UK



Numbers on the map refer to the number of members per country.  
Countries marked in darker blue are those with new members.

\*(6 national members + 15 working towards the EU)

\*\* (1 national node + 1 member)

\*\*\* (1 national Node + 8 members)



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## THE NETWORK

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2023 was a groundbreaking year for CAN Europe, with 21 new members joining the Network. Notably 6 of these members are Ukrainian, a country not previously represented in the organisation. The result of this is that CAN Europe now represents 200 organisations in 40 countries. This is a huge milestone that demonstrates the interest in our Network, the importance of the work that the broader membership is carrying out, as well as the support in wider civil society of CAN Europe's direction, as outlined in the strategy that was adopted in April 2023.

## NETWORK ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS

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June 2023 saw CAN Europe organise a EUKI study tour to Brussels, which focused on providing a select group of Central and Eastern European climate and energy experts with a better understanding of relevant EU policy developments, and to share their national perspectives and reflections with key EU stakeholders. During the trip, the group engaged with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) on 2040 climate ambition, the Directorate-General for Energy (DG ENER) and the Recovery and Resilience Task Force about REPowerEU, the International Union of Tenants, the European Trade Union Institute about the benefits of energy savings and renovation of buildings, as well as the European Consumer Organisation, SolarPowerEurope, and Local Governments for Sustainability, about how to speed up renewable energy solutions in Central and Eastern Europe.

In the lead up to COP28, CAN Europe supported four activist labs in Austria, Finland, Lithuania, and Slovakia. These short training programmes enabled CAN Europe members and partners to engage with and train local grassroots groups and activists (such as Fridays

The number of new members requires a great deal of consolidation work to ensure staff and organisations are onboarded successfully into our working structures. This will constitute a key piece of work for CAN Europe in 2024 and beyond.

for the Future and Extinction Rebellion) in conducting street actions focused on relevant climate issues.

In the second half of the year, the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU provided unique engagement opportunities, which included several in-person coordination meetings in Madrid. Direct involvement with members through Presidency events, specifically on the topics of just transition, energy policies, and National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), as well as participation in the informal NGO alliance, created opportunities to try and influence the Presidency priorities. The collaboration with the Spanish Presidency was particularly impactful in the run up to, and during COP28.

Finally, the second season of CAN Europe's monthly podcast, Europe Climate Connection, was made possible with outstanding input from our member organisations. Over the course of the year a diverse range of issues were covered including sufficiency of nationally determined contributions, carbon inequality, carbon removals, youth engagement and the solar rooftop revolution.

# CAN EUROPE IN NUMBERS

# FACTS & FIGURES 2023



  ACROSS ALL SOCIAL MEDIA  

**1,365,000+** IMPRESSIONS

**50,700+** FOLLOWERS | **1,000+** POSTS SHARED | **63,000+** ENGAGEMENTS | **5,700+** RESHARES

**8** STUNTS / PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES



**3,070**  
MEDIA HITS

9 MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS WITH    
**1,474** SUBSCRIBERS 

**59 STRATEGY CALLS**  
AND

**30 WEBINARS**



WITH THE NETWORK



 **2,045** PODCAST LISTENS



## FINANCE

	€
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>CAN EUROPE</b>	<b>4,594,780.67</b>
EUROPEAN CLIMATE FOUNDATION	2,363,558.95
EUROPEAN COMMISSION	1,296,508.96
GERMAN GOVERNMENT	281,056.76
MEMBERSHIP FEES	159,567.00
OTHER INCOME	158,419.08
ENVIRONMENT DEFENSE FUND	132,443.76
CLIMATE WORKS FOUNDATION	59,554.91
ROCKEFELLER BROTHERS FUND	48,235.12
BELGIAN GOVERNMENT	45,800.93
CLIMATE BREAKTHROUGH	31,232.71
MINOR FOUNDATION	10,234.03
LAUDES FOUNDATION	5,332.43
FUNDERS FOR FAIR TRADE	2,836.03
<b>CAN INTERNATIONAL</b>	<b>96,346.69</b>
<b>EUROPE BEYOND COAL CAMPAIGN</b>	<b>2,106,576.17</b>
EUROPEAN CLIMATE FOUNDATION	842,957.40
CLIMATE BREAKTHROUGH	553,239.72
OTHER INCOME	356,733.20
CLIMATE WORKS FOUNDATION	353,645.85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,797,703.53</b>

A top-down view of a group of people's hands stacked in a circle on a grassy surface. The hands are of various skin tones and are positioned in a way that suggests a team huddle or a shared goal. The background is a soft, blue-tinted image of the grass and the people's legs and arms. The word "ACHIEVEMENTS" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image, partially overlapping the hands.

# ACHIEVEMENTS

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EU CLIMATE



INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE



GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS



TRILLIONS



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PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION



TRADE



WESTERN BALKANS



TURKEY



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COAL



RENEWABLE ENERGY



GAS



PARIS AGREEMENT COMPATIBLE SCENARIO

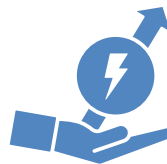


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BUILDINGS



ENERGY SAVINGS





# THE PUSH TO RAISE EU CLIMATE AMBITIONS

**“WE CALL ON MEMBER STATES TO IMMEDIATELY REVERSE  
THE DEGRADATION TREND IN EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEMS AND  
JOINTLY TACKLE THE CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY CRISES”**

*CHIARA MARTINELLI, DIRECTOR CAN EUROPE*



## EU CLIMATE

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In 2023, CAN Europe continued to push the EU to raise climate ambitions. As a part of this effort, the newly agreed Fit for 55 climate proposals were closely scrutinised, with a focus on the Emissions Trading System (ETS), the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) and the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF). The final laws that were adopted represent an important step forward in EU climate policy, however, CAN Europe stressed that the package falls short on the required ambition to align with the 1.5°C goal and equity calls. Simultaneously, CAN Europe engaged in the process leading up to the Commission proposal for the EU 2040 climate target. Our contributions were put forward in a range of stakeholder consultations, where we presented the network's views on the required ambition level and policy framework needed to achieve climate neutrality by 2040 at the latest. Our efforts to bring science to the centre of the debate have also been rewarded; with the recommendations of the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change (ESABCC) on the EU 2040 climate target now being closely listened to in political discussion, with the new Climate Commissioner, Wopke Hoekstra, and Commission Executive Vice-President on the European Green Deal, Maroš Šefčovič, committing to follow the minimum target that the scientific body suggests.

2023 also saw the crucial proposal of the Nature Restoration Law, reinforcing the importance of biodiversity in the climate agenda. Despite an intense disinformation campaign against the proposal, civil society organisations and progressive businesses formed a strong #RestoreNature coalition to share knowledge and push stronger legislation. The final inter-institutional agreement was reached in November and was approved by the European Parliament's Environment Committee (ENVI). CAN Europe was an active member of this large coalition of NGOs and, in parallel, together with many of our members, also focused on the forest ecosystem elements. In parallel, a robust #RestoreNature communications campaign was run to rebut false claims that were sadly dominating the political discussion.

Finally, CAN Europe actively engaged with the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament on the carbon removals certification framework (CRCF) legislation during 2023. This was to ensure that carbon removals and sequestration do not hinder, but support mitigation efforts. The advocacy efforts were aimed at closing loopholes in carbon removal reporting and ensuring that the role of land-based activities were first and foremost, nature and biodiversity.



# INTO THE BLUE ZONE

“CAN EUROPE HAS VERY POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTED TO GLOBAL MOBILISATION EFFORTS IN 2023 AROUND COP28, AND PARTICULARLY PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE TASK FORCE CONVENING THE DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES AROUND A CALL FOR AN EQUITABLE, FEMINIST AND FAIR FOSSIL FUEL PHASE-OUT. THIS IS THE RESULT OF THE COLLABORATION THAT GREW OUT OF THE CLIMATE JUSTICE CAMP IN LEBANON. FROM THE WOMEN AND GENDER CONSTITUENCY WE ARE VERY HAPPY TO SEE CAN EUROPE MOVING INTO THIS DIRECTION AND WORKING JOINTLY WITH DIFFERENT MOVEMENTS”

*GINA CORTÉS VALDERRAMA, WOMEN AND GENDER CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATIVE*



## INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE

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The negotiation space in the Blue Zone at the UNFCCC has become increasingly important and during 2023 CAN Europe was involved in a number of strategic discussions and in close coordination with our global alliance, CAN International.

CAN Europe's plans for the United Nations Climate Change Conference 28 (COP 28) started early, notably with participation in the Lebanon Youth Climate Justice Camp in September 2023. Several stunts were planned during the camp, including Loss and Damage, Make Polluters Pay and Ending Fossil Fuels.

During COP28, CAN Europe played a pivotal role in the coordination of action to demand an equitable phase out of fossil fuels that is full, fair, fast, forever, feminist, and funded. This was co-developed with different constituencies including the Women and Gender Constituency, Trade Union Non-Governmental Organizations, the International Youth Climate Movement, and indigenous peoples. This was all with the goal of trying to influence the fossil fuel phase out related language in the COP28 negotiation text. During the two weeks of the COP, momentum of the action continued with around 1,000 people taking part directly in replicated actions — but crucially, many more passers-by stopped, engaged, watched, and took pictures. The actions also resulted in mainstream media coverage, including the New York Times, which included a fire-themed visual developed in partnership with the Artist Network.

On the political level, CAN Europe is proud that ahead of and during COP28 we influenced the EU to be more proactive and outspoken on key issues, including the approval and funding of the loss and damage fund. This aligned the EU with progressive calls and marked a shift away from less progressive heavyweights like the US, building on continuous CAN Europe engagement with key EU negotiators throughout the year. Even though the final agreements on loss and damage finance fell short of the need, they constitute an important step forward.



# FROM LEGAL LABYRINTHS TO POLICY POTHOLES

**“MANY EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUCH AS INTENSIFYING EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS, ACTUALLY THREATEN FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE EU AND BEYOND, ESPECIALLY GROUPS THAT ARE ALREADY MARGINALISED OR MORE VULNERABLE”**

*ROMAIN DIDI, CLIMATE GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY COORDINATOR*

## GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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In 2023, major flaws were revealed in national energy and climate planning of Member States. CAN Europe's NECP Awards campaign collected and showcased more than 70 stories that exemplified the good and bad examples. This included the creation of a video aimed at explaining the significance of the NECPs to a broader audience. As one of our key priorities to enhance public participation in the planning process, public participation in 23 countries was assessed, which revealed major flaws in the process. In October 2023, CAN Europe released an NECP Assessment Report, analysing the available draft NECPs. The report gathered data and experience from 21 countries and was published in late December, in time to inform the Commission's own NECP assessment.

In November CAN Europe brought together prominent voices from Central Eastern Europe including MEPs, businesses, as well as climate and social think tank representatives, for a high-level hybrid event to focus on the co-benefits of climate action. Around 100 participants engaged in discussions at the event on how to build positive narratives in the region to address people's socio-economic concerns linked to ambitious climate policies.

The impact of climate change on human rights became increasingly visible in 2023, as did the numbers of people seeking to protect these rights in court. CAN Europe has legally supported such demands; one case saw six Portuguese children and young adults taking 32 countries to the European Court of Human Rights for failing to do their part to avert climate catastrophe. We also backed the campaign led by Vanuatu, and civil society from the Pacific region, to take the world's biggest climate emergency to the world's highest court. In a groundbreaking move, the UN General Assembly requested the Internal Court of Justice to issue an advisory opinion on climate change. This opinion could be key in holding countries accountable for their failure to address climate change. Finally, CAN Europe legally challenged the European Commission to live up to EU climate ambition by 2030.



# ENSURING EU FUNDS SUPPORT GENUINE CLIMATE ACTION

“THE EU’S ECONOMIC REFORM COMPROMISE IS A DEATH SENTENCE FOR THE JUST TRANSFORMATION OF EUROPE. THE COMPROMISE FOCUSES EXCLUSIVELY ON HOW FAST AND DEEP NATIONAL DEBT AND DEFICIT NEED TO DIMINISH, PAYING ZERO ATTENTION TO ENSURING NATIONAL INVESTMENTS AND REFORMS SERVE EU CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS. OBSESSED WITH OLD-SCHOOL ECONOMICS, FINANCE MINISTERS SEEM TOTALLY DISCONNECTED FROM TODAY’S IMPERATIVE TO INVEST IN THE TRANSFORMATION AWAY FROM OUR FOSSIL FUEL-BASED ECONOMY AND TO SUPPORT PEOPLE IN THIS PROCESS”

*ISABELLE BRACHET, SENIOR FISCAL REFORM POLICY COORDINATOR*

## TRILLIONS

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CAN Europe continued its focus in 2023 on ensuring that EU funds support genuine climate action and that national budgets are guided by EU fiscal rules to ensure they are fit for climate challenges. On this, the European Commission presented a proposal in April for new economic governance rules, which integrates climate elements. Member states must submit national plans to the Commission outlining their budget, as well as aligning investments and reforms with NECPs. Climate-related fiscal risks will have to be assessed by Member States, which is a recognition of the huge impact that climate change will have on the sustainability of public finances. While this is seen to be a win, the risk that Member States will water down the climate elements in the final deal remains. Additionally, the social and climate context calls for a much deeper reform of the outdated and damaging EU fiscal rules.

Finally, during 2023 CAN Europe has actively worked to ensure that the EU's economic governance and EU funds genuinely enable decarbonisation of the European economy instead of pouring more money into fossil fuels.

One final aspect of CAN Europe's work in this field has focused on working at both the legislative level to shape crucial files such as the financial leg of the Green Deal Industrial Plan and the implementation of RepowerEU chapters; and by tracking EU funds to showcase positive investments for the climate and people.



# FIGHTING FALSE SOLUTIONS

**“SOLUTIONS TO REACH NET-ZERO BY 2040 EXIST, BUT POLITICAL COURAGE TO MATCH THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGES CURRENTLY DOES NOT. WITH THE END OF THE NET ZERO INDUSTRY ACT TRILOGUE, POLICY-MAKERS DILUTED THE SCALE-UP OF EXISTING TECHNOLOGIES INTO A TECHNO-OPTIMIST VISION OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY, FAR FROM THE INITIAL OBJECTIVE TO SUPPORT THE EU’S CLIMATE TARGETS”**

*BORIS JANKOWIAK, STEEL TRANSFORMATION POLICY COORDINATOR*



## PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

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In 2023, both the Industrial Emissions Directive and the Ecodesign of Sustainable Products Regulation were concluded. These two policies addressed complementary sides of the industrial transformation: on the design of products so that sustainable products become the norm, and on production processes to reduce impacts at source.

During the year, CAN Europe also reacted to the untargeted Net Zero Industry Act. From the outset this was flawed since it supported heavy industry's approach of technological decarbonisation which ultimately drives up energy material needs while avoiding demand-side management measures. By working together with other civil society organisations, CAN Europe was able to also bring in these messages to the debate on the Critical Raw Materials Act.

Finally, the CAMPAIGNers project was influential and work continued to focus on demand-side management — especially in the context of the development of Nationally Determined Contributions — with a statement to COP, an informal dinner held with government representatives at the Bonn preparation meeting, and a COP side event to discuss behavioural change with government representatives. This was the first time CAN Europe brought these particular messages to this arena.



# ALTERNATIVE TRADE FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

**“THE NUMBER AND INTENSITY OF THESE GIGANTIC FOSSIL FUEL PROJECTS IS SHOCKING AND CLEARLY SHOWS THAT EXISTING VOLUNTARY CORPORATE COMMITMENTS ARE INSUFFICIENT. FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES ARE DECEIVING THE PUBLIC WITH THEIR GREENWASHED STRATEGIES, WHILE THEY KEEP MAKING RECORD PROFITS ON CLIMATE BREAKDOWN. THEIR DESTRUCTIVE BUSINESS MODEL MUST BE PUT TO AN END. IN THE ABSENCE OF ROBUST DUE DILIGENCE, A HARROWING WORST-CASE SCENARIO CONTINUES, WHERE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHES GO UNCHECKED, PARTICULARLY AT THE COSTS OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH”**

*AUDREY CHANGOE, TRADE & INVESTMENT POLICY COORDINATOR*

## TRADE

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In 2023, CAN Europe continued to campaign against the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). Intense advocacy and coalition work with civil society organisations and member organisations across Europe convinced more EU Member States to withdraw from the ECT. Germany, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Portugal, Ireland, Poland, and Slovenia have announced their withdrawal intentions. A landmark victory was achieved in June 2023 with the European Commission concluding that a coordinated withdrawal from the unmodernised ECT was the soundest way forward and that it was no longer compatible with the EU's enhanced climate ambitions under the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement.

Another key campaign in 2023 was against the EU-Mercosur trade deal. CAN Europe utilised the EU-CELAC Summit in Brussels in July as a platform to mobilise support. Together with the Stop-EU Mercosur coalition, CAN Europe held a series of side events, including a high-level debate in the European Parliament with key stakeholders.

Another 2023 highlight was the release of the Carbon Bombs report, a joint project with Friends of the Earth Europe and other member organisations. The report revealed that at least 107 of 425 of the world's biggest fossil fuel extraction projects, known as 'carbon bombs' are operated by EU-based companies like Total Energies, Shell, RWE, and ENI, or financed by major European banks. The report also sets out the case for legally binding climate reduction targets for companies, their enablers, the EU's financial sector, and the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD).



# OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

**“INCORPORATING CREDIBLE POLICIES AND MAXIMISING RENEWABLE ENERGY DEPLOYMENT IN NECPS IS CRUCIAL. IT ENSURES THAT THE 2030 TARGETS LEAD TO CLIMATE NEUTRALITY BY MID-CENTURY, ALIGNING THE WESTERN BALKANS WITH THE EU’S FRAMEWORK AND BOLSTERING GLOBAL EFFORTS”**

*VIKTOR BERISHAJ, WESTERN BALKANS ENERGY & CLIMATE POLICY COORDINATOR*

Photo: © 2023, Fatos Bytyci

## WESTERN BALKANS

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Following CAN Europe's initial assessment of Albania and North Macedonia's first NECPs in line with the new Energy Community timeline, a progress report urged enhanced ambition in updated drafts. CAN Europe also provided an assessment tool and supported public participation in NECP working groups.

An analysis on document credibility and cohesion was also carried out and published when Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kosovo submitted their initial draft NECPs to the Energy Community Secretariat. Findings underscored the necessity for concrete actions, notably a defined coal phase-out strategy and measures for justly achieving 2030 climate and energy targets.

CAN Europe also analysed the political, economic, and regulatory frameworks for renewable energy development in North Macedonia and Serbia, in order to outline challenges and opportunities for decarbonisation. Policy recommendations were crafted to overcome identified barriers, fostering a just transition to sustainable, resilient, and efficient energy systems in both countries.



# GRASSROOTS PRESSURE FOR A JUST COAL EXIT

**“IN TURKEY’S COAL SECTOR, WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS AND THE SUBCONTRACTING OF WORKERS IS INCREASING, WAGES ARE FALLING, WOMEN ARE EXCLUDED FROM EMPLOYMENT AND UNION MEMBERSHIP RATES ARE DECLINING. THEREFORE, FROM A LABOUR MARKET PERSPECTIVE, AN EXIT FROM COAL IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE, BUT ALSO DESIRABLE”**

***ÖZLEM KATISÖZ, CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY COORDINATOR FOR TURKEY***

## TURKEY

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In Turkey, CAN Europe is working actively and collaboratively with civil society organisations and think tanks to generate grassroots pressure aimed at advocating for a government decision to phase out coal. This united approach underscores the vital role that CAN Europe is playing in fostering collective action towards sustainable energy transitions in Turkey.

The impact of one of these efforts has been illustrated in the report *Milas beyond coal*, a co-published effort by CAN Europe, 350.org, the local association KARDOK, the village association from the coal region, and Milas City Council. Focussing on the local perspective of a just transition, the report zooms in on the case of Milas, a coal region in Turkey, exploring the region's potential for olive oil cultivation and eco-tourism and how these present opportunities for employment and economic growth for residents.

Another significant study, *Challenges and Proposed Solutions for Exiting Coal-Based Employment* was co-authored and published with the Sustainable Economy and Finance Association (SEFIA). The study identified essential conditions and policy areas impacting the transition away from coal and outlines necessary steps to achieve a just transition in Turkey. The study outlines how viable a just transition away from coal would be for workers and identifies the potential to improve their conditions under specific circumstances.



# SCANDALISING STATE SUPPORT FOR COAL

**“REWARDING THE INACTION OF MEMBER STATES THAT ARE FAILING TO DIVERSIFY AND DECARBONISE THEIR ENERGY MIX, BY ALLOWING AGAIN TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF COAL PLANTS SETS A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT FOR OTHER COUNTRIES TO FOLLOW”**

*MARTA ANCZEWSKA, ENERGY POLICY COORDINATOR*



## COAL

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Fossil fuel-based electricity dropped substantially in 2023, with an historic reduction in coal-based generation. In the EU, structural coal decline is accelerating with a 26% year on year drop, despite last-minute efforts by coal reliant Member States offering financial lifelines, like the coal derogation that compromised the Electricity Market Design reform, to dying power plants.

CAN Europe continues to make decision makers aware of the consequences of any prolongation to coal lifetime and continue to push for a socially just transition away from coal by 2030. We will also continue to observe how the Just Transition Fund is helping EU regions to mitigate socio-economic impacts.



# A FAST AND FAIR TRANSITION TO 100% RENEWABLES

“YEAR ON YEAR, THE URGENCY IN TRANSITIONING TO A FULLY RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEM BECOMES GREATER, YET, THIS IS NOT REFLECTED IN THE COMMITMENTS AND AMBITIONS LEVELS OF EU POLICYMAKERS AND MEMBER STATES”

*VEERLE DOSSCHE, ENERGY POLICY COORDINATOR*

“Ramping up production at Balcombe’s new power plant” © 10 10 Flickr  
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## RENEWABLE ENERGY

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The revision of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) was a significant development in the advancement of the renewable energy transition within the European Union. RED III, the revised directive, a key component of the EU's climate and energy framework, officially entered into force in November and included an increased renewable energy target of at least 42.5% binding at EU level by 2030, an increase from the previous 32%, with an aspiration of 45%. While CAN Europe has advocated for the more ambitious target of 50% share of renewable sources for EU energy consumption to align with the urgent need for climate action, the adoption of RED III still represents a landmark advancement in EU legislation.

Long, intense negotiations on the revision proposals as part of the Fit for 55 package and REPowerEU plan resulted in a directive that both raises the renewables target and lays down a framework that can support an accelerated deployment of renewable energy across the EU. The successful implementation of this directive by Member States is a critical step in achieving a faster, fairer, and sustainable renewable energy transition on the ground. An additional step will be ensuring citizen and local community engagement in the planning and development of projects, and maximising synergies with nature protection.

Under CAN Europe's 100% Renewable Europe campaign, the organisation has continued to mobilise forces in the membership network and beyond to contribute to a fast and fair renewable energy transition. Together with our members and partners, Guidelines to Faster and Fairer Permitting were developed, which include a ten-step checklist aimed at enhancing the efficiency and fairness of permitting for wind and solar developments in Member States. This checklist highlights several critical steps including the importance of early public engagement, providing benefits to local communities, and ensuring the protection of nature.

To ensure the stability of a future power system based increasingly on renewables, CAN Europe released a video and written materials to explain the role of demand-side flexibility of households, that explain how citizens can manage their demand and gain financial benefits.



# CLOSING LOOPHOLES, OPENING PATHWAYS

“EU LAWMAKERS MUST NOT ALLOW VESTED INTERESTS FROM THE GAS INDUSTRY TO BLOW UP THIS LAST OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN THE GAS PACKAGE AND LAY SOLID GROUNDS FOR A REAL FOSSIL GAS PHASEOUT BY 2035”

*ESTHER BOLLENDORFF, SENIOR GAS POLICY EXPERT*

## GAS

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During 2023, CAN Europe actively worked to influence two gas related legislative processes: the gas package and the methane regulation.

CAN Europe's joint work within a vocal coalition resulted in a framework to tackle methane emissions from imported energy sources included in the methane regulation. This framework aims to close the gap that was missing from the Commission's initial proposal, which effectively omitted oil and gas imports from the methane regulation. As most methane emissions occur at the extraction stage, it was important to close this loophole, especially given that the EU import rates for oil and gas is more than 80%. While the framework falls short on the fact that implementation will only happen in 2030 and there are missing mitigation measures, it is a critical first step in the right direction.

In the gas package CAN Europe successfully pushed for the inclusion of a clause which obliges gas distributors to publish their network decommissioning plans; a first step toward a specific gas phase-out pathway. A second victory in the gas arena was fighting back against the gas industry's push to pass responsibility for future hydrogen network planning to fossil fuel gas operators only, creating an obvious conflict of interest. However the process has been safeguarded with the creation of an independent entity, the European Network of Network Operators for Hydrogen (ENNOH).

CAN Europe used 2023 to strengthen the network position on our demand to the EU to phase out gas by 2035. By drafting and publishing a ten-point-plan to phase out gas, there is now a policy tool, combined with a contextualisation blog which are both being used to influence the drafting of political parties' manifestos in the lead up to the 2024 EU elections.



# A CREDIBLE REFERENCE POINT FOR ADVANCED CLIMATE ACTION

**“WE SHOULD AIM FOR CLIMATE NEUTRALITY BY 2040 WITHIN A 100% RES BASED EU ENERGY SYSTEM WITH DEMAND REDUCTION AS A KEY DRIVER SO AS TO REMAIN BELOW THE 1.5°C THRESHOLD. IT IS NECESSARY, FEASIBLE AND BENEFICIAL”**

*DIMITRIS TSEKERIS, ENERGY SCENARIOS PROJECT MANAGER*

## PARIS AGREEMENT COMPATIBLE SCENERIO

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CAN Europe's Paris Agreement Compatible Energy Scenario (PAC) 2.0 is our vision and proof of concept for a fully renewables based energy system based on ambitious energy savings by 2040.

Data from PAC 2.0 scenarios started to be benchmarked by civil society organisations and research institutes. Early in 2023, CAN Europe held a joint webinar with European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change (ESABCC) and members which focused on how climate neutrality could be achieved by 2040. This event was attended by approximately 140 participants and was followed up by several internal and external capacity building events.

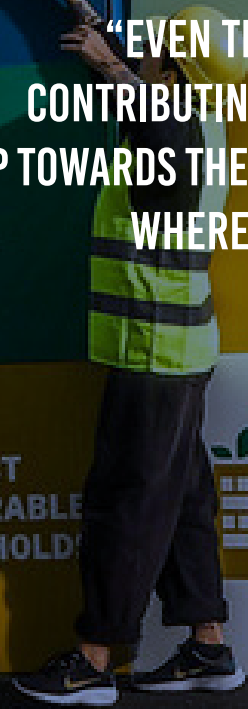
CAN Europe was accepted to the Stakeholder Reference Group, where we can actively help to shape European long-term energy infrastructure scenarios and ensure the future Ten-Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP) is aligned with the needs of a 100% renewables based energy system.



# BETTER BUILDINGS TODAY FOR BETTER LIVES TOMORROW

“EVEN THOUGH THIS DIRECTIVE HAS LOST ITS POTENTIAL OF CONTRIBUTING TO REMARKABLE CHANGE, IT IS STILL ONE SMALL STEP TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, WHERE THE TRUE FIGHT FOR AMBITION WILL TAKE PLACE”

*EVA BRARDINELLI, BUILDINGS POLICY COORDINATOR*





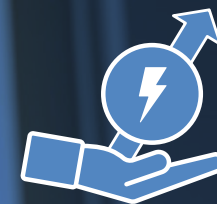
## BUILDINGS

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During 2023, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) revision was marred by misinformation campaigns at the national level. The Build Better Lives campaign emerged as a response to counterbalance media attacks and to positively shift the narrative. Drawing on the experience of CAN Europe's long-running Warm Homes 4 All campaign, a robust partnership was built by garnering support from social and housing sector organisations, trade unions, city networks, and youth groups among others.

Friends of the Earth Europe collaborated with CAN Europe to launch the campaign, coordinating efforts across 86 diverse organisations at EU, national, and local levels. Activities included joint statements, social media campaigns, a photo-event stunt, and a video project (which to date had nearly 250,000 views) that supported the "Better Homes for Better Futures" petition. The campaign, with its extensive reach and partnerships, is poised to contribute significantly during the implementation phase of the directive.

CAN Europe carried out strong advocacy actions to support the revision of an ambitious and socially just Buildings Directive, which included social safeguards, an ambitious MEPs framework for Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS), and better funding allocation. We used a number of public events and conferences such as European Sustainable Energy Week 2023 and the publication of policy briefings to influence change. Our work has been both fighting against misinformation, and to ensure the directive ultimately contained ambitious requirements, coupled with equally strong enabling elements like financing, technical assistance, and social safeguards.



# LESS IS MORE

**“THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY TARGET AGREED BY POLICYMAKERS DOES NOT REFLECT THE CURRENT FOSSIL FUEL CRISIS WE ARE LIVING THROUGH, THE EED BECAME A “PAPER TIGER”**

*VERENA BAX, ENERGY SAVINGS COORDINATOR*



## ENERGY SAVINGS

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At the beginning of 2023, the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) revision was finalised. Despite the revised EED not meeting the right level of ambition to unleash a 1.5°C compatible future, the revision introduced the first ever binding energy efficiency target by 2030.

With the finalisation of one of the main strands of the Fit for 55 package, CAN Europe's focus shifted onto the implementation of the Directive to ensure that the requirements related to energy savings in NECPs were updated according to the new minimum requirements of the EED and the Paris Agreement goals. Work also deepened on the topic of sufficiency, where CAN Europe strived to ensure that energy savings and other measures will ultimately support in rolling out an ambitious energy transition that respects the planetary boundaries and leaves no one behind.

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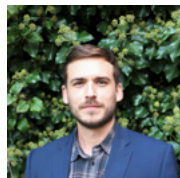
**OUR TEAM**

## MANAGEMENT

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Head of Network  
Development



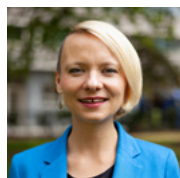
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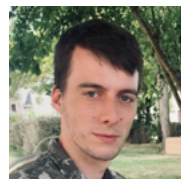
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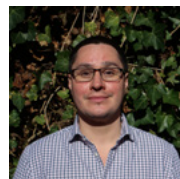
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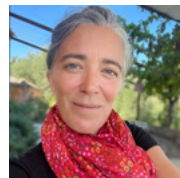
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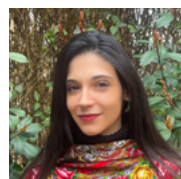
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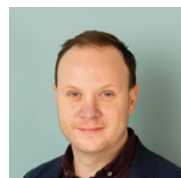
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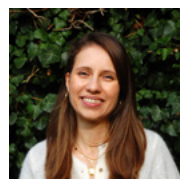
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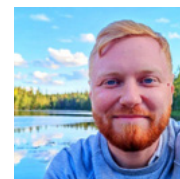
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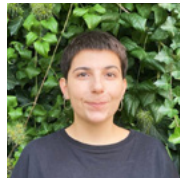


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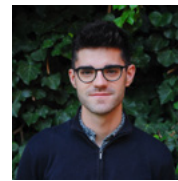
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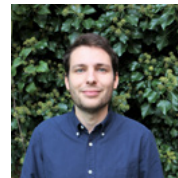
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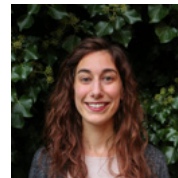
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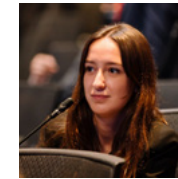
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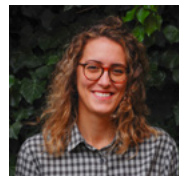
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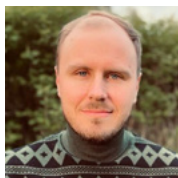
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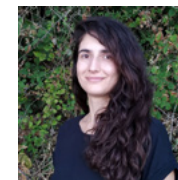
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Steel Transformation  
Policy Coordinator



**AGATA MEYSNER**  
EU Sustainable  
Consumption &  
Lifestyles Project  
Coordinator

CAN Europe also gives great thanks to the following staff members that helped us implement our work in 2023, but have since left us:

Doruntina Basha  
Viktor Berishaj  
Anuna De Wever  
Veerle Dossche  
Elif Gündüzyeli  
Adam Leckius

Masha Perovic  
Theodora Petroula  
Pascual Polo  
Eliot Primault  
Klaus Röhrig  
Reinhilde Stinders





Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe is Europe's leading NGO coalition fighting dangerous climate change. We are a unique network, in which environmental and development organisations work together to issue joint lobby campaigns and maximise their impact. With over 200 member organisations active in 40 European countries, representing over 1,700 NGOs and more than 40 million citizens, CAN Europe promotes sustainable climate, energy and development policies throughout Europe.

**CAN EUROPE'S VISION IS A WORLD ACTIVELY FIGHTING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND ITS ADVERSE IMPACTS ON PEOPLE AND PLANET IN A MANNER THAT PROMOTES EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.**

CAN Europe members work to achieve this goal through joint actions, information exchange and the coordinated development of NGO strategy on international, regional, and national climate issues. CAN Europe members place a high priority on both a healthy environment and development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission).



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