The corporate capture of EU decision-making leads to policies that exacerbate social injustice, economic inequality, climate change and environmental destruction. From the negotiation of new free trade agreements, to false solutions to global warming, and attacks on the regulation of toxic chemicals, EU decisions and policies frequently reflect the interests of big business.
WHAT WE DO

Corporate lobbies like to act in secrecy, so we expose what they do, increase public awareness, and build momentum to curb corporate influence over EU policy-making by:

- Revealing the tactics, financial firepower, privileged access and connections of corporate lobby actors – and their negative impact on public-interest policy-making.
- Exposing revolving door scandals, which see (former) EU politicians joining the private sector as lobbyists – and vice versa.
- Promoting lobbying transparency at the EU level and empowering citizens to partake in EU politics through petitions, public consultations, citizens’ initiatives.
- Working in close cooperation with investigative journalists from all over Europe to make crucial information accessible to the general public.
- Campaigning for stricter EU lobby regulation.
- Highlighting the common dominance of corporate interests in European Commission advisory groups, which set the direction for many EU policies.
- Campaigning with allied NGOs and civil society coalitions against (proposed/draft) EU policies skewed in favour of corporate interests.
While CEO extended the scope of our work as much as possible to include new issues of high relevance for the public interest (the link between corporate lobbying abusing the corona-pandemic, the close ties between Frontex and security and defence companies, digital rights and Big Tech lobbying and Big Pharma), CEO has particular expertise in several EU policy areas.
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SAFETY

CEO exposes the biotech, food, chemicals, agro-fuels and pesticide producers and their lobby groups which target decision makers to weaken regulation of their activities. We campaign to fight back corporate capture of food systems, and make EU decision making independent from the agribusiness-, and food industry, with a special focus on pesticides and GMO’s. In 2021 CEO exposed the industry’s attacks on the EU Farm to Fork Strategy.

JAN 2021

COPA-COGECA: DEFENDING FARMERS IN PUBLIC AND THE AGRIBUSINESS INDUSTRY IN PRIVATE?

LINK
MARCH 2021
DERAILING EU RULES ON NEW GMOS - CRISPR-FILES EXPOSE LOBBYING TACTICS TO Deregulate NEW GMOS

OCT 2021
LEAK: INDUSTRIAL FARM LOBBIES’ COORDINATED ATTACK ON FARM TO FORK TARGETS
ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The European Green Deal (EGD) is a major new plan for the EU that seeks to make its economy ‘climate-neutral’. Its seems a positive step, but is the deal really “Climate proof”? The fingerprints of the fossil fuel industry, can be seen all over the EGD. Carbon trading will continue, emissions reductions targets are too modest and too slow, fossil gas is kept as a transitional fuel, and public money will finance ‘false solutions’. CEO revealed how net zero climate plans are the latest attempt by polluting industries, and the neoliberal governments doing their bidding, to escape responsibility to act to address climate change or to repair the damage they’ve imposed on ecosystems and frontline communities. Corporate lobbying has resulted in weak greenhouse gas reduction measures, the dominance of carbon markets and other false solutions such as hydrogen linked to “low-carbon” fossil fuels like gas and carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology.
**JULY 2021**

**HIJACKING THE RECOVERY THROUGH HYDROGEN. HOW FOSSIL FUEL LOBBYING IS SIPHONING COVID RECOVERY FUNDS**

[LINK](#)

**JULY 2021**

**HUNDREDS OF FOSSIL FUEL LOBBYISTS FLOODING COP26 CLIMATE TALKS. MORE LOBBYISTS FOR BIG POLLUTERS THAN ANY NATIONAL DELEGATION**

[LINK](#)
The past years CEO uncovered and challenge out the corporate bias of and secrecy around neoliberal EU trade deals like CETA and the investor-state dispute settlement system (ISDS), both of which threaten social and environmental justice and enshrine corporate power. In 2021 CEO focussed on the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) which gives investors and the private sector sweeping powers to sue states over government actions that have supposedly ‘damaged’ their investments. CEO revealed a EU proposal in the pipeline, which aims to protect cross-border investments in the EU which showed worrying signs that the new proposal could include vast new legal privileges for corporations – exactly what large banks, law firms and big business lobby groups have been pushing for.
JUNE 2021
CONQUERING EU COURTS? BIG BUSINESS LOBBIES IN SECRET FOR NEW LEGAL PRIVILEGES IN THE EU

SEP 2021
TECH LOBBY EYES OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY NEW EU-US TRADE AND TECH COUNCIL
ECONOMY AND FINANCE

We expose the great leverage of banking and other financial industry lobbies, the failure of the EU to better regulate the sector since the financial crisis, and the extent to which big banks and the financial industry continue to set the European agenda on for example sustainable finance. CEO revealed that some of the worst financiers of the worst polluters helped write the script of how to shift from financing climate policies and that the first real attempt to address the continued massive influx of money into new fossil fuel supply will end in inertia and symbolic statements; As well as how financial markets will implement the decisions taken at the COP26 Climate summit in Glasgow.

OCT 2021

JUNE 2021
OFF THE HOOK? HOW BUSINESS LOBBIES AGAINST LIABILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ABUSES

DEC 2021
CHAMPIONING’ INDUSTRY: HOW THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL IS LOSING SIGHT OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST
CEO invested in exposing the increasing ‘digital lobbying’. Big Tech firms are spending more and more on lobbying in Europe – a clear sign of the industry’s growing power. Its increased lobby spending also reflects the importance of key upcoming policy battles. Yet, lack of transparency remains a problem.
APRIL 2021
EXPANDING THE CORPORATE CAPTURE OF RESEARCH: THE NEW EU JOINT UNDERTAKINGS
LINK

AUGUST 2021
THE LOBBY NETWORK: BIG TECH’S WEB OF INFLUENCE IN THE EU
LINK
EU LOBBYING REGULATION

CEO continued to highlight the many gaps in and shortcomings of EU lobby transparency tools and underline how they must be addressed in order to curb corporate influence over policy-making and improve public scrutiny of EU decisions and the accountability of Members of the European Parliament, politicians and desk staff at the EU institutions and affiliated EU bodies.
EU DEFENCE AGENCY UNDER PRESSURE TO CHANGE RULES AFTER AIRBUS REVOLVING DOORS SCANDAL

MAY 2021

BUSINESS LOBBIES DOMINATE SECRET CHANNEL TO INFLUENCE COUNCIL

JULY 2021

At the Council Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth, industry attendance outnumbers trade unions & NGOs 13:1

*Between 2018 and February 2021, there were 143 meetings and 16 of these had invited speakers from non-industry organisations.*
From the unhealthy privitatisation of health care to tobacco companies lobbying EU officials in the light of the upcoming revision of the Tobacco Products Directive, to chemical companies trying to influence a roadmap for how the EU is to regulate toxic chemicals: CEO exposed the fact that it is high time that the EU meets its obligations to ensure that lobbying by the tobacco and chemical industry to influence public officials faces tighter scrutiny and pro-active transparency.
MARCH 2021
TARGETING THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION: THE 7 LOBBYING TECHNIQUES OF BIG TOBACCO
LINK

NOV 2021
BITTER PILL. HOW THE EU’S DEFENCE OF PHARMA PROFITS COULD KEEP COVID TREATMENTS OUT OF REACH FOR MILLIONS
LINK
In 2020 CEO has started a lot of new research on how the EU has been dealing with the covid-19 pandemic and why it seems to have a deep love affair with Big Pharma. CEO exposed how the public-private partnerships of the European Commission are largely corporate driven. CEO also started pandemic-related research in 2020, which resulted in several breaking publications in 2021, which not only showed the EU has a very eurocentric way of dealing with the covid-19 pandemic, but also persists in complete secrecy on how it negotiates with powerful pharmaceutical companies.
MARCH 2021
EU RISKS PUBLIC HEALTH IN ITS PROTECTION OF BIG PHARMA MONOPOLIES

LINK

MAY 2021
BIG PHARMA’S LOBBYING FIREPOWER IN BRUSSELS: AT LEAST €36 MILLION A YEAR - AND LIKELY FAR MORE

LINK
CAMPAIGNS, PUBLICATIONS AND OUTREACH
Several cooperations with investigative journalists and investigative journalistic platforms like Investigate Europe, Bureau for Investigative Journalism, Arena, Apache, Follow the Money and Médiapart, etc.

Participating in campaigns, petitions, open letters and webinars
EXAMPLES OF CAMPAIGNS & OUTREACH

END EU COUNCIL SPONSORSHIP DEALS NOW!

PARTICIPATION OF ADVOCATE GENERAL PITRUZZELLA IN EVENT CO-HOSTED BY PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY LOBBY

NO SPONSORSHIP DEALS FOR THE FRENCH EU PRESIDENCY

STOP THE TOXIC TRADE!
MEDIA OUTREACH

- Close cooperation with investigative journalists from newspapers, tv-documentaries, magazines, website, media-coöperatives.

THE NEW YORK TIMES
FACEBOOK HEARING STRENGTHENS CALLS FOR REGULATION IN EUROPE
LINK

EUOBSERVER
FIRST COVID, NOW MCKINSEY - HOW AUSTERITY HIT EU HEALTHCARE
LINK

EU PANDEMIC RECOVERY PLANS SET TO BAILOUT FOSSIL-FUEL COMPANIES
LINK
BBC
COP 26: FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY HAS LARGEST DELEGATION AT CLIMATE SUMMIT

SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG
GEFÄHRLICHE ÜBERMACHT

EL PAIS
LOBBIES’, EL PODER EN LA SOMBRA

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST
HUAWEI EMPLOYS MORE LOBBYISTS IN THE EU THAN GOOGLE, FACEBOOK, MICROSOFT AND APPLE, BUT SPENDS LESS

LE MONDE
LES GAFAM, ROIS DU LOBBYING À BRUXELLES
EL DIARIO
EL SECTOR FINANCIERO EN LOS COMBUSTIBLES FÓSILES: ORGANIZACIONES SOCIALES SEÑALAN LA COP26 COMO “LA GRAN CUMBRE DEL LAVADO DE CARA VERDE”

DE STANDAARD
PORTRET GATES FOUNDATION - EEN GEPATENTEERDE LOBBYIST

DOMANI
COSÌ L’ITALIA E L’EUROPA CAMUFFANO IL DIBATTITO SULL’ACCESSO AI VACCINI

ZEMBLA (DUTCH NATIONAL TV)
‘KWALIJKE’ LOBBY TEGEN VERDUURZAMING VAN DE LANDBOUW
PUBLICO
LA ONU RECLAMA MEDIDAS PARA LIMITAR LAS EMISSIONES DE METANO, EL GAS OLVIDADO QUE ACELERA LA CRISIS CLIMÁTICA

SOCIAL EUROPE
HOW BIG TECH MONEY SKEWS THE EUROPEAN PLAYING-FIELD

OPEN DEMOCRACY
EU STANDS FIRM WITH BIG PHARMA AGAINST COVID VACCINE PATENT WAIVERS

NRC HANDELSBLAD
GRENSBEWAKER FRONTEX WANKELT TUSSEN EMPATHIE EN STRENGHEID
WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT US

CEO is often the first to notice when shady lobby affairs take place. Therefore, their research and sources provide indispensable munition to Europe’s investigative journalists.

LISE WITTEMAN
Journalist, co-founder and team member of the EU-desk ‘Bureau Brussel’of Follow the Money

CEO has for years been my favorite NGO in Brussels. It’s an indispensable organisation doing crucial work to improve transparency in EU decision making.

HARALD SCHUMANN
Journalist & co-founder, Investigate Europe

An internal exchange at Uber in 2015 clearly mentions “the risk that an NGO, such as Corporate Europe Observatory” would request access to documents in the Kroes file from Brussels with the aim of publishing them.

ADRIEN SÉNÉCAT
Journalist, Le Monde
2022 is a special year for us: Corporate Europe Observatory is a quarter of a century old and we will celebrate our anniversary.

While we are living in volatile times, marked by uncertainty, derailing climate change, war and social unrest, it is nevertheless also a moment of celebration for CEO, an opportunity to reflect on next steps and look back at what we have achieved together.

We will be publishing some special pieces of content and will organise some activities to reach out to our supporters. From deep dives into some of our work areas, looking back on the history and where we are today to webinars and events where we can reach out and connect.

Keep an eye on our special dedicated page on our website, follow us on social media and don’t miss a beat!
Please also take a look at our guide on the corporate lobby scene in Brussels: The ‘Brussels Lobby Planet’ is available in English, French and German, and provides a thorough and thought-provoking introduction to corporate lobbying and its impact on the EU’s ability to pass policies in the public interest.
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OUR BOARD

CEO’s board consists of three members:

- Analía Penchaszadeh (The Netherlands/Argentina)
- Brid Brennan (The Netherlands/Ireland)
- Adam Ma’anit (UK/US)

Our advisory council includes the board members as well as:

- Pratap Chatterjee (India/US)
- Jakub Patočka (Czech Republic)
- Saskia Ozinga (Belgium)
- Thomas Wallgren (Finland)