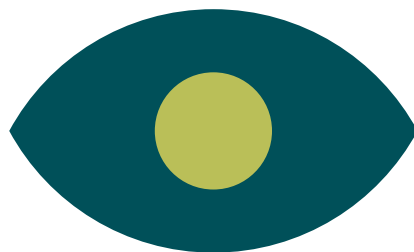
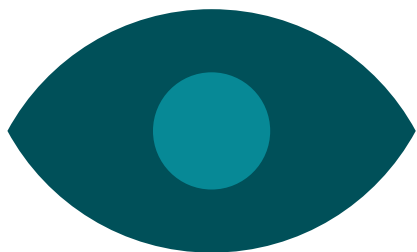


The background features dark teal, textured, organic shapes that resemble torn paper or ink blots. Two stylized eyes are positioned in the upper half: the left eye has a teal iris, and the right eye has a yellow-green iris. Both eyes are white with black outlines and are set against the dark teal background.

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022



Corporate
Europe
Observatory



ANNUAL REVIEW 2022



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WHO WE ARE

Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) is a research and campaign group working to expose and challenge the privileged access and influence enjoyed by corporations and their lobby groups in EU policy making.

WHY WE'RE NEEDED

The corporate capture of EU decision-making leads to policies that exacerbate social injustice, economic inequality, climate change and environmental destruction. EU decisions and policies frequently reflect the interests of big business instead of people and the planet. Corporate lobbies like to act in secrecy so we expose and challenge what they do, increase public awareness, and build momentum to curb corporate influence over EU policy-making.



WHAT WE'RE WORKING TOWARDS

- **Building stronger movements** at the local, national and European level to denounce and resist corporate capture.
- **Creating momentum for solutions** that democratise EU decision-making and protect it from corporate capture.
- **Building public pressure** against corporate-influenced decisions in specific lobby battles - resulting in better decisions at the EU, national and local level.
- **Challenging the neoliberal ideology** being institutionalised in EU treaties and laws that is leading to deregulation and privatisation and that creates obstacles to social and ecological transformation.

HOW WE WORK

Through high-profile investigations, in-depth reports, media articles and briefing (investigative) journalists, building movements, participating in public events, producing infographics, videos, and podcasts we expose corporate lobbying, the actors involved, and the solutions we need for a socially and environmentally-just Europe.

We work with a wide range of groups and organisations across Europe, from mainstream NGOs and coalitions to academics and investigative journalists, to more radical grassroots activist and civil society networks.

OVERVIEW OF 2022



Dear Reader,

2022 was a special year for CEO as we celebrated our 25th anniversary. It was a chance to look back at everything we have achieved over the years and reflect on next steps for the organisation.

As well as keeping up our core work on climate, the fossil fuel industry, food and agricultural issues, we scaled up our work on Big Tech, started working on the Cost of Living crisis and relaunched our LobbyFacts data crunching website. We continued to work on big pharma profiteering from the Covid pandemic and responded to other political realities throughout the year:

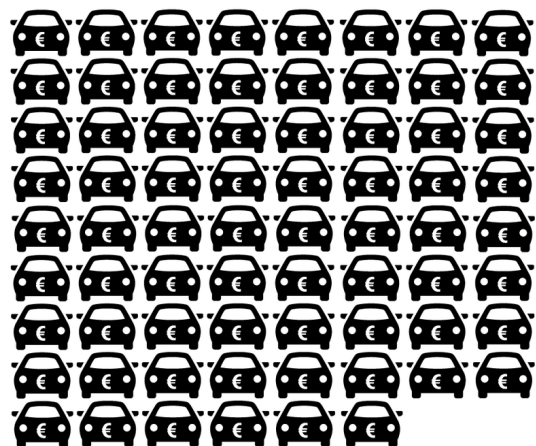
Russia's appalling invasion of Ukraine was instrumentalised by corporate vested interests to ramp up the pressure to block environmental and health commitments. We scrutinised the EU's energy policy response which was to double-down on gas from other repressive regimes while millions of people fell into energy poverty, and we challenged opportunistic corporate lobbying in the context of the war. We exposed how the CEOs of six big energy companies – Shell, BP, Total, ENI, E.ON and Vattenfall, and members of powerful lobby group ERT (European Roundtable of Industrialists) were involved in shaping the EU's response, including creating an industry-only taskforce to advise

the Commission on energy policy measures. The summer saw the publication of the **Uber Files** - a massive leak of the company's internal documents - which provided unique insights into its lobby strategies, privileged access, revolving door hires, and capture of policy-making in various countries. The leaked material showed how justified we had been in raising numerous concerns over the years about Uber, its policies, and its lobbying. The files also showed that they were worried about us: internal exchanges from 2015 discussed: "...the risk that an NGO, such as the Corporate Europe Observatory" would investigate and expose its EU lobbying and wooing of a senior and high-profile Commissioner to join Uber.

From 2014 to 2022,
Uber's lobby spending
increased by **1400%**



2014: €50 000



2022: More than **€700 000**

From the report "Uber Files 2 in Brussels"

2022 ended with one of the biggest bribery and lobbying scandals to have rocked the European parliament: “**Qatargate** exposed the existing gaps in lobbying and transparency mechanisms in the EU institutions and raised questions about conflicts of interest, second jobs, revolving doors, lobby transparency, informal ‘friendship groups’, gifts and trips, and outright bribery. We had been raising the alarm about repressive regime lobbying in Brussels for years through our **in depth investigations**, and consistently pointed out problems in the current EU rules and institutional culture which have failed to tackle these issues.

The Qatargate scandal put radical options for curbing corporate lobbying influence back on the agenda, including far better lobby transparency (also for MEP meetings with lobbyists), limits of revolving door moves and MEPs holding problematic second jobs. We called on MEPs to finally introduce the **strong transparency and ethics system** that can prevent such scandals as published in our article “**How to close the door on repressive regime lobbying**”.

*Thanks for your support,
The CEO team.*

60 YEARS OF RACHEL CARSON'S SILENT SPRING

In 1962, Rachel Carson's book “Silent Spring” made the environment a subject of public discourse and policies. It documented the devastating ecological impacts of pesticides, a theme which is still very much relevant today. Rachel was fiercely criticised by industry lobbies with chemical companies launching vicious anti-Carson campaigns. Sixty years later, corporate lobby groups continue to undermine science and to deploy industry-backed “science” to manipulate the public. To mark the 60th anniversary of Silent Spring, we co-organised an **international seminar in Brussels** with the University of Bergen's **BeeCaution project** aimed at policy makers, civil society, journalists and scientists. With speakers from Harvard University, Le Monde, the universities of Agder and Bergen (Norway) and Corporate Europe Observatory Science, lobbies and the environment explored the new frontiers of regulatory capture and environmental conflict.

“Science. lobbies and the environment”

CLIMATE JUSTICE

KEY ACTIVITIES, ARTICLES AND REPORTS



Fossil fuel industry lobbying is a major obstacle to the ambitious policies needed to prevent catastrophic climate change. With the Fossil Free Politics coalition (which CEO co-founded), we helped [expose](#) how the gas industry successfully captured the EU's new "gas package", ensuring it remained firmly in the driving seat when it came to the energy transition. As co-coordinators of the [Kick Big Polluters Out](#) campaign, we also campaigned to reign in fossil fuel influence at the UN climate talks with the [headline-grabbing stat](#) that over 600 fossil fuels lobbyists attended the COP27 negotiations. Our efforts culminated in a day of action joined by over 450 civil society groups.

Our climate work also focused on the European Commission's plan to replace fossil gas with hydrogen - the latest silver bullet pushed by the gas industry - in an attempt to end dependence on Russian gas. But while hydrogen is called a "climate solution", almost all hydrogen is currently manufactured using fossil fuels. As well as [shifting its gas supplier](#) from Putin to other repressive regimes like Azerbaijan, Israel or Algeria, and [building more ports and pipelines](#) to import and transport gas and hydrogen, the Commission's plan RePowerEU shows that hydrogen is to be produced and imported in wildly unrealistic quantities, with a major reliance on renewable resources in countries in the global South, amounting to a [neocolonial resource grab](#).

Last year we co-founded the **Real Zero Europe coalition**, bringing together climate, environmental, economic justice, human rights, and food sovereignty organisations, to scrap the European Commission's carbon removal certification law, to resist Europe's 'net zero' false solutions, and to apply pressure on the EU and European nations to take action now towards real, deep emissions cuts. As well as building a **common analysis**, more than 170 organisations signed an **open letter** to the Commission, while CEO additionally produced an in-depth **report** into how the fossil fuel industry intended to use the new law to avoid making emissions cuts, and coordinated a number of 'teach-outs' to climate justice groups around the world that are being delivered in 2023. The EU's dependence on fossil gas and promotion of false solutions such as hydrogen and carbon dioxide removals are a consequence of the fossil fuel industry successfully capturing EU decision making.



We also worked with the Fossil Free Politics coalition to expose the role of the fossil fuel industry in the cost of living crisis and how oil and gas industry lobbying allowed them to make record profits while millions struggled to pay their bills. The oil and gas industry's unprecedented access to European decision-making has led to a series of critical decisions on tax, energy infrastructure, and regulation that have put fossil fuel industry profits above the interests of millions of people at risk of energy poverty

in Europe. Working with Fossil Free London, CEO successfully produced a series of videos on instagram to bring our research to new audiences in new formats. The Fossil Free Politics coalition presented a **petition** to the European Parliament, signed by 91 climate and social justice groups from 15 countries demanding that fossil fuel corporations be held accountable for their role in the cost of living and climate crisis and to adopt a conflict of interest framework to remove them from climate and energy policymaking.



May 2022: Fossil Fuel Giants Shape EU's Response to the Energy Crisis

May 2022: EU plans to import hydrogen from North Africa, Assessing the cases of Morocco, Algeria and Egypt (in coalition)

May 2022: Hydrogen from North Africa – a neocolonial resource grab: The reality of EU green hydrogen import plans (also in **French** and **Arabic**, in coalition)

October 2022: The deadly climate gamble: Dirty Energy bets on unproven 'carbon removals' to keep fossil fuels flowing (in coalition)

October 2022: Co-opting the COP: How the finance sector captured the UN climate finance agenda

October 2022: A 'gastastrophic' mistake: New expert group invites fossil fuel giants to steer Europe's energy

October 2022: Fuelling the cost of living crisis: How the fossil fuel industry turned the Ukraine war into an opportunity for extra profits and further lock-in of gas (in coalition)

Open letter: November 2022: Stop funding climate disaster: Big bankers are part of the problem, not the solution - published in English, French, German and Spanish.

November 2022: COP27: 100 more fossil fuel lobbyists than last year

November 2022: COP27: 90% of sponsors have fossil fuel ties

November 2022: The hydrogen COP: boosting green colonialism in Africa

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

KEY ACTIVITIES, ARTICLES AND REPORTS

In our environmental justice work, we campaign against the corporate capture of food and environmental political decision making, and to make EU decision making independent from agribusiness with a special focus on pesticides, chemicals and GMOs.

Corporations are trying to weaken the EU's attempts to tackle the grave threat of the biodiversity crisis such as the Farm to Fork

Strategy and targets for the reduction of pesticide use (also part of the European Green Deal). We exposed how biotech, food, chemicals, agro-fuels, pesticide and chemical producers and their lobby groups are targeting decision makers to block or weaken regulation and undermine ambitious, binding targets.



The four big pesticide firms (Bayer, BASF, Syngenta and Corteva) have gone out of their way to delay and derail the various actions planned under the EU Farm to Fork strategy regarding pesticide use. Our milestone report **A Loud Lobby for a Silent Spring** exposed the key lobby tactics employed by these firms to block an ambitious, EU-wide mandatory pesticide reduction target. A leaked lobby document confirmed how the industry ordered 'academic' impact studies in order to fearmonger politicians over food security concerns, abusing both the Covid-crisis and the war on Ukraine as pretexts.

CEO also was a founding member of a renewed coalition to demand both a ban on the export of banned chemicals and pesticides from the EU, and also a ban on imports carrying residues of pesticides banned in the EU. Despite being banned, huge quantities of very toxic products are still produced and exported by EU companies to third countries, where safety regulations are often weaker and less strictly implemented. The European Commission has promised action, but has since been dragging its feet. So with a coalition of NGOs we organised a high-level event on 1 December 2022, where we presented the **joint statement signed by over 300 civil society groups, farmers organisations and trade unions on the**

proposed ban on export of pesticides and other hazardous chemicals forbidden in the EU. We also delivered a petition to the EU Environment Commissioner signed by over 200,000 citizens and organised a conference in Brussels with speakers from civil society, trade unions and EU institutions.

The EU genetically modified organisms (GMO) safety rules are also under threat. The same four big chemical corporations at the same time control a big share of the global commercial seed market. They are pushing the EU to allow new GMOs (GM crops made with genome editing techniques like CRISPR-Cas) onto the market without safety tests, monitoring or consumer labeling. These companies have been lobbying the European Commission for years to exclude new GMOs from the European GMO regulation, making unsubstantiated claims on the supposed benefits for sustainability. But as they also hold patents on the seeds engineered with these techniques, their true motivation remains to increase their profits and domination over the food system. Such an industry takeover of seeds would seriously threaten farmers' seed autonomy and agricultural biodiversity as a whole. Our work highlighted how industry pressure has led to the European Commission taking its first steps to deregulate new GMOs. CEO is also an active member of the civil society coalition on this issue.

March 2022: Joint open letter: Publication of the revision of the legislation on the sustainable use of pesticides

March 2022: A loud lobby for a silent spring: The pesticide industry's toxic lobbying tactics against Farm to Fork

Coalition work / Campaign action: April 2022: Take action! Stop the biotech industry's deregulation push for new GMOs - over 420,000 signatures

September 2022: Researchers with vested interests lobbying to undermine GMO safety rules

Coalition work: October 2022: Exposed: How biotech giants use patents and new GMOs to control the future of food

October 2022: EU lobby profile: Syngenta: A toxic 'world champion'

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY

KEY ACTIVITIES, ARTICLES AND REPORTS

As part of our Economic Justice and Democracy work, we launched a big report in June exposing how corporate lobbyists, with assistance from the European Commission's own business-friendly 'Better regulation' agenda which includes the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB), severely watered down a proposed EU law that sought to hold companies accountable for human rights abuses, climate change, and environmental destruction. **Inside job: How business lobbyists used the Commission's scrutiny procedures to weaken human rights and environmental legislation exposes how the RSB's deregulatory mission helps to ensure the costs of social and environmental damage caused by corporations are paid for by society, not the companies themselves.**

June 2022:
Our report Inside job exposed.

RELAUNCHING LOBBYFACTS

In 2022 we relaunched our number-crunching database **LobbyFacts** with a series of articles including **"A ranking of lobbying activities: Who spends most?"**. LobbyFacts provides useful tools to search, sort, compare and analyse official EU lobby data – from today and dating back to 2012 – to help journalists and researchers track lobbyists and their influence at the EU level.



**How much money have the
biggest companies spent on
lobbying in last 7 years?**

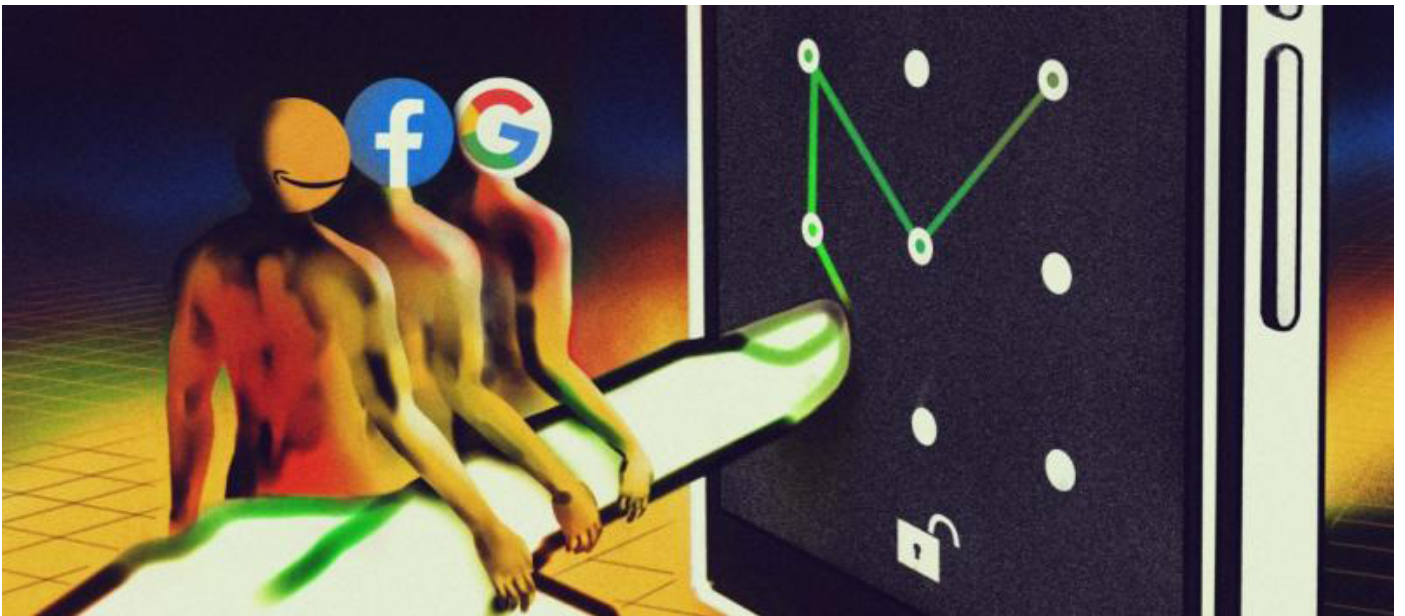


WWW.CORPORATEEUROPE.ORG



BIG TECH

KEY ACTIVITIES, ARTICLES AND REPORTS



We stepped up our efforts to expose and counter Big Tech lobbying efforts to weaken crucial legislation on issues such as labour rights of platform workers; political advertising; and Artificial Intelligence. For example, despite the EU's talk about regulating the digital sphere, we uncovered how Big Tech has successfully waged a major lobbying campaign to prevent a ban on their extremely profitable model of intrusive surveillance advertising.

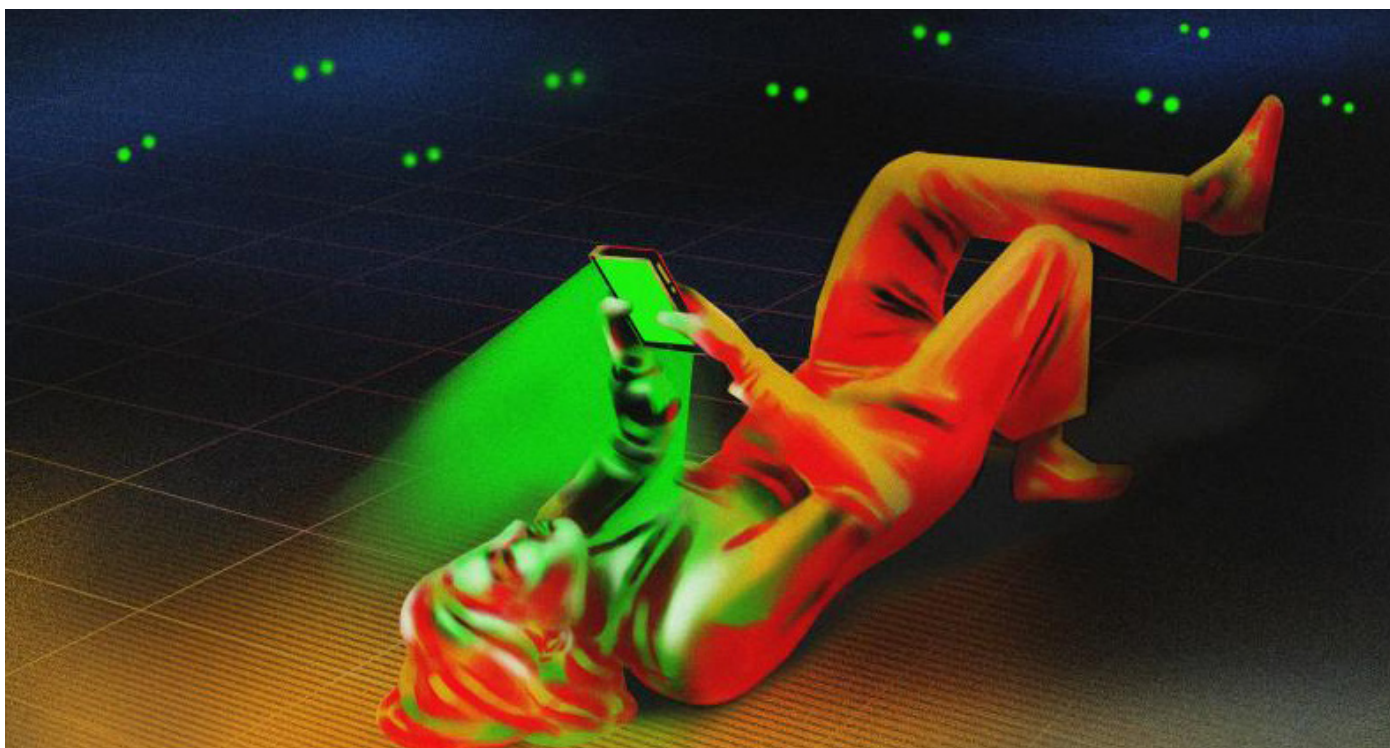
We also revealed Big Tech's use of front groups and other problematic lobbying strategies regarding the Digital Services and the Digital Markets Acts. We submitted a number of new complaints to the EU's transparency register about these front groups; MEPs reacted forcefully against these deceptive industry lobbying tactics, calling for sanctions against the Big Tech corporations.

Halfway through 2022, an international consortium of journalists led by The Guardian exposed what would be named as Uber Files - a massive leak of the company's internal documents. We had already been raising numerous concerns over the years about Uber, its policies, and its lobbying and had made a complaint about Neelie Kroes' revolving door move to Uber in 2016. We took the opportunity to issue

a new complaint about the Commission's lack of enforcement of its own revolving door rules. In October, as the Council and the European Parliament were discussing a directive to better protect the rights of platform workers, we supported the launch of a new report by **Observatoire des Multinationales** exposing a lobbying offensive by Big Tech to drastically weaken the legislation. New internal EU documents exposed the lobbying tactics by digital platforms to

safeguard their business model based on flexibility, low costs and few social rights for platform workers.

Towards the end of the year we built a coalition with LobbyControl and MEPs to create a website for MEPs and other decision-makers to leak lobbying by Big Tech to be launched in February 2023. We also started exploring the role of economic consultancies in pushing through Big Tech mergers and acquisitions and started working on lobbying around the Artificial Intelligence act.



January 2022: How corporate lobbying undermined the EU's push to ban surveillance ads

February 2022: Coalition work / open letter: Over 40 CSOs and trade unions demand transparency in DSA-DMA trilogues

April 2022: Big Tech's last minute attempt to tame EU tech rules: Lobbying in times of trilogues

July 2022: UBER: An EU lobby profile

July 2022: Kroes-ing through the revolving door

July 2022: Politicians should stop the 'Uberisation' of EU politics

September 2022: The revolving door - from public officials to Big Tech lobbyists

October 2022: Uber Files 2: How digital platforms are lobbying to undermine the rights of their workers - by Observatoire des Multinationales

BIG PHARMA

KEY ACTIVITIES, ARTICLES AND REPORTS



After almost two years of a Freedom of Information battle, we received hundreds of internal documents in June 2022; although often heavily redacted, the documents threw important new light on the EU's betrayal of vaccines as a global public good, as explained in the article [**"TRIPS 'Waiver failure': EU betrayal of global south on vaccine access obscured by lack of transparency"**](#).

We continued to generate high-quality media coverage for our vaccine justice work, including an excellent indepth German TV documentary, broadcasted at a very strategic moment during the work of the Parliament's COVI committee. The documentary (which prominently features our work and also includes the chair of the COVI committee responding to our findings) is available on Youtube with English subtitles: [**Part 1**](#) and [**Part 2**](#).

We contributed to the work of the European Parliament's COVI committee, which was analysing the EU's response to the Coronavirus crisis and drawing lessons for future cross-border health threats.

June 2022: Vaccine transparency case is still not closed, despite EC's claim
July 2022: [TRIPS 'Waiver failure': EU betrayal of global south on vaccine access obscured by lack of transparency**](#)**

OUTREACH IN 2022



We published over **25 articles and reports.**

We produced **12 episodes** of our podcast “EU Watchdog Radio” with over **4000 downloads.**

We made **35 videos**, with a total of **5,500 views** on Instagram; **30,000 total views** on Instagram and **4,100 views** on Facebook.

We organised over **10 Lobby tours** (our guided tours through the EU quarter for **journalists, decision-makers, students and civil society**).

CEO staff spoke in **hundreds of public debates, workshops and hearings** in **Brussels and in cities across Europe.**

We gained **2,600 followers** on Twitter, had over **274,000 visits** and over **3,000 mentions.**

We ended the year with 25,000 followers.

On Facebook we had over **18,000 followers** and reached over **33,000.**

We **created an account** on LinkedIn and on Instagram.

We **started a collaboration** with the Galician TV channel “Nós Televisión”, which broadcasts our videos on their national channel.

According to Matomo, we had over **156,000 visits** to the website and over **252,000 pageviews.**

MEDIA COVERAGE

We had over 800 media mentions in 2022 in a variety of national and international news outlets including Financial Times (US), BBC (UK), The Guardian (UK), El Diario (Spain), Le Monde (France), France Info (France) Die Zeit (Germany), Domani (Italy), Público (Portugal), RTL Nieuws (Netherlands), De Standaard (Belgium), Washington Post (US), PBS (US), RTBF (Belgium), Irish Times (Ireland) among others. We were featured several times in

the Brussels-based media outlets Politico, Euronews, EurActiv and EU Observer and the international outlets Al Jazeera, Reuters, Middle East Eye and Social Europe.

Our work was also featured in widely-watched documentary TV programmes including in the the German outlet ZDF and an ARTE documentary on the EU's vaccines politics.

We published over 15 opinion articles in various national and international outlets in English, Danish, Dutch, French, Portuguese and Spanish including:

March 2022: The obsession to 'complete the single market' (Social Europe)

May 2022: La investigación sobre covid-19 en el Parlamento: las preguntas que deben hacer los eurodiputados (El Salto Diário) (**The EU Parliament Covid inquiry: The questions MEPs must ask**)

May 2022: EU hydrogen targets—a neo-colonial resource grab (Social Europe)

July 2022: Uber's privileged access to politicians shows the lobby system urgently needs to change (The Guardian)

July 2022: Exploiting the Ukraine crisis for Big Business (EU Observer)

October 2022: Will EU Commission capitulate to toxic chemicals industry? (EU Observer)

December 2022: The not so soft killing of the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy (EU Observer),

December 2022: "Qatargate": É tempo de fechar a porta ao lobbying de regimes repressivos (Público), ("**Qatargate**": Time to close the door on lobbying by repressive regimes")



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LUCY HALL **PRESS OFFICER**

JAN CALLEWAERT **DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICER**

OUR BOARD

ANALÍA PENCHASZADEH (The Netherlands/Argentina)

BRID BRENNAN (The Netherlands/Ireland)

SASKIA OZINGA (Belgium)

Our advisory council includes the board members as well as:

PRATAP CHATTERJEE (India/US)

JAKUB PATOČKA (Czech Republic)

THOMAS WALLGREN (Finland)

EMMA AVILÉS (Spain)

LISA MITTENDREIN (Austria)

COALITIONS WE'RE PART OF



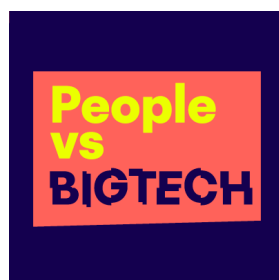
ENCO
EUROPEAN NETWORK OF
CORPORATE OBSERVATORIES

**CLIMATE
JUSTICE NOW!**



European Alliance for
Responsible R&D and Affordable Medicines

**EU FOOD
POLICY
COALITION**



**JUSTICE IS
EVERYBODY'S
BUSINESS.**



AMONG OTHERS!

HOW WE'RE FUNDED

CEO receives donations from individual supporters as well as grants from a number of trusts and grant-making foundations. Our funding policy rejects funding from EU institutions and corporations in order to maintain the independence of our research. You can access our accounts as well as a list of the trusts and foundations that are supporting us financially on our website.

**"One of the best NGOs in Brussels...
If CEO would not exist, we would need to invent it."**

- Harald Schumann, journalist with German daily Tagesspiegel
and co-founder of Investigate Europe.

SUPPORT US

We are the only fully independent organisation in Europe constantly monitoring and challenging the influence of many corporate lobby groups on policy making in the EU. We are committed to remaining independent from EU and - of course - corporate funding, so we rely on your support to keep going. Every donation helps us fight the power corporations have in the EU. You can make a one-off or recurrent donation using these details or on our website:

IBAN: NL12TRIO0198300026

BIC: TRIO NL2U

ACCOUNT HOLDER: STICHTING CEO



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