

# By2020WeRiseUp:

## Communication package for targeting the fossil finance industry

This is an offering for external communication in targeting the finance industry during the [second wave of By2020WeRiseUp](#). You can find the corresponding [advisory on actions here](#).

From targeting banks to financial centres we, groups of different horizons declaring that #By2020WeRiseUp, call on everyone to take action. The autumn of 2019 saw an unprecedented amount of climate action targeted at governments and political power-holders, along with widespread coordination efforts in what was termed as the first wave of actions in the context of By2020WeRiseUp. As politicians have proven to be unwilling or unable to take sufficient measures, a call is now issued to target the finance industry: the ones who are funding the climate and many other crises.

In January 2020, the World Economic Forum (WEF) will be coming for the 50th time to Davos, and we need to take action in the face of its absurd illegitimacy, and of the one of its world, along with the boundless destruction caused by its actors. Together, we will act in coordination to make our targets feel the pressure of rolling disruption across Europe, and we invite everyone to pick their action depending on their favoured methods and/or action levels.

This introduction is followed by thoughts on strategic communication, narrative offerings, and proposals for hashtags. The narrative section is structured into three threads of communicating about actions against the finance industry. You can take one of the threads or mix and match – either way, the threads aren't better or worse than one another, they're simply different. If you're coordinating with groups who have different action levels or ways of communicating, we highly recommend our [guideline to solidarity press work](#).

We'd like to emphasise that all of the following is but an offering, it's neither obligatory to use it nor in the way it is presented here. Pick and choose according to what works for your group and feel free to adapt and build on it! We've also got further offerings for external communication on our website, be sure to [check them out as well](#), we'd like to especially point out the [By2020-core-messaging](#).

By2020WeRiseUp is a rallying cry for groups and people to come together for transformative action across Europe and to believe in the possibility of radical change. It is based on a [call-out that was issued during the first European strategy conference](#). It also provides a facilitation platform and tools to connect political struggles related to climate justice, social justice, and other issues. By2020WeRiseUp is a coordination effort and does not itself organise actions, issue press releases, or speak in the name of participating initiatives. After the second wave of actions, a third one, targeting the economic system, is planned for spring of 2020.

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## Strategic communication

In regards to communication strategy, we'd like to emphasise three aspects of communicating about targeting the finance industry:

- Highlight the responsibility and failings of the finance industry.
  - Banks are still funding (and therefore fuelling) the climate and social crises.
  - The locus of power is not within governments as much as within finance and corporate giants, making governments resistant to change.
  - The current neo-liberal and exploitative system is based on short-term profit and an exploitation of people and nature.
- Anticipate green-washing! The finance industry in general and especially the World Economic Forum is going to try HARD to sell green capitalism as the magical fix for the climate crisis. They will drown us in ads announcing new, green investments and we have to be prepared for that. On the one hand, that means, we need to have our fact-sheets ready for debunking their lies (funding for fossil fuels having increased each year since the Paris agreement, etc.) but we need to prepare counter-arguments, counter-stories as well.
- The connection between governments and the finance industry needs to be as obvious and easy to understand as possible.
  - Make transparent the connections between the finance industry and governments. For example, the weight of money and lobbies in decision-making vs democracy and the voices of the people; the imbalance of priorities (we bailed out the banks during the financial crisis on public money and at the cost of austerity); the current use of public financial resources (fuelling crises and suffering).
  - State and show that we are compensating for governments' inability to regulate. We need to take matters in our own hands because there is no time left and we have nothing to lose.

## Narrative offerings

*The agreed upon core narrative for communicating about actions against the finance industry was: World Economic Failure – the finance industry is failing us.*

*We've elaborated this in three different interpretations, feel free to adapt and build on them as you see fit as well as mix and match them.*

### Softer interpretation

*Your money is being used to destroy the earth and your future. „My money, my choice!“*

The finance industry is failing us. The banks are using our money, our savings for our future to fund projects and companies that are destroying that same future. We cannot keep bankrolling an industry that is actively fuelling climate and social crises. Our savings need to go towards a safe and fair future. And it's in our hands: It's our money, our choice.

It's not just about our private money though. Money provides the fossil fuel industry the power to block every serious attempt to stop climate change and to lobby governments' decision-making. We demand that our taxes and public funds are no longer used to fuel these crises. We call for a shift of public support away from industries responsible for climate and social crises by terminating subsidies and breaking the sponsorship ties between those companies and our public institutions.

By shifting our money and public support, we can break the hold that they have on our economy and our governments, while paving the way for a just transition and community-led solutions.

We need to take matters into our own hands, there is no time left and we have nothing to lose. We refuse to have our money being used to destroy the earth and violate human rights.

We rise up against a deadly and exploitative system in which profits are worth more than life.

### **Medium interpretation**

*Stop funding the climate crisis/destruction/suffering. „Save the people, not the banks!“*

The finance industry is not only failing us, it has actively misled us. It's time for banks to stop the lines of credit and project-level loans to climate and social crises. We need banks that guarantee, through investment and lending policies, a complete cut of corporate ties with industries that are threatening our future. Financing any of those business, anywhere, is utterly unacceptable due to the destruction they cause and the future dangers they pose to society and our planet. Stop funding the fossil fuel industry. Stop funding the destruction of people's homes. Stop funding all climate and social crises. The finance industry is clearly not going to do this voluntary – since the Paris agreement in 2015, bank financing for fossil fuels has increased every year.

Money provides the power to block every serious attempt to change as well as lobby governments' decision-making, threatening democracy. We are well aware of our governments' unbalanced priorities, e.g. when they bail out banks during the financial crisis using public money and increasing austerity measures. If the planet would be a bank, it would've long been saved.

We are stepping up to fill the void left by governments' inability to act, protect and regulate. We need to take matters into our own hands, there is no time left and we have nothing to lose. Business as usual is killing the climate and us.

We rise up against a deadly and exploitative system in which profits are worth more than life.

### **Stricter interpretation**

*System change not climate change. “Capitalism needs to go extinct before we do. Make the fossil finance industry go extinct.”*

The finance industry is failing us and will carry on doing it. Not only does it fund the climate and social crisis, but its obstruction of badly needed climate protection, lobbying, misinformation and policy interference make it one of the primary obstacles to change.

Our current system is a dystopia. The global finance industry operates in a fantasy world. There cannot be infinite economic growth on a finite planet, nor can CO<sup>2</sup> emissions be reduced as much and as quickly as they need to with mindless economic growth. We're the ones who are being realistic. We are facing the biggest human rights, environmental and humanitarian crisis of humankind and life on earth. Our rights and ability to survive must not be dictated by the finance system. We refuse to accept life on earth being in serious peril and demand climate justice. And to that end, the fossil finance industry has to go: [Only a hundred companies have been responsible for 71% of global emissions since 1998](#). These companies are all being funded by the finance industry. The majority of them are members of the WEF. And it's not only about the past, the current investments of the global finance industry are funding a global temperature rise of 4°C until the end of the century. We have to stop the finance industry from financing the climate crisis. The fossil finance industry must go extinct before we do. We stand up against the madness of unlimited economic growth, "green-washing", oppression and social injustice.

What's more, while the World Economic Forum calls itself a meeting of global leaders, it has zero democratic legitimacy. The executive boards of companies which are solely interested in short-term profits cannot be allowed to decide over the future of fossil fuels – if the fossil fuel reserves already owned by fossil fuel companies are burned, not a single climate target could be reached. We need to

democratise the decisions about fossil fuels as it'll decide over the future of life on earth. The people, not companies should decide.

To achieve this, we have to compensate for governments' inability to act, protect and regulate. We need to take matters into our own hands, there is no time left and we have nothing to lose. The finance industry must change in order for capitalism to be overcome. The climate is already changing - we have to change the system to stop the climate from collapsing.

We rise up against a deadly and exploitative system in which profits are worth more than life.

## Hashtags

We'd like to ask you to use the following two hashtags in targeting the finance industry:

- #WorldEconomicFailure
- #FossilBanksNoThanks

If you're targeting a specific bank, we'd recommend using a specific hashtag targeting that bank – that could be as simple as looking for the bank's own hashtag. On that note, if you'd like to overtake hashtags of the fossil fuel finance industry, two proposals from our side would be:

- #WEF20
- #ResponsibleBanking

If you're looking for social media inspiration, here are a couple of exemplary tweets, kindly provided by BankTrack. You can find further comms materials [on their website](#).

- Preventing #ClimateBreakdown means quitting fossil fuels. Yet no major bank has committed to fully end its support for coal, oil, or gas. #WorldEconomicFailure #FossilBanksNoThanks
- U.N. #IPCC 1.5°C report: fossil fuels are a threat to civilisation. An the world's top banks are siding with the fossil fuel industry. #WorldEconomicFailure #FossilBanksNoThanks
- The new #IPCC report confirms that emissions need to be cut very fast, but we've known for ages that preventing #ClimateBreakdown means fossil fuels cannot be burned indefinitely. Yet no major bank acknowledges this fact. #WorldEconomicFailure #FossilBanksNoThanks
- Fossil fuels are the past. So are #FossilBanks. #WorldEconomicFailure #FossilBanksNoThanks
- Holding the world to 1.5°C is still possible, but not if major bank keep on funding coal, oil and gas. Tell them to wake up - and fast: #FossilBanksNoThanks #IPCC #WorldEconomicFailure
- U.N. #IPCC 1.5°C report: fossil fuels are a threat to civilisation. An the world's top banks are siding with the fossil fuel industry. #WorldEconomicFailure #FossilBanksNoThanks