

Executive summary of the Fourth European Strategy Meeting of By2020WeRiseUp

This is the Executive Summary of the Third European Strategy Meeting of By2020WeRiseUp. You'll find the [exhaustive minutes here](#).

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Evaluation of the first wave

- While different actions were taken all over Europe in regards to mobilised numbers and action levels, there has undoubtedly been an unprecedented amount of climate action in the autumn
- Mobilisation and media attention have been the biggest success stories
- Coordination was present in most countries but there was a broad agreement about a need to further increase it and not only inside the climate movement but intersectionally
- In most countries there was some political impact but the results ranged from insufficient (Hungary) to outright laughable (Germany). Do we need to disrupt more? Or differently? Who is blocking the change?
- Further commonly identified success stories:
 - What was once seen as radical is in parts becoming broadly acceptable
 - Building up structures, training, capacity for NVDA
 - Internationality of actions was helpful
- Further commonly identified challenges:
 - Some disruptive actions lost their impact with their surprise element – “people got used to it”
 - Groups are reactive, but are not proactive. Others are setting the agenda
 - There is an end to reaching the public via mass media => social media, alternative media
 - We need narratives to prevent right extremists (“ecofascists”) to enter our movement
 - Reaching out into regions beyond capital/major cities
 - Organic growth of the movement (Are there limits? Does it depend too much on NGOs?)
 - Tension: someone needs to go to TV, someone needs to go an international meeting: does this create hierarchies? How can we prevent hierarchies?
 - How do we handle emotions? Can we actually handle emotions? Is there a need for professional support?

Outlines of a common Theory of Change

Short version

All of the following statements were approved in a consent procedure, meaning that everyone actively supported it. Major concerns are taking up in the minutes, they are to be read as still supporting the consensus.

- **We MUST change for the upcoming period – if we do not reinvent (strategies, tactics, the language we use, ourselves), we risk losing impact in the longer run.**
- **Big numbers are perfect to increase impact, if you have a purpose for them. We are pretty good at mobilizing numbers at this point.**
 - Major concern 1: A few months in-between, expectations are there now, too much, too many, this is terrorizing ourselves : there is a risk of feeling of failure because they can't find capacities & energy to do in advance publicized days
 - Major concern 2: we cannot claim the wording of “we are good at mobilizing“
 - Major concern 3: big numbers can be a purpose per se
- **Simply doing something new/completely different can be radical.**
 - Major Concern 1: something new is not per se more radical, it's not the right wording
 - Major Concern 2 : we rather need something new (shared by three people)
 - Major Concern 3: just something new without impact is not radical
- **Diversity in the sense of including marginalized groups is a tool to protect quality of democracy and the overall space for action, for everyone.**
 - Major concern 1: Diversity is more than only marginalized groups, but also other sectors of society like farmers, etc. (agreement in the plenary)
 - Major concern 2: Sounds paternalistic, let's be more humble, learn, what has happened , see it as an equal exchange (agreement in the plenary)
- **We must have the space for groups with different levels of radicality, for different groups to be able to take on the role of “friendly faces” and other groups as “mean faces” in a coordinated way that increases our collective impact.**
 - Major Concern 1: How can we do it? Mean demeanour do not show different levels, give space without losing the different levels of radicality
 - Major Concern 2 : Sometimes difficult to give space practically to different softer-radical actions
 - Major Concern 3 : respect for different methods
- **We also must create space for personal/individual radicality - exposing ourselves, being personally radical, “polarizing” means that the majority cannot live in indifference, no matter how they react.**
 - Major Concern 1 : Do not like the word polarizing (agreement in the plenary)
- **Social justice must remain part of the movement, the goals, and the messaging.**
 - Major Concern: Social Justice is local & global social justice

Long version

The following is an elaboration of the sentences on which a consensus was found on.

We have achieved some impact in the autumn wave. A lot of that impact was not equal to our expectations, the needs of the people and the urgency of the climate crisis.

Climate striking is becoming a trend, the activism we do is becoming normal. (That by itself is good but it enables the system to accommodate instead of change.)

We MUST change for the upcoming period – if we do not reinvent (strategies, tactics, the language we use, ourselves), we risk losing impact in the longer run.

Numbers of people we can mobilize, the radicality of actions and the diversity of the movement are all key to success.

Size of crowds matters – it creates space for us to do more things and safety for a diversity of groups and people to join in. **Big numbers are perfect to increase impact, if you have a purpose for them.** We have this idea of growing to be better, but if we do not have the capacity to give tools

to empower those people to do something as follow up, we cannot use the crowds to their full potential. Size needs to be sustainable, it requires structures to keep it going, and it means an overall reduction of radicality with the masses.

We have mobilized 7.6 million people worldwide during the autumn climate strikes only. **We are pretty good at mobilizing numbers at this point** – the numbers are of relative size based on country, but equally important.

We are in agreement that we need some (up to a lot) increase in radicality. Radicality is not the same thing as extremism - although it can be perceived negatively by some parts of the public, it's necessary to increase impact. Long term polarization of society is NOT our goal, although a radical approach might polarize society around the issue of climate crisis. How we speak, what is ok to demand (Overton-window), the language we use to shift the envelope can also be more or less radical. Radicality can take different forms, from changing the form to being more surprising, to changing tactics completely. In this sense, **Simply doing something new/completely different can be radical.*** Being radical changes the system because the system has to adapt radically and fast to survive.

Diversity is key to creating space for climate justice, not just climate action, and goes hand in hand with radicality. It can range from having a diversity of targets (governments, industry, finance, infrastructure), a diversity of messages within the narrative which are communicated by different groups, a diversity of creative alliances (firefighters, forest workers, tourism, labour unions). Diversity also means joining the struggle of other movements (justice, peace, human rights). **Diversity in the sense of including marginalized groups is a tool to protect quality of democracy and the overall space for action, for everyone.**

For the next wave, radicality and intersectionality are more important than further increasing numbers. For that to work, **we must have the space for groups with different levels of radicality, for different groups to be able to take on the role of “bad cops” and other groups as “good cops” in a coordinated way that increases our collective impact.** (Our goal is not to be liked - although the goal for some of us might be to take the majority with us.) **We also must create space for personal/individual radicality - exposing ourselves, being personally radical, “polarizing” means that the majority cannot live in indifference, no matter how they react.**

This diversity of approaches also applies to the messaging and the language we use. **However, social justice must remain part of the movement, the goals, and the messaging.**

Different groups and people will play different roles – but we have to accept each other and be prepared to combine the effect. If we focus on new things & more radical elements, while respecting each others' levels of radicality, we can grow together.

Simply doing something new does not fulfil the definition of “radical”.

Call to action against the finance industry for the second wave of By2020WeRiseUp

From targeting banks to financial centres we, groups of different horizons declaring that #By2020WeRiseUp, call on everyone to take action. We need to take action in face of the absurd illegitimacy of the WEF in Davos and its world, and 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.

Impact and objectives

Responsibility of the finance industry:

- Banks are still funding the climate and social crises
- Locus of power is not the government, but finance, making governmental change resistant;
- The current neo-liberal and exploitative system is based on money and an exploitation of people and nature.

How do we target finance so that governments are not resting easy?

- Make transparent the connections between the financial industry and the government. For example, the power of money and lobbies on decisions over democracy vs the voices of the people; the difference of priorities between people and power (we bailed out the banks during the financial crisis); the current use of public financial resources
- We are compensating for government's inability to regulate. We need to take matters in our own hands because there is no time left and we have nothing to lose.

Types of action

Goals of WEF action:

- Hiking towards Davos in three stages and therefore taking the protest to the WEF itself and raise awareness of systemic problems of the underlying economic system;
- Increase anger and empowerment (internal and external to movements);
- Create fear for investors and financial actors (name and shame);
- Boost coordination and cooperation (shared calendars, actions, complementarity; helping movements move towards this mindset);
- Justify other (decentralized, more goal-oriented) actions.

Goals of decentralized actions:

- All of the above, in addition to:
 - Visible, tangible disruption (districts around financial centres, functioning of branches, etc.);
 - Impact on banks (and maybe reaction from them);
 - Intersectional actions and messaging;
 - Complementarity of decentralized and centralized actions.

Time-frame:

- Action in Switzerland as an anchor: **call for action around the WEF in January** (Hike to Davos: Sunday the 19th – Tuesday the 21st of January)
- Time-frame of two to three weeks around the WEF in Davos (before and after – Davos forum duration: 21st to 24th of January)

Narrative

- **World Economic Failure: the finance industry is failing us**
 - Softer interpretation: divestment; Your money is being used to destroy the earth and your future.
 - “My money my choice”
 - Medium interpretation: Stop funding the climate crisis/destruction/suffering.
 - “Fossil free banks;”
 - “Save the people not the banks” (don't bail out banks);
 - harder interpretation: we need to overcome capitalism.
 - “System change not climate change.”;

- “The end of capitalism is here”;
- “Capitalism needs to go extinct before we do. Make the fossil finance industry go extinct.”;
- The connection between governments and the finance industry needs to be as obvious as possible and easy to understand, with a messaging also explaining why it’s relevant (e.g. system change not climate change).
- Further ideas for narrative threads:
 - We are the sane ones, they're living in a fantasy world; We have to understand that the dystopia is our current system. The global finance industry has absurd and grotesque ideas, not us. They're the ones who live in a fantasy world, we're the ones who are being realistic;
 - The World Economic Forum has no legitimacy whatsoever. We must know that we have the strength, the capacity, and the legitimacy to rise up for a just and liveable planet.
- Hashtags:
 - #WorldEconomicFailure
 - take over their hashtags (#WEF20 + www.best-hashtags.com/hashtag/wef)
 - Some kind of hashtag targeting banks (most visible part of financial system)
 - from BankTrack: #FossilBanksNoThanks, #BankingOnClimateChange

Coordinating the second wave

- The **call to action** will be fleshed out and finalised in working groups (impact/actions/narrative) until end of November
- A **more detailed framework** for action with practical ideas and coordination practices will be worked on by dedicated working groups.
- One key aspect will be **sharing practices** and ideas of actions. To that end, a first list of ideas has been compiled. However, we would welcome more examples of your favorite means of action! <https://by2020weriseup.net/ideas-for-actions/>
- **Riot** will be used as a communication tool to that end, kicking off it's use as a communication platform for By2020WeRiseUp. Invitations are sent over the info-list.
- The European coordination team is in real **need of support**; to be able to keep on fulfilling its facilitating role. Do you like calls, website stuff, logistics planning, or any other fun aspect of grassroots self-organizing? Join us!
- To contribute to any of the above-mentioned areas of work, write to by2020we@riseup.net

Objectives for 2020

- COP 26 (9-20 November 2020) is a symbolic date – decisions are going to be taken before November 2020. Therefore, we must achieve the change the change we need before November 2020.
- Objective should be SMART: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable/**A**mbitious, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-based, e.g.: By the end of 2020, 75 % of the population switch to a plant-based diet in the UK
- Exemplary objectives from different countries:
 - Germany:
 - Shut down all coal power plants
 - Introduce a free or 365€ public transport ticket, Pendlerpauschale abolished; car-free cities
 - Benelux:
 - All policy decisions taken must be in line with climate goals (1,5° C) by June
 - Workers working in fossil industries starting to be retrained by July
 - 100 % coordination of struggles (farmers, social...) by summer
 - Iberian Peninsula:

- May 2020 have at least 50-100 citizen assemblies (1-3 by country) in Europe
- Overload legal system with climate cases
- Central Europe:
 - Campaign against stock markets, investors (redirecting money into non-fossil investments)
 - By COP26 all EU countries plus UA announce coal-phase out by 2030

Thoughts on the third wave

- Existing plans:
 - FfF International: 22nd April 2020: 50th anniversary of earth day. As it's a Wednesday, it might be turned into a three-day strike.
 - XR International: 3rd major rebellion probably in the second half of April 2020. Possibility to make it last until beginning of May (1st of May as intersectional date)
 - Shell Must Fall: Shell's annual general assembly (shareholder meeting) will be cancelled by dutch groups. A people's AGM will take place 16-17 May 2020, the mass action on 18-19 May 2020.
 - Polish groups have big plans for June
 - Belgian groups are looking into simultaneous blockades of cargo airports and harbours
 - AniCa is planning a mass action against an industrial slaughterhouse in May or June 2020
- Further thought on objectives, actions, and narrative can be found in the [exhaustive minutes](#).

To sum up

- *We are going for a second wave to systematically target the finance industry and prepare the third wave;*
- *we will work towards bringing about huge coordinated disruption throughout spring;*
- *we will work together, bringing our actions and action levels to complement one another;*
- *and, last but not least, we will rise up to turn the tables in 2020.*

We have more power than we think, and we are making use of it. #By2020WeRiseUP, Adelante!