

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

This document reached consensus during a European conference.

Context:

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 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.

Introduction:

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.

Impact and objectives

Responsibility 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.

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

- 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 (banks were bailed out 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.

In order to be as effective as possible, it has been suggested to target specific banks and financial centres with disruptive actions (to be agreed on and determined between interested groups – more information to follow), with advice from specialized organizations, including fact-sheets on both European and national-specific contexts (to be sent upon request from groups. Get in touch at: by2020we@riseup.net)

Types of action

Goals of WEF action (<https://strike-wef.org/>):

- 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;
- Channel 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 and legitimise 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 possibly a reaction from them);
 - Intersectional actions and messaging;
 - Complementarity of decentralized and centralized actions.

Time frame:

- The action in Switzerland will act as an anchor (Hike to Davos: Sunday the 19th – Tuesday the 21st of January).
- For decentralized and increasingly disruptive actions, we are setting a time frame of two to three weeks around the forum in Davos (before and after the forum which will last from the the 21st to the 24th of January).

Narrative

World Economic Failure: the finance industry is failing us

- Possible communication lines around the narrative:
 - 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”
 - 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 and tangible as possible and easy to understand, with a messaging also explaining why it’s relevant (e.g. system change not climate change, social justice and climate justice).
- Hashtags:
 - #WorldEconomicFailure
 - Hashtags targeting banks (the most visible part of financial system) to be worked out

Coordinating the second wave

- To follow the coordination and planning process of the second wave and the European conversation around it, send a mail to by2020we@riseup.net to be signed up to the info-list.
- Riot will be used as a platform for internal communication and working groups. To sign up, send us an email too.