

# **Campaigning for transformational change in climate and energy across Europe**

**Francesca Gater  
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**Friends of  
the Earth  
Europe**



# THE BIG ASK

[WWW.THEBIGASK.EU](http://WWW.THEBIGASK.EU)



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Thom Yorke

Tony Jungermann









## The Big Ask - questions & answers

### Why is the campaign called the Big Ask?

The Big Ask is about people across Europe challenging whether their governments are doing enough to tackle climate change. The campaign's 'big ask' – or its demand – is that European governments commit to binding annual targets for reducing emissions.

### What was the inspiration for the idea of a Europe-wide Big Ask campaign?

Friends of the Earth in the UK was the first to run Big Ask campaign. Through its Big Ask, almost 200 people contacted their member of parliament to demand a climate change law. This resulted in the groundbreaking climate change law - the first of its kind in the world - which will bind the current and future governments to reduce emissions on a year-on-year basis (averaged over five years).

Thom Yorke, the lead singer of Radiohead, has been an advocate of the Big Ask campaign in the UK since its launch and supported the Europe-wide campaign as well.

### What is the Big Ask campaign demanding at the European level?

Our Big Ask is that EU member states make legally binding commitments to cut emissions year-on-year.



### Finnish line in sight for climate law

Climate justice | The Big Ask  
15 NOVEMBER 2012

The 5th September will remain as one of the brightest moments for the Finnish Big Ask campaign when Friends of the Earth Finland/Maan ystävät and other members of the Finnish Big Ask campaign coalition welcomed their MPs back to parliament by publishing the Campaign Climate Bill. After much challenging work, the Campaign Climate Bill was presented to the Minister of Environment, Ville Niinistö, in front of the House of Parliament, cheered on by the whole campaign coalition...

FINLAND



### Scottish government: get your act together

Climate justice | The Big Ask  
26 OCTOBER 2012

In 2009, Friends of the Earth Scotland was one of the driving forces behind the Climate Chaos Coalition Scotland's (SCCS) mass lobby to push for the strongest climate legislation in the world, The Scottish Climate Change Act.

In July 2012, the Scottish Government failed to meet its first, and most challenging, target to reduce emissions under the Act. In the light of this, the SCCS decided to call for a second mass lobby to tell the government to get the Act into Action. People from all regions of Scotland travelled to Edinburgh to speak to their MSPs...

SCOTLAND



### Strongest climate law in Europe?

Climate justice | The Big Ask  
11 OCTOBER 2012

Today, NOAH (Friends of the Earth Denmark) hosted 'The Climate Challenge: is it the strongest in Europe?' a conference with the Danish government, climate and energy spokespeople, the leading expert on environmental legislation in Denmark, climate scientists and directors from environmental municipal organisations. At the conference, NOAH presented its demand for a strong climate law, advocating for Denmark to be fossil-fuel-free by 2050 and to have a net greenhouse gas uptake in 2050 – absorbing more greenhouse gases than it emits every year...

DENMARK



### Festival builds pressure for Czech climate law

News | Friends of the Earth Europe - Green



### Climate law database launched in Czech Republic

The Big Ask  
30 SEPTEMBER 2011

The Environmental Law Service (ELS), a partner organization of Friends of the Earth Czech Republic, has launched a Climate Law Database, which provides information about climate change legislation, both existing and proposed, and gives access to a wide range of related materials.

With its legal know-how ELS wants to contribute to the creation of a legal environment that leads to a systematic decrease of greenhouse gas emissions, along with the development of renewable energy sources...

CZECH REPUBLIC



### New Danish government announces climate law

The Big Ask  
30 SEPTEMBER 2011

Friends of the Earth Denmark's Big Ask campaign has received a major boost following the new Danish government's commitment to pass a climate law...

DENMARK



### New Finnish government agrees climate law proposal

The Big Ask  
30 JUNE 2011

The Finnish Big Ask campaign has reached a major milestone with the new coalition government agreeing to prepare a proposal on a climate law.

After long and tough negotiations following elections in April, a coalition government with six parties has been formed. The Greens, the Left Alliance and the Social Democrats have all stated that a climate change law is one of the most important legislative projects of the next electoral period...

FINLAND



### 10,000 people attend Czech Big Ask festival

The Big Ask  
4 JUNE 2011

Around 10,000 people have attended a music festival in Prague in support of the Big Ask campaign.

The main message of the festival was that a climate change law would bring benefits to the economy and the climate.

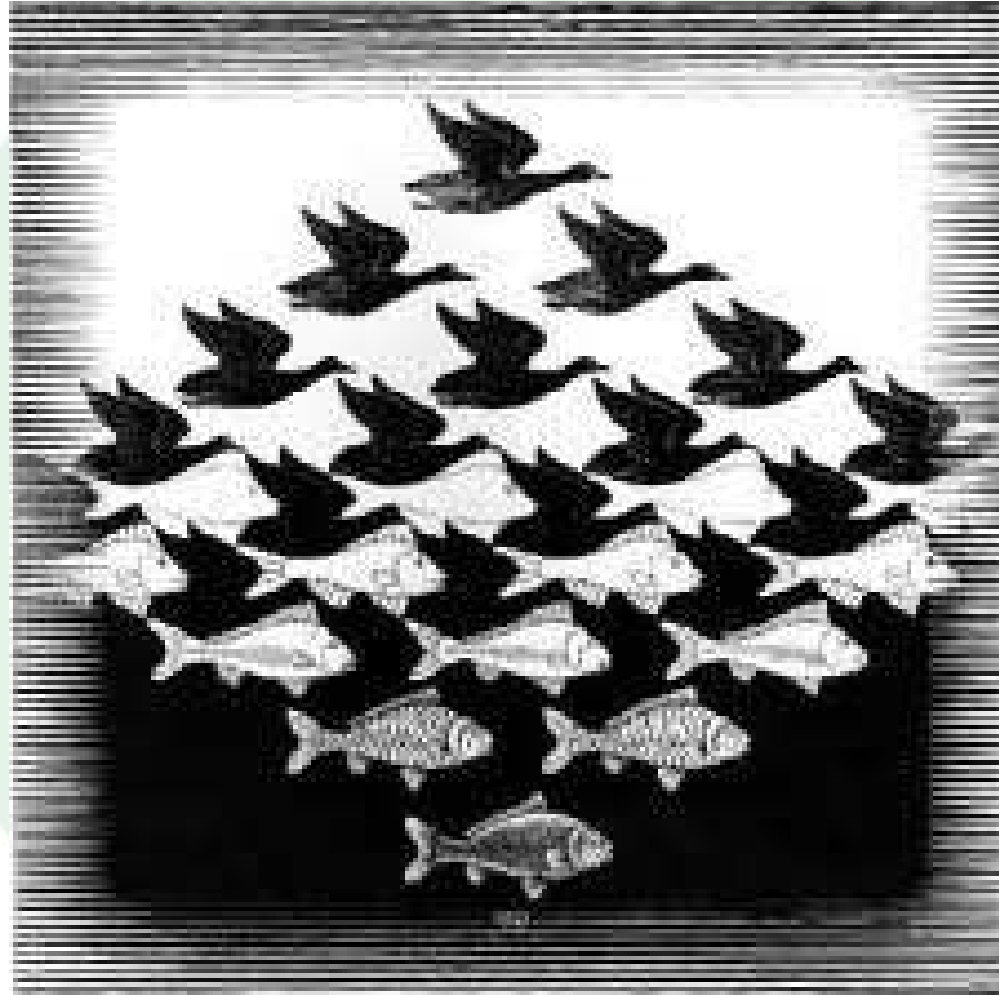
## **Lessons learned**

- **Common materials and identity strengthened campaign, but were difficult to develop**
- **Joint launch created momentum**
- **One common set of demands**
- **Clear, simple, common message**
- **Communicate facts, figures and emotions**
- **Sharing and repeating of ideas**
- **Credible, high-profile figures can be brilliant... if the right ones**



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# Transformation



**‘Community Power’**



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# WHAT

- **Massively increasing the share of community and citizen-owned renewable energy and energy savings projects ...**
- **... and putting people at the core of reaching 100% renewables by 2050 in a sustainable way (ownership, participation).**
- **Change of legislation and set-up of community projects across Europe**



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# **CHALLENGES**

- **How to communicate campaign is pan-European, when different focuses in different countries?**
- **How to link community level to EU and global?**
- **How to communicate the personal and community benefits of renewables?**



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## Contact

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# WHY

- **People's ownership – early involvement in planning and financing**
- **Public acceptance: NIMBY becomes YIMBY**
- **Reduced dependence on big power utilities and high energy prices; Reduced fuel poverty**
- **Environmental and financial benefits.**



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