

COUNTER BALANCE

ACTIVITY REPORT

2023



OUR MISSION

Counter Balance was established in 2007 to ensure European public finance drives a fair and just transformation toward socially and environmentally sustainable societies. We advocate for economies that serve everyone—human and non-human alike—rather than a privileged few.

Our work focuses on monitoring public finance institutions, with the European Investment Bank (EIB) at the heart of our efforts. Additionally, we engage with EU investment policies and other European institutions shaping or influencing public finance.

OUR MEMBERS

- >> **Both ENDS**
The Netherlands
- >> **Bretton Woods Project**
United Kingdom
- >> **CEE Bankwatch Network**
Central & Eastern Europe
- >> **Les Amis de la Terre**
France
- >> **ODG**
Spain
- >> **Platform London**
United Kingdom
- >> **ReCommon**
Italy
- >> **The Corner House**
United Kingdom
- >> **urgewald**
Germany



Counter Balance is an independent European non-profit and membership-based organisation. It is legally represented by its Board, which is elected by the General Assembly, and by its Director upon delegation by the Board.



Frank Vanaerschot,
Director at Counter Balance

“Counter Balance and its members across Europe are joining forces to reclaim the EU’s public investment as a catalyst for equitable social change.

The convergence of climate disruption, the cost of living crisis, and the lingering effects of the pandemic imperils livelihoods and public health, while flawed economic policies have widened power imbalances and eroded social services.

Urgent action is imperative to prioritise a sustainable economy that serves everyone, not just profit-driven interests.

That’s why our advocacy and coalition-building endeavours centre on urging the European Investment Bank and EU funds to realign its funding with green and social imperatives, rejecting austerity and championing investments in public services that are accessible to all.”



RESEARCH

We analyse the activities of European public finance institutions, examining their investments and assessing their effects on communities and the environment.



ADVOCATE

We actively engage with decision makers at the EIB, European institutions, and EU member states, urging them to prioritise accountability, democracy, and sustainability in public banking practices.

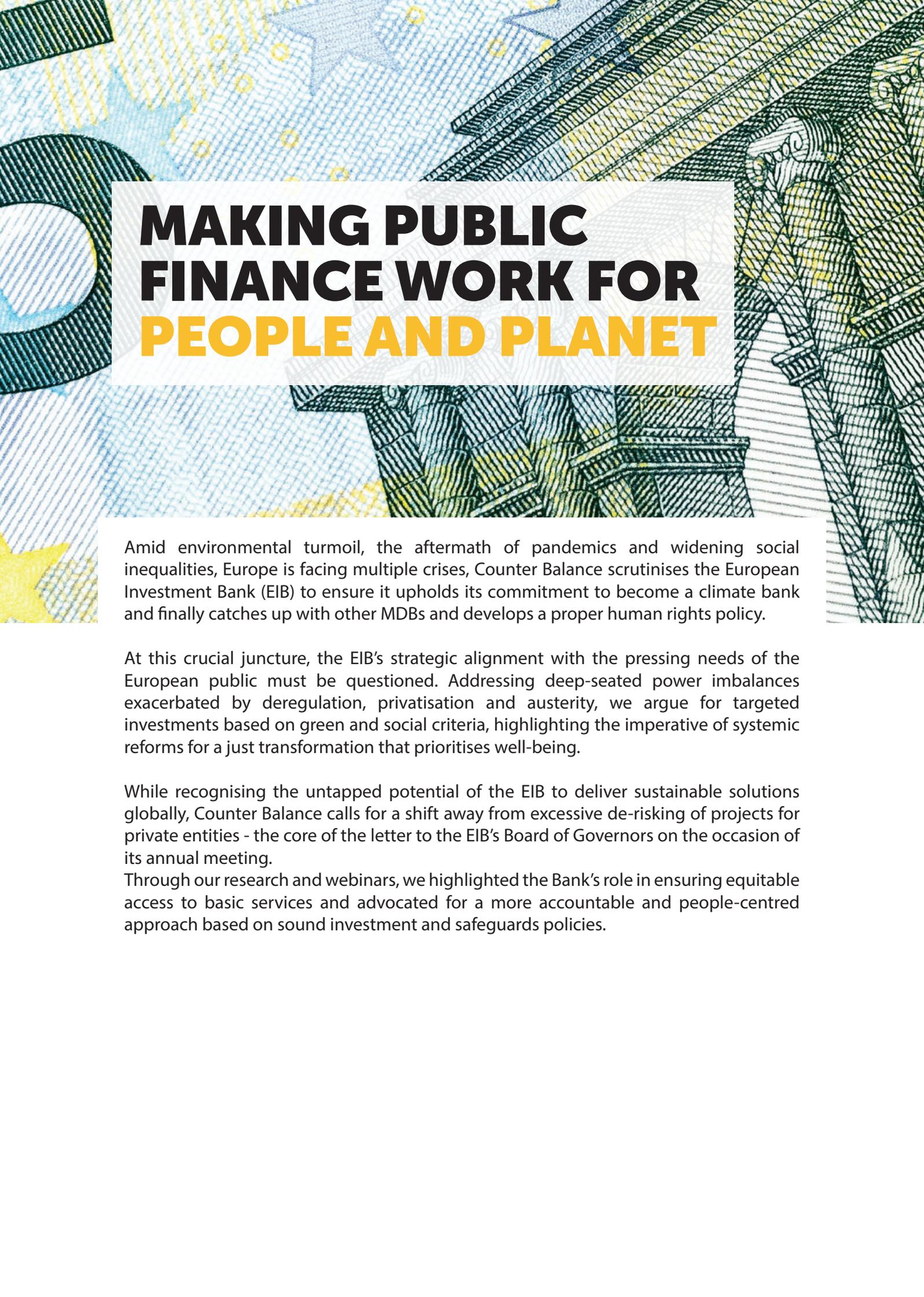


INFORM

We aim to educate the public and stimulate discussions on the significance of EU public finance in fostering the shift towards more sustainable and fair societies.

A person wearing a dark jacket, glasses, and a backpack is shouting into a megaphone. The scene is outdoors with a warm, golden-yellow light. In the background, other people are visible, including one holding a smartphone. The overall atmosphere is energetic and public.

HIGHLIGHTS 2023



MAKING PUBLIC FINANCE WORK FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

Amid environmental turmoil, the aftermath of pandemics and widening social inequalities, Europe is facing multiple crises, Counter Balance scrutinises the European Investment Bank (EIB) to ensure it upholds its commitment to become a climate bank and finally catches up with other MDBs and develops a proper human rights policy.

At this crucial juncture, the EIB's strategic alignment with the pressing needs of the European public must be questioned. Addressing deep-seated power imbalances exacerbated by deregulation, privatisation and austerity, we argue for targeted investments based on green and social criteria, highlighting the imperative of systemic reforms for a just transformation that prioritises well-being.

While recognising the untapped potential of the EIB to deliver sustainable solutions globally, Counter Balance calls for a shift away from excessive de-risking of projects for private entities - the core of the letter to the EIB's Board of Governors on the occasion of its annual meeting.

Through our research and webinars, we highlighted the Bank's role in ensuring equitable access to basic services and advocated for a more accountable and people-centred approach based on sound investment and safeguards policies.



KEEPING THE EIB ON THE RIGHT CLIMATE PATH

Counter Balance joined civil society efforts to urge the European Commission to reject greenwashing by polluters trying to repurpose fossil gas pipelines under the PCI/PMI list, advocating instead for genuine sustainability and energy security. We also criticized the European Commission's Green Deal Industrial Plan (GDIP), which prioritizes corporate profits over sustainability, risking environmental harm and exacerbating inequality.

When the EIB decided to boost renewable energy financing for the REPowerEU agenda, it expanded exemptions for non-Paris-aligned fossil activities. In response, we called for binding climate criteria for companies and emphasized the role of energy companies in driving up energy prices.

Together with the Fossil Free EIB coalition, we wrote to the EIB to demand true alignment with the Paris Agreement and sufficient financing for a socially just transition. Despite no new fossil fuel investments since early 2022, concerns remain over weak climate criteria, EIB support for hydrogen, transport investments, and the real impact of renewable energy financing. We also urged the EIB to address these issues in its mid-term review of the Climate Bank Roadmap.

We developed positions on the PATH Framework and the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), calling for decarbonization plans aligned with the Paris Agreement. Despite political opposition, the EIB upheld its fossil financing ban, including in the the mid-term review of the EIBs energy policy.

Our advocacy included organizing debates, roundtables, and workshops on public investment for a just transition, in collaboration with the Belgian socialist labor union, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, and various academic institutions.



EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF OUR WORK

During the course of 2023, we worked on different types of EU funds linked to the EIB, such as the financing of the EU Green Deal via Invest EU and the Recovery Fund, the Global Gateway and the Bridgetown initiative.

We used the focus on these strategies to create attention for the need to improve EIBs policies and highlight the need to strengthen EIB's climate and environmental policies and practices to ensure the EIBs role in these initiatives would contribute to environmentally friendly climate finance and projects.

We also started working on a field that was entirely new for Counter Balance: the regulation of Export Credit Agencies. The objective was to highlight to policy makers that the EIB is a key implementing institution or closely related to these initiatives. We coordinated EU-level advocacy on export credit agencies (ECAs) with BothENDS and the ECA Watch coalition, mobilizing civil society, briefing MEPs—especially in the INTA committee—and engaging the Spanish Presidency to push for science-based fossil fuel phase-out roadmaps.

We secured a strong EU position on fossil fuel phase-out at the OECD and successfully linked export credit issues with broader EU policies like the Net Zero Industry Act and Critical Raw Materials Act. Despite challenges such as resistance from member states and limited EU-level power, we learned that integrating ECA work with broader EU policies amplifies impact.



HOLDING INSTITUTIONS ACCOUNTABLE

Counter Balance, in collaboration with The Corner House, has exposed the European Investment Bank's (EIB) failure to address evidence of a fraud and corruption case in Kenya, via a €38 million investment in the ECP Africa Fund II.

Despite clear signs of misconduct—questionable payments and inflated fees—the EIB's investigation fell short, lacking critical interviews and key documents. The case was abruptly closed in 2020, prompting calls for the EIB to acknowledge its missteps, reopen the investigation, and implement stronger anti-corruption safeguards. This underscores the urgent need for EU law reform to ensure genuine accountability at the EIB.

In a separate win for transparency, the EU Ombudsman ruled in favor of urging the EIB to disclose environmental information in two cases. One involved a loan to PGE, where the Ombudsman found the EIB's claims of commercial confidentiality unjustified.

The second case concerns a bus transport project in Kenya, where the Ombudsman, citing the ECJ, stressed the importance of releasing Environmental and Social Assessments before project approval. Alongside Bankwatch, Counter Balance has called on the EIB's directors to uphold these transparency standards.



ADVOCACY TOWARDS EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

Counter Balance has been instrumental in driving European institutions to advocate for stringent climate criteria within the European Investment Bank (EIB). During a pivotal vote in the European Parliament on reports from the Budgetary Control (CONT) and Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) committees, MEPs emphasised to the EIB the necessity of financing clients and intermediaries committed to credible decarbonization plans to avert catastrophic climate change.

Following our recommendations, MEPs underscored the critical need to strengthen support for affordable housing, healthcare, and community initiatives. They also urged the EIB's external investment arm to adopt a robust development mandate and enhance human rights procedures and practices. Despite these efforts, the European Parliament endorsed some worrisome directives, including advocating for increased support to the defence industry and larger investments in hydrogen technology without explicitly excluding fossil-based hydrogen. This underscores the importance of Counter Balance's continued advocacy efforts, as new areas of concern emerge, ensuring that vital issues are addressed in the months ahead.



PUBLIC FUNDING ALIGNED WITH GLOBAL SOUTH NEEDS

Counter Balance has been working to hold both the European Commission and the EIB to account on infrastructure financing outside the EU. In a briefing with the Fossil Free EIB coalition, we outlined how the EIB can use its development arm 'EIB Global' to promote the public good and facilitate a just environmental transition outside Europe, published ahead of the EIB's 2023 Board Seminar with Civil Society.

Together with partner organisations and members, Counter Balance critiqued the Commission's flagship global investment plan - the EU Global Gateway - to show how this flawed strategy is more about 'de-risking' private investment and prioritising European economic interests abroad than it is about long-term sustainable development.

This was demonstrated at the Global Gateway Forum, an event that was dominated by politicians and business leaders, with no meaningful representation from civil society and trade unions. In this context, as well as at the Finance in Common Summit, we highlighted the problems with a strategy of using development funds for private infrastructure investment in the Global South.

On these occasions, Counter Balance criticised the dominant strategy of public development banks to prioritise mobilising private capital over strong development impacts. It questioned the approach of such events, which perpetuate an unjust financial system, and underlined the need for discussions on debt and climate crises to take place in more inclusive and representative forums.



RESPONDING TO ISRAEL'S GENOCIDAL WAR ON GAZA

In the wake of 7 October and the cycle of violence against civilians in Gaza, Counter Balance has published a letter calling for a ceasefire in Israel's war against the Palestinians. The statement condemned the failure of the European Union to denounce the ongoing collective punishment in Gaza and challenge Israeli occupation policies, calling for action to end the occupation and apartheid.

Counter Balance urges the European Investment Bank to bring its funding activities into line with international law by ending support for illegal Israeli settlements. It is imperative that EU leaders prioritise global peace and justice and adjust their policies accordingly.

TOWARDS A NEW EIB PRESIDENCY



European
Investment Bank

Werner Hoyer's tenure as President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) concluded in December. The appointment of his successor, Nadia Calviño, following extensive behind-the-scenes negotiations, occurs at a pivotal juncture for the world's largest multilateral lender.

Counter Balance greeted Calviño's nomination with a series of recommendations aimed at reorienting the EIB's focus towards addressing contemporary challenges, particularly the funding gap necessary to facilitate a just transition, support public services, and finance projects with a strong development impact both inside and outside the EU.

Moreover, expressing concerns regarding transparency and accountability, we have urged Calviño to enforce stringent environmental and social criteria for EIB partners and enhance governance structures to ensure the inclusion of trade unions, civil society, and local authorities in decision-making processes.



REPORTS

NO RECOVERY WITHOUT CITIZENS



The Citizens' Observatory for Green Deal Financing's report "[No recovery without citizens: why public involvement is key to Europe's green transformation](#)" highlights how EU Member States are exacerbating economic inequality, eroding democracy, and hindering efforts towards a green, transformative European economy by sidelining citizens in decision-making processes.

Analysing investments made in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Spain through the EU's Recovery Fund, as well as programmes such as InvestEU, REPowerEU and the European Investment Bank (EIB), the report reveals investments that harm the climate, exacerbate biodiversity loss and neglect vital public services due to a lack of citizen involvement.

This exclusion of the public has resulted in investments that benefit companies still extracting and burning fossil fuels, while neglecting citizens' real priorities.

The report calls for greater citizen involvement in decision-making to ensure that investments are aligned with societal needs and environmental limits. It also proposes improvements in transparency, civil society monitoring and citizen participation to rectify the situation.

THINGS HAVE TO CHANGE

Counter Balance's latest report, ["Things Have to Change,"](#) calls for the next President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) to prioritise addressing Europe's cost of living crisis. It urges a shift away from profit-driven agendas toward investing in essential services like housing, energy, transport, and healthcare to enhance accessibility and affordability for all citizens.

Emphasising the need for the EIB to focus on societal benefits rather than high returns, the report advocates for riskier projects with significant social impact. It also highlights the importance of broader systemic changes, such as wealth taxes and rent controls, to support long-term social investments.

Ultimately, the report emphasises the EIB President's responsibility to use the institution's financial resources to build a legacy of quality and affordable infrastructure across Europe.



THINGS HAVE TO CHANGE



A stack of various colored papers and folders, including purple, white, green, and red, is shown in a close-up, slightly blurred view. A large, semi-transparent yellow diagonal shape overlays the left side of the image. The word "BRIEFINGS" is written in bold, white, uppercase letters across the middle of the stack.

BRIEFINGS

EIB GLOBAL BRIEFING



CIVIL SOCIETY SEMINAR

28 April 2023

EIB GLOBAL BRIEFING FOR THE EIB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear EIB Directors,

We are taking the opportunity of the annual policy dialogue with Civil Society Organisations to discuss with you the role of EIB Global in support of EU development policies and the rules it should follow in its operations globally.

With almost €10 billion of commitments outside the EU in 2022, the EIB cannot be considered an inconsequential actor. In fact, EIB Global will play a pivotal role in the European Fund for Sustainable Development +, the main global investment tool of the EU in the post-2020 era.

Following the announcement of EIB Global as a "new arm for international partnerships and development finance (which) aims to further enhance impact and visibility of EU investments worldwide", there has been only limited public discussion on how EIB Global can deliver on this promise to strengthen its development orientation. Similarly, scarce information is shared by EIB Global on how it works to increase "efficient cooperation with partners and beneficiaries, with development finance institutions, and civil society".

We consider the creation of EIB Global as an opportunity for the bank to change course in its development operations. But in order to seize this opportunity, serious steps forward are required. CSOs have been following the EIB's record in the development field for years and have documented serious problems with EIB-funded projects, including a lack of development orientation and transparency, failures in due diligence and major shortcomings in environmental, social and human rights standards.

Therefore during the upcoming meeting with the EIB Board we would like to discuss the recommendations formulated by civil society to guide the future operations of EIB Global:

- ▶ The EIB operations outside of Europe are based on the general principles guiding EU external action as set forth in Article 21 of the Treaty on the European Union, such as supporting democracy and the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. These principles should guide its operations as a public bank with a development mandate. The priority should be focusing on a pro-poor sustainable development agenda, rather than acting as a tool of economic competitiveness and diplomacy supporting geopolitical interests of the EU under the Global Gateway strategy.
- ▶ All EIB operations outside the EU should demonstrate clear development additionality and contribution towards long-term structural transformation into socially and environmentally sustainable and equitable societies, noted in the recipient country's national development goals. Evaluation studies should go beyond short-term impact assessment to support the pursuit of this goal by demonstrating how EIB operations contribute to strengthening recipient countries' public service provision and access, as well as local public or private enterprise in line with national development priorities.

The annual EIB policy dialogue with CSOs provides an opportunity to discuss the role of the EIB Global in support of EU development policies and the necessary guidelines for its global operations. With almost €10 billion to be committed outside the EU in 2022, the EIB has a significant influence as a major actor. However, there has been limited public discussion on how EIB Global can effectively deliver on its promise to increase the impact and visibility of EU investments worldwide.

Civil society has long identified problems with EIB-funded projects, including a lack of development focus, transparency and compliance with environmental, social and human rights standards.

The Counter Balance briefing underlines the need for the EIB Global to shift its focus to to keep the fossil bank and pursue a just transition during the cost of living crisis, promoting rule of law and human rights, rather than solely serving the geopolitical interests of the EU. It advocates a pro-poor sustainable development agenda, genuine development assistance and the democratisation of decision-making processes. It also calls for full consultation and engagement with affected communities, robust human rights due diligence and the prioritisation of public goods and services in EIB-financed projects.

As Werner Hoyer prepares to pass the torch to a new leader at the end of his presidency of the EIB, it is a critical time for reflection and evaluation of the Bank's strategic direction. [In a letter to the Board of Governors of the EIB](#), Counter Balance underlines the need for a shift in focus from primarily de-risking projects for private entities to prioritising affordable access to basic services for households worldwide. We emphasised the need to use the full capacity of the EIB's balance sheet to directly support long-term projects that address basic human needs in Europe and around the world, and called for greater democratic accountability and stronger investment and safeguards policies.

Green hydrogen is increasingly seen as a key solution for decarbonisation and achieving climate neutrality by 2050 in the face of the pressing energy and climate crisis. The rush to develop projects such as the H2Med initiative risks the creation of oversized and unnecessary infrastructure that is not in line with the needs of the energy transition and the effectiveness required. [In a letter to the European Commission and European Council](#), we urged to reject this project, as well as other large-scale hydrogen transport initiatives that lack thorough analysis and face similar challenges.

RESTRUCTURING THE EIB TO MEET THE EU PUBLIC'S NEEDS



LETTER

Counter
Balance
Public
Investment
Bank
18 June 2023

RESTRUCTURING THE EIB TO MEET THE EU PUBLIC'S NEEDS

Dear European Ministers of Finance,
Dear EIB Board of Governors,

The EIB finds itself at a pivotal moment. This is the final shareholders meeting of current President Werner Hoyer's mandate. It is a moment to take stock and assess whether the bank is acting strategically to deliver on the most pressing needs of the European public.

More than €20 billion in subscribed capital – money coming from the taxes paid by people in the 27 EU Member States – you represent, be leveraged in the most useful way to finance projects that will meet society's most important needs. This is the fundamental question we should ask ourselves in times when the climate and broader environmental emergency has combined with an unforeseen drop in living standards due to the cost of energy, and post-pandemic and increasing inflation. The EIB has been an operational leader by becoming the first bank to start lending for unbanked local fuel projects. This was and remains an important step. Yet, the bank has enormous untapped potential to use the economic power of its balance sheet to more effectively provide long-term solutions for the most important needs of the EU public.

The EIB positions *affordability* as central to its operations. However, we believe the current interpretation of offering financing conditions that can not be provided by the market alone leads to too much thinking of private corporations and financial institutions that have ample access to finance. Additionally, should focus more on guaranteeing affordable long-term access to the essential services which households and people need most in order to live decent lives while respecting environmental limits, such as high-quality affordable housing, utilities, transport and food. The affluent & households, the larger (and still growing) proportion of income it currently has to spend to access these services. Ensuring affordable and democratic access to them in the long term requires setting them as public services.

This can be done by thoroughly evaluating whether projects and promoters have business models which ensure long-term affordable access to the essential services mentioned above. The EIB can achieve this by using the full capacity of its balance sheet to take on risks that directly support projects that address basic needs, demonstrating the bank and strengthening its investment and safeguarding policies.

Currently the *economic appraisal of investment projects* is not very different from the methodologies used by commercial banks. A project's social and environmental benefits should carry important weight when it is appraised, including projects not supported by public guarantees.

The EIB should recognise the *structural failure of markets to cover the real investment needed in public infrastructure* and focus more on cooperation with non-market actors. Currently, a big part of the EIB's public investment power is being used to make public investments more attractive for private investors. Yet, this de-risking should be put aside by working together with different national and regional state and other non-market actors. If public investment in finance is this way, more resources would be made available for projects that have long-term economic viability and environmental and social benefits – but now below market rate returns. The capacity to take on risk for such projects could then be further enhanced by various forms of public guarantees. This is already the case, but is currently used to de-risk private sector promoters and investors which respect environmental standards for projects that need to deliver affordable services to the people in the EU for example.

H2MED PROJECTS



DEAR PARTICIPANTS OF THE 25TH OF OCTOBER PCIPMI LIST HIGH-LEVEL DECISION-MAKING MEETING. DEAR ATTACHES.

The undersigned organizations and signatories from across Europe are writing you to express our serious concerns in relation to the first Union List of Projects of Common and Mutual Interest (PCIPMI List) under the revised TEN-E Regulation, which will be discussed in the upcoming High Level Decision-Making Meeting which will take place on 25th of October. We are aware that, on this occasion, decision makers will discuss the projects to be included in the PCIPMI List, which is scheduled to be published in November, and we would like to express our concerns about plans to include certain hydrogen-related projects in the list.

In the current context of severe energy and climate crisis, there is a growing trend to consider green hydrogen as one of the most appropriate options to contribute to the decarbonisation of the economy and achieve climate neutrality well before 2050. The European Union has incorporated it into its priorities and investment plans, and green hydrogen initiatives have been multiplying. This has led to the beginning of a frantic rush to develop numerous projects, some of which risk not being needed in the future, as they are oversized and do not respond to the needs of the energy transition.

This is the case of the H2Med project, submitted by the gas network operators of Spain (Enagás), Portugal (REN) and France (GRTgaz and Targas) to the December 2022 call for proposals. According to promoters, this project aims to be the first European green hydrogen corridor and it will enable to transport two million tons of hydrogen from the Iberian peninsula to central Europe, through two transboundary interconnections: a terrestrial interconnection between Portugal and Spain (H2Med-CalZel) and a submarine interconnection between Spain and France (PCIPMI-Bar Mai).

PODCAST



The EU Watchdog Radio podcast, now three years old and produced with Corporate Europe Observatory, released 8 episodes in 2023 – taking the total number to 48.

The podcast covered a vast array of topics, including the Qatargate, food speculation, reflections on the 30 year anniversary of the EU Single Market and the much needed reform that the Elb should take to deliver for the planet and its people.

IN THE NEWS

35

MEDIA HITS

The coverage that spans from Brussels-based outlets to national ones, including the Financial Times, Politico Europe, EurActiv, EuObserver and ENDS Europe

4

BLOGS

3

PRESS RELEASES

6

OPINION PIECES

12.000

VIEWS

A photograph of a protest or rally. In the center, a person holds a white sign with the word "ENOUGH" written in black, hand-painted capital letters. The sign is held high above the crowd. The background shows a large, ornate building with arched windows and a crowd of people, some wearing yellow vests. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime. A large, semi-transparent yellow triangle is overlaid on the right side of the image.

ENOUGH

IN 2024



CLIMATE

Counter Balance will continue its collaboration with the Citizens' Observatory for Green Deal Financing, a coalition of various CSOs advocating for transparency and equitable distribution of EU funds at both EU and national levels. We will contribute by conducting research on the utilisation of recovery funds, disseminating our findings through reports, and fostering dialogue with policymakers and the public via webinars and roundtable discussions.

In light of the EIB review of its energy lending policy and climate roadmap in 2023, Counter Balance will ensure that the bank upholds all aspects of the roadmap, efforts that will be reinforced through renewed collaboration with the Fossil Free EIB coalition.

Additionally, Counter Balance will continue to bolster our watchdog role by closely monitoring European Export Credit Agencies and their involvement in financing fossil fuels by mobilizing the new Parliament and Commission post-elections, tracking the implementation of Council conclusions, and producing advocacy materials to advance the ECA reform agenda.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, the ongoing effort to ensure that European public financing upholds human rights standards and promotes genuine international development equity remains paramount. Counter Balance will continue its work to actively advocate for the EU Global Gateway, the European Commission's international investment strategy partially overseen by the EIB, to prioritise the well-being of communities in the Global South over its geopolitical and corporate interests.

By reviewing the EU's Global Gateway strategy, Counter Balance will expand its work to assess the coordination between export credit and development finance, highlighting significant concerns about suitability of such coordination for development objectives.

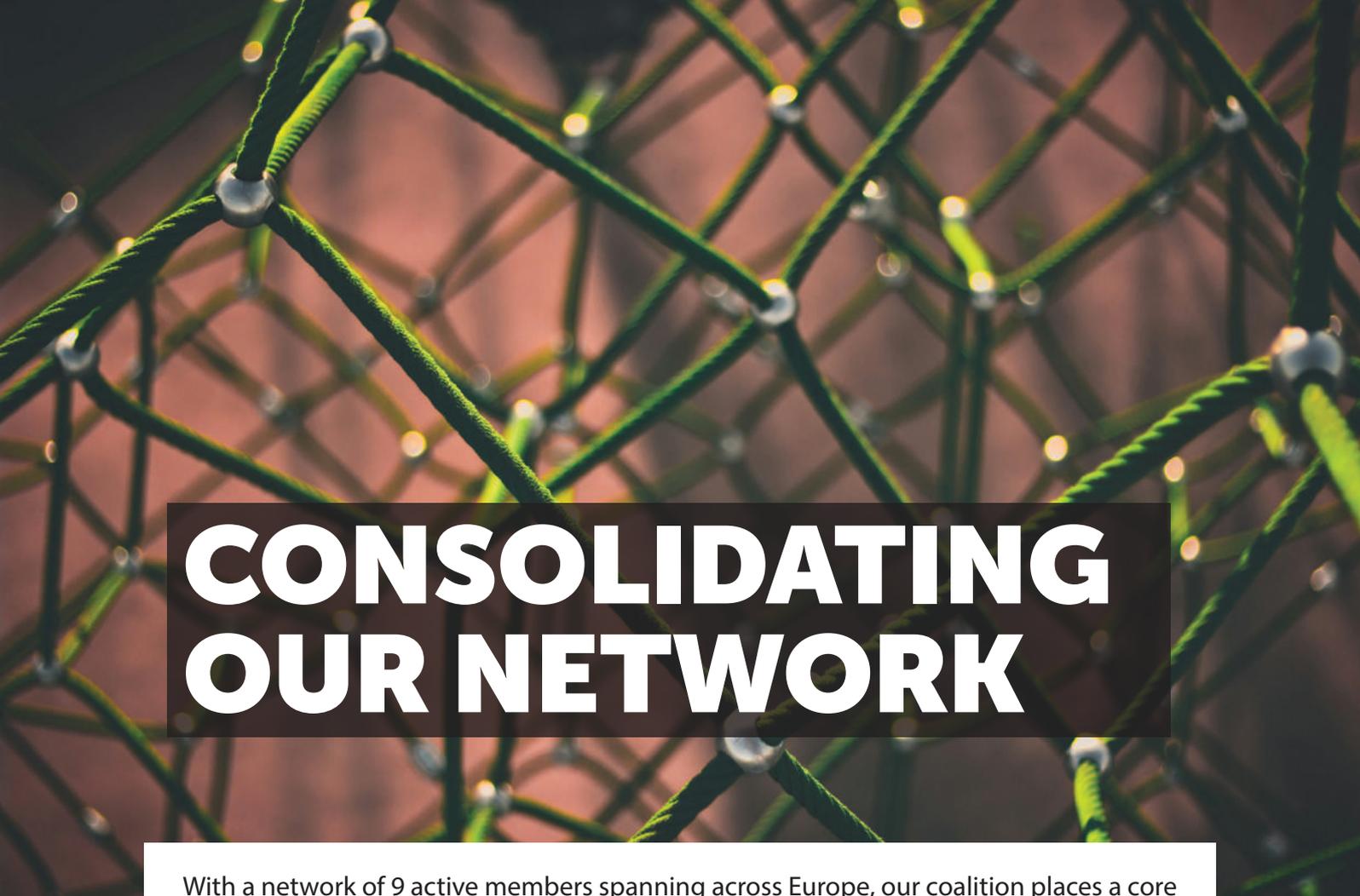
Additionally, Counter Balance will collaborate with other development organisations to exert influence on EIB Global, the EIB's recently established development arm. This collaborative effort will involve holding the bank accountable for any projects associated with human rights abuses and prioritising the needs of communities directly impacted by the bank's investments.



TRANSPARENCY

Counter Balance will strengthen its collaboration with the Europe Network of Corporate Observatories (ENCO) to intensify pressure on the EIB. We are committed to promoting democratic public financial institutions that prioritize the public interest, guided by environmental responsibility, transparency, ethics, and accountability.

Through rigorous scrutiny of EIB-funded projects, we will continue exposing questionable deals, suspected corruption, and tax evasion by major European corporations benefiting from public funds.



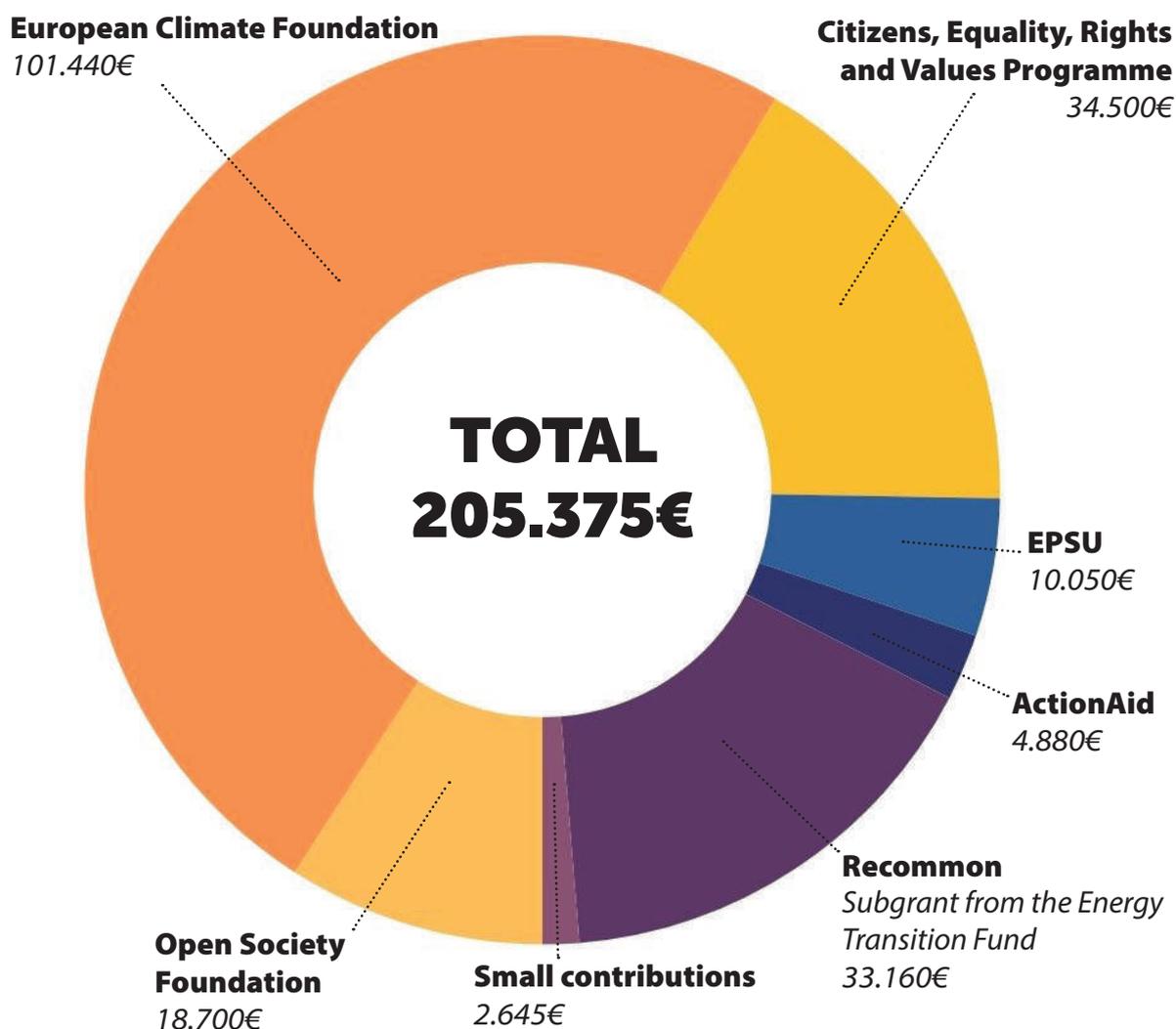
CONSOLIDATING OUR NETWORK

With a network of 9 active members spanning across Europe, our coalition places a core emphasis on strengthening and broadening partnerships with NGOs and grassroots movements both within Europe and in the Global South. This entails sharing expertise and resources to enhance collaborative efforts.

Furthermore, we aim to bolster our well-established coalition by enhancing our media visibility and actively participating in official events through presentations and engagements.

FINANCES IN 2023

The financial overview below provides a detailed breakdown of our donors and income for the year. By clearly mapping out our financial flows, we aim to demonstrate accountability and reinforce our commitment to maximizing impact with the funds entrusted to us. We extend our sincere gratitude to our donors and partners for their continued support, which makes our work possible.



TRANSPARENCY INDEX NUMBER: 02902955023 – 04

In line with our demands for increasing transparency for European public banks, Counter Balance fully supports efforts undertaken at EU level to enhance the openness of organisations engaging in European affairs, including NGOs.

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