

Update: this letter was updated at 14:15 CET Wednesday 1 September to add 350.org as a signatory

NGOs to refuse invitations to speak at fossil-fuel sponsored media events

Open letter to the editors of EURACTIV, The Financial Times, and POLITICO Europe

Brussels, 2 September 2021

Sir / Madam,

As European campaigners for climate action and climate justice, we are writing to you to inform you that we will no longer accept invitations to speak at events organised by your media organisation on EU policy with the sponsorship of fossil fuel companies.

For the fossil fuel industry, like the tobacco industry before it, image is everything. Being seen as a legitimate partner and part of the solution to the climate crisis is key. By sponsoring high profile events organised by media outlets such as yours, the fossil fuel industry is buying a platform to gain credibility and undue influence.

In an era when disinformation spreads on social media, and when advertising and editorial content are increasingly tricky to tell apart, we firmly believe that free media has a pivotal role to play to uphold democracy and free speech.

However, the pursuit of objectivity is not served by letting the fossil fuel industry sponsor media platforms. The continued role of coal, oil and gas interests in accelerating the climate crisis and undermining climate action is not a matter of opinion, and allowing the industry to continue to frame the conversation can only serve to delay the urgent steps needed to limit global heating to a level nature and society can withstand.

In the words of the millions of climate-striking schoolchildren: our house is on fire. And the fossil fuel industry has a petrol can in its hand. When fossil fuel companies exploit the credibility of your media platforms as part of a strategy to set the terms of public debate and to position themselves close to decision-makers, you are helping them pour fuel on the fire.

We would be grateful for you to publish this letter so that your readers and event participants may be informed as to why our organisations are absent from any events you may organise with the support of the fossil fuel industry. And we urge you to go further in addressing the insidious problem of fossil fuel influence, by no longer organising any event with sponsorship of fossil fuel companies.

Yours truly,

Fossil Free Politics
Alter-EU
CIDSE
Corporate Europe Observatory
Counter Balance

European Federation of Public Service Unions
Food and Water Action Europe
Friends of the Earth Europe
Global Witness
Greenpeace
HEAL
Naturefriends International
Transport & Environment
Youth for Climate
WWF European Policy Office
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