

SHUT SHIT DOWN!



AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE TO ENDE GELÄNDE



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HOW TO SHUT SHIT DOWN!

An activist's guide to *Ende Gelände*
Berlin, October 2020

Written by the
International Working Group
of *Ende Gelände*

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An activist Handbook!

Dear comrades,

this brochure was developed by us, the International Working Group of Ende Gelände, to give an insight in how Ende Gelände works and to outline from our perspective the key factors for its success. Over the years since the first action in 2015, Ende Gelände has become an inspiration for the European climate justice movement and beyond, and we get a lot of requests of international activists who want to do their own version of Ende Gelände.

Ende Gelände started as an association of different groups and persons with a left activist background (some rooted in the climate movement, some not) to organise a mass action against Europe's biggest source of CO₂ in the Rhineland coal fields. The type of action we do (openly announced mass actions with an action consensus, based on affinity groups and fingers, using action trainings and the tactic of floating through police lines) was not invented by us. We have learned it from the Antinuclear Movement in Germany who also took inspiration from different sources.

Only 30 persons took part in the first ›mass‹ action in the Rhineland mining area in 2011 (still not under the name Ende Gelände). Four years later, there were already 1,500 people at the first Ende Gelände action. Since then, the number of participants has kept growing up to 6,000 in 2019—and so did the organisation crew. There are now doz-

ens of local groups associated to Ende Gelände and more than 100 people are working constantly in one of the many working groups of Ende Gelände. We have been working together for many years and our active participation in each step of the preparation process has allowed us to further develop and refine the way we do our actions—and adding a lot of nice extras. Although we really enjoy eating pizza at our camp or watching a laser show during blockades, we believe that these treats are not essential for successful and powerful actions of massive civil disobedience. In this brochure, we want to gather and discuss the most important points regarding the way Ende Gelände prepares and carries out actions.

We are very happy that the way we do actions is so attractive to many people outside of Germany. Nevertheless, we want to stress that the (historical, legal, ...) context for disobedient actions is very specific to each country and what works for us in Germany does not necessarily work elsewhere. A careful adaptation is always required.

We hope you enjoy reading this brochure and that its content inspires you to think about how massive actions of civil disobedience for climate justice could look like in your context.

Your International Working Group of Ende Gelände



Action Forms

1 We organise **civil disobedient mass actions for climate justice**, because we believe that civil disobedience is necessary to stop the climate crisis. However, not all people are able to organize disobedient actions by themselves. The idea behind Ende Gelände is to make civil disobedience as accessible as possible, so that a large number of people can join. Indeed, we believe that mass actions are useful when it comes down to public communication (→ *Chapter Public Communication, p. 7*), by providing beautiful pictures and videos of activists entering a mine, running in fields, preparing themselves during trainings etc. They also help to normalise civil disobedience, by showing that a lot of people are willing to take risks to fight for climate justice. In that sense, they also help to highlight the increasing strength of our movement.

Moreover, the mass aspect of the action makes it in general less risky for activists (eg. the risk of being arrested is more unlikely in a big action than in a smaller one) and therefore, it can help to attract people who are not always experienced activists. To make the action accessible, we believe it is essential that we communicate openly beforehand about our action to the activists, to our sympathizers and to the broader public. Among others, we provide action trainings and legal information on the camp, a starting point for the actions. The camp is indeed a space where people can prepare, ›have a look‹ first before they decide what they are going to do during

the action or find an affinity group to do the action with.

AFFINITY GROUPS AND FINGERS

Affinity groups are groups of 5 to 7 people who stay together during the action (as far as possible). These groups are formed on an ›affinity‹ basis, according to which group members trust each other and agree on a certain number of issues before the action (eg. personal limits, desires, arrestability etc.). Affinity groups may be long-term or temporary commitments: some affinity groups have existed and travelled together to Ende Gelände and other actions for years while others are formed at the camps and dissolve after each action.

Although Ende Gelände is a collective mass action, affinity groups are important because they can provide the emotional support needed before, during and after stressful situations (eg. during arrests). They are also important places for decisions like choosing what to do during the action or even leaving it in some cases. Besides, they facilitate quick consensus decision-making during the action: each affinity group designates a delegate to participate in ›spokes councils‹, responsible for making decisions according to the preferences expressed by all delegates (and, by extension, all affinity groups). Finally, affinity groups usually organise debriefing moments after an action, to check in with every-

body and possibly reflect on ways to do things differently in the future. But before that, all affinity groups must pick the ›finger‹ they will join.

A finger is a group of several hundred people with a specific objective (eg. going to the mine, blocking railways, supporting action logistics etc.). Among them, there is a camp finger (people staying at the camp site), which is essential to the action and makes it possible for the people who cannot afford to be arrested to still be part of it. All fingers are briefly presented during action plenaries on the spot so that affinity groups can make their choice, even though some information might not be public out of security reasons. Fingers may adopt a colour code (eg. silver finger), a theme (eg. deforestation) or even a specific action culture (eg. in the queer & feminist finger, activists usually do not run and pay extra attention to care work and gender-neutral language). In order to make the action more accessible to the people with reduced mobility (eg. activists with children, activists who cannot walk far distances or use wheelchairs etc.), we also have a colourful finger which does not include running or climbing into the pit. Fingers may be mainly German or English-speaking, although interpretation within a finger may be organised so that anyone can attend the action despite wherever they come from.

Even though fingers may develop their own identity and usually pursue a common goal, all fingers form together a ›hand‹. Indeed, the hand is formed by all action participants, who wear the

same white suits and masks in order to anonymise activists and increase the sense of belonging. This action structure (based on a hand with five fingers or more) allows flexibility, while acknowledging the collective dimension of the action (eg. if your finger is kettled, it might help another one to reach its objective by tying up police forces). This collective dimension is particularly important when your finger has not reached its initial objective, because it helps to overcome feelings of frustration or disappointment by acknowledging the collective success of an action. On top of the finger's goals, there is indeed an overall goal for each action which is decided by the alliance as a whole beforehand.

EACH ACTION HAS ITS OWN GOALS

In our view, it is important to be clear about the objective of the action in order to politically (re)frame it. Examples of action goals are numerous: blocking the entrance or road to a power plant; blocking railway tracks; reaching and climbing a digger; reaching a certain level in a mine so as to halt production; blocking for a few hours or days and overnight; ending the action on your own terms or when a demand is met. Since there are numerous action goals, it should be clear which one(s) are picked and why. This needs to be communicated to the activists, the media and the public. More specifically, it might be useful to clarify geographically what your goal is: which mine, which digger, which railway track—and why. How do certain physical landmarks ampli-

fy your narrative and story? What would be an empowering goal for activists?

Although it is important to discuss collectively the overall aim of the action, it is also essential to manage different kinds of expectations (number of people, press coverage, coalition building, duration of the camp etc.) and sometimes divergent desired impacts (economic, political, cultural etc.), both before and after the action. That is why we make time during our alliance meetings for lengthy strategic discussions (→ *Chapter Logistics, p. 19*) in order to give voice to the highest number of positions possible and eventually reach a consensus before an action. We also dedicate time to evaluation, to reflect on what worked well or less well in order to improve the next actions.

TACTICAL DIVERSITY IS ANOTHER MAIN FEATURE OF OUR OVERALL STRATEGY

All activists follow the action consensus, which is a framework explaining why and how we are going to do the action. Even though the whole group usually pursues a common goal (eg. blocking coal-mining infrastructures), it does not mean that affinity group cannot organise autonomously. Indeed, as long as they respect the action consensus, groups are free to self-organise. Ende Gelände, as a mass

action, relies on a balance between flexibility and a common purpose, between autonomy and collective consciousness. This flexibility can help to attract both experienced and unexperienced activists, by offering different types of engagement during the action.

Moreover, the action usually includes a demonstration and sometimes also a non-disobedient finger, both for people who are very vulnerable to repression and who should not be taken into custody if possible. Our actions are always synchronised with other demonstrations and smaller actions happening in the same area. For example in Summer 2017, we have developed an 'area concept' together with other groups according to which different kinds of protests (demonstrations, human chains, civil disobedient actions of different sizes etc.) would happen at the same time in the same geographical area. This 'area concept' was a way to increase cooperation and offer multiple ways to act for climate justice.

Indeed, we strongly believe in the power of tactical diversity, that is why we try to build coalitions with many actors with different tactics, from environmental NGOs to Fridays to Future, from local residents to long-term occupations or autonomously acting small groups (→ *Chapter Outreach and Coalitions, p. 9*).



Public Communication

2 Ende Gelände does actions not for its mere sake but to transport the message of climate justice. In the run up to and during the action, we communicate strongly with the (to become) activists and the wider public. Our Mobilization Group focuses more on the activists while our Press Group reaches out to the broader public. In the Social Media Group, both aspects come together. All three groups develop a common and coherent narrative and key message at the beginning of every new preparation cycle.

The most important aspect is that **Ende Gelände announces the action publicly** some months before the action. On the one hand, this gives the possibility to mobilise openly and prepare more participants in advance, and, on the other hand, allows our message to be spread in the (social) media during a longer time frame.

Although Ende Gelände has so far always tackled critical infrastructure of brown coal mines, **the stories were always different**. In 2016, we were the risk for future investors when a brown coal mine was sold. In 2017, we stood in solidarity with the people of the global south when the COP21 took place near the lignite mines. The narrative and key messages are discussed and approved by the whole Ende Gelände alliance. They are based on a thorough analysis of the current political landscape, nationally, locally and internationally. The groups can then work freely on that approved basis.

Although we know about the downsides of twitter, Facebook and co, **we use social media intensively** to shout out our messages directly without any filtering which is prevalent in the traditional media. Getting our message (especially the more radical parts about anticapitalism and climate justice) into the traditional press is always challenging and we had to decide which price we wanted to pay to get our message into the news. One critical point is the **press spokesperson**. The most efficient way would have been to choose the same cis-male white spokespersons every year, as the media most easily picks up on traditional white male leaders. We decided against that and rather opted for a group of rotating FLTI* spokespersons to highlight the queer-feminist values of Ende Gelände.

In general, we try to avoid responding to accusations of violence by the police or the press to have more space for our messages. We provide trainings for our press spokespersons to deal with tricky interview situations. Anyway, the scandalisation of police violence was very successful in the last years. We also have good experience with letting trustworthy journalist accompany activists. This type of **embedded journalism** shows the diversity of our movement and leads often to personal insights into the Ende Gelände experience for the broader public.

Ende Gelände uses an action consensus in a two-fold way. On one hand, we inform and prepare the

activists about the way we do the action. An **action consensus** is a way of performing consensual activism and empowering the participants to the action through clarity. On the other hand, it is a message to the public that no danger or harm comes from us. We are not a wild bunch of rioters but organized activists who say what they do and do what they say.



Outreach and Coalitions

3 Ende Gelände has focused on outreach to other civil society actors and more autonomous informal groups from the beginning on. The idea was that, while Ende Gelände activists do civil disobedience, other institutions sympathetic to the cause of climate justice, coal phase out and climate protection could declare their solidarity with Ende Gelände. They do not necessarily support or endorse what Ende Gelände does. However, such form of tentative careful solidarity can strengthen and amplify our discourse and narrative.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THAT?

We have mandated fixed delegates who work for a defined period as the constant and regular contact persons with NGOs, institutionalised or more autonomous direct action groups. It is a loose mean to stay in touch, exchange ideas, know what the others are doing, share strategies, and discuss dates and relevant climate related topics. These delegates are important to establish a sense of trust and continuity to discuss controversial matters.

Ende Gelände embraces to be one (rather disobedient) constituent among others and has been in contact with many **relevant environmental NGOs and institutionalised groups**. Initially, it was done not only to suss out the potential political fights we could win but also to assess the political landscape and power dynamics at stake. Our goal is to align

forces and seek ways to enhance each other's causes and the struggle for climate justice. The aim is **not** to agree on all terms, goal, tactics and analysis or common actions.

On a spectrum of allies, Ende Gelände not only reaches out to civil society actors, but also to **more autonomous groups** from the climate justice and anti-nuclear movement. The idea is to learn from their tactics, but also to invite them to conduct their own—often more separate and more autonomous—actions. Indeed, we believe that ›a diversity of tactics‹ would enhance our cause.

Collaboration with both sides of the spectrum also mean that **communication in the run up to and during action is crucial** in order to prevent (unintended) distancing in social media and press work. The idea is to avoid judgemental and distancing statements that would discredit actions and groups as ›violent‹, ›bad‹ or ›illegitimate‹. Though this is an ideal state of collaboration and sometimes there is—often harshly voiced—criticism of certain actions that some groups believe harm the cause.

We also find it extremely important to reach out to other movements. The climate crisis is not an ecological crisis, but it is interwoven with various power relations. These different social, political, cultural and economic power relations are inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing. This means that the cli-

mate crisis must be viewed in terms of intersectionality. Understanding and dealing with it as a single issue will not eliminate the underlying causes and it will only fight against certain symptoms.

A special issue we have been tackling is the fight against the **far-right**. So, how is the climate crisis interconnected with the far right? The far right has always seen the cause for the environment and ecology as ›their‹ rightful issue. In the 70s, the question of ecological problems and issues was—according the far right—captured by the left. The biggest problem with the far right is not that they deny climate change, but what happens if they take it seriously and place it on their agenda.

Today, with accelerating climate change, the far right seizes the moment to recapture ›the environment‹ to load it with their nationalistic, racial and ›völkisch‹ (populist) worldview. The far right has always gained from a climate of fear. The supposed havoc that climate change will bring to our social and political systems is a perfect opportunity to push for fascist, authoritarian measures. The existing injustices already apparent in our societies will become even more entrenched and those most marginalised will be excluded and pushed to margins even more. Thirdly, the far right has always prepared for ›day x‹. The far right has stock piled weapons, many are trained in combat and are part of law enforcing institutions (police, military). At ›day x‹ they will seize the moment and take over power and install a fascist order. Increasing climate change, a breakdown of social order, weakened democratic

institutions and social distress are the perfect recipe for the far right to declare ›day x‹.

But what would it mean if the far right takes climate change seriously, diverting from the path of climate change denial? Climate protection—not climate justice, but climate protection—from the far right will mean locating the responsibility and culpability for the climate crisis in migration and refugees. Closing borders in order to protect ›our environment‹; allocating scare resources according the race and nationality are likely scenarios. Measures to protect ›our way of life‹, the imperial mode of production and consumption and defending ›white‹ privileges will be taken at any costs. In such a situation the prospect for climate justice will be slim to non-existent.

This means our fight shall never fall behind the demand for global climate justice. Naming and addressing the climate crisis as a decrying fundamental injustice of our time is a central task for the climate justice movement.

Ende Gelände has a working group called »Against the (far) right«. We work with various groups in the antifascist movement to connect movements and take a stance against the far right. The personal overlap, local proximity and personal contacts are vital in making such collaboration possible.

Internal Plenaries

4 In general, we try to have as many discussions, information and decisions as possible in **open plenary sessions**. This concerns the big alliance meetings, which take place every few months, and where activists from all over Germany (and elsewhere) come together, as well as meetings of local groups or action plenaries. All fundamental decisions concerning the alliance are made in open plenaries. The agenda for plenaries and decisions to be taken are communicated in advance, so that people can prepare and discuss those matters in their local groups, working groups or affinity groups beforehand.

Through these plenaries, we want to make sure that as many people as possible can participate in the process, including new people who can be involved more easily. The plenaries also contribute to the positive atmosphere and sense of belonging.

Large plenary sessions succeed best when they are well prepared and facilitated and when the questions and objectives are clear. Using hand signals simplifies communication and participation. Murmur rounds can liven up the discussion. In addition, we often use quoted speech lists: people who speak for the first time, or who are **FLTI***, **BIPOC** or **disabled** person, are allowed to speak first and thus more often. Our plenaries are in German. Interpretation to English is organised via whispering trans-

lation in dedicated corners or via the technical tool of a spider.



To structure the long days of the alliance meetings using many different methods helps. Apart from plenary sessions we use small breakout groups, which bring their discussions and results back to the plenary in a compact form. Breakout groups can discuss the same topic to give more people the possibility to speak or they can discuss different topics in more depth as it would be possible in the big plenary. Breaks are also important for a successful meeting.

WORKING GROUPS

Much of the work, including the shaping of decisions in the open plenary sessions, takes place in **working groups** (wg). The working groups vary in size, rhythm, work load and continuity. Each working group brings expertise from their field to the process and decisions. Because of these differences, examples are more helpful here than descriptions:

- The Action wg takes care of the exact planning of the action. It works rather secluded due to an increased risk of repression.
- The Action Logistics wg takes care of the material and concrete organisational support of the activists in the action.
- The Camp wg organises the camp for the activists.
- The Finance wg manages and organises the money for the alliance.
- The Press and Social Media wg communicates with representatives of the press and manages the social media channels.
- The Process wg is the greasing oil between the working groups and has all kinds of things on its radar.
- The International wg maintains contact with activists abroad (more information below).
- The Outreach wg and ngo Communication wg are responsible for maintaining contact with external groups or NGOs.
- The Anti-repression structure helps to assess the legal consequences of our actions, to give

recommendations for behaviour and to provide long-term support to activists affected by legal consequences.

- The Mobilisation wg develops our mobilisation material such as stickers, posters, flyers and takes care of the distribution to the local groups.
- The Inclusion wg accompanies and initiates processes that reduce various barriers to our alliance meetings, discussions and actions.

Other working groups are homepage, moderation, police contact, paramedics, security and more.

The working groups coordinate their activities in a regular telephone conference, the coordination platform. This platform is also entitled to make decisions. One delegate from each working group attends the coordination platform with a mandate to participate in decision-making.

LOCAL GROUPS

Besides, there are now **Ende Gelände local groups** in many cities and regions. All local groups are linked on a map on our website. These groups are different in sizes, some of them being composed of only single affinity groups while others are very large. Often, they have emerged from connections that have developed through joint participation in Ende Gelände mass actions. Sometimes, they are long-standing local climate justice groups that work not only in the framework of Ende Gelände, but

also on other issues. Thanks to them, we are very large.

Local groups often carry out local actions and interventions. Furthermore, they are very relevant when it comes to mobilising for our mass actions. The local groups mobilise locally and organise travel to our actions. Sometimes, they also organise large actions themselves, possibly with other local groups. For example, we have seen mass actions in the Rhineland or in Lusatia which were more prepared by the local groups than the (national) alliance's working groups. In this case, there are always regular supra-regional phone calls, where delegates from the various local groups come together.

Because of their high degree of autonomy, the local groups often develop ideas, initiatives and action concepts, which they then bring back to the alliance. The local group in Munich worked for example on the topic of mobility and mobility reversal and had a big interregional action. Political discussions are often held at the level of local groups, where a lot of analysis and strategies develop. The local groups are central to the further development of the alliance and to overcome moments of collective inertia. Last but not least, our regular alliance meetings are hosted by local groups.

For many people, the local groups are the most important political group to which they feel they belong to: there are indeed many people who have been active in local groups for a very long time, but who have never really been involved in the supra-regional process. This has advantages and disadvantages.

DIGITAL TOOLS

In our process, **we use various digital tools**. At the heart of these tools is **the large, unencrypted mailing list**. At each alliance meeting, new people are added to this list, so that everyone who is or has been active in the cross-regional alliance process is on it. This list reaches many people, but of course it is not a place for very sensitive information. We use it to start discussions and new topics, to prepare for and follow up on meetings, to share news from the working groups, and to invite to the regular conference calls or share the results.

Every one or two weeks, the coordination platform—the conference call where delegates of the working groups meet—takes place. For this, we always use the **same conference room** where all participants dial in. Basically there are different providers who provide conference rooms free of charge. We use **a pad for taking minutes**. It also helps to support the moderation, because in the chat of this pad it is possible to raise hand (*), agree (++) or disagree (-). Shared documents are stored in a **cloud** to which people can access via their working groups. Working groups often also have a file storage system, such as *Crabgrass* or *Wachstumswende* (both work in different languages). These systems can also be used to create task lists, start polls (e.g. for finding dates) or lead discussions. Many working groups also use internet telephony/conference calls via internet instead of telephone conferences, for example to avoid telephone costs. Possible pro-



grams with video function are *meet.jit.si* or *Zoom*. *Mumble* does not allow cameras but meets higher security requirements in return. Different messengers for smartphones may also be used, depending on the tasks of the working group.

CONSENSUS—MAKING PLANS TOGETHER

Regarding decision-making, we want to be as participatory as possible in our processes. For the decision-making processes, this means that we want both to enable as many people as possible to participate in the discussions and to hear their voice when decisions are made. We found that the typi-

cal majority decision is not suitable for this since it often ends up in silencing minorities. This type of discussion process is not very creative and does not rely on many different voices. Therefore, we reach our decisions by consensus.

First of all, this means that **we take a lot of time to make decisions**. Agendas are published before alliance meetings, and for important decisions there is a reader that summarises the most important contributions to the debate, based on what has already been shared via our mailing list beforehand. Thus, there is the possibility to pre-discuss positions in our own local groups or affinity groups.

At the alliance meeting itself, very broad debates are opened up. The aim is to listen to and relate all controversial points of view. Sometimes, a feeling arises that the proposals diverge more and more instead of coming together; but this opens up space for creative ideas. In order to bring the different ideas back together to form a proposal as a basis for decision, we regularly form »controversial small groups« in which different positions and working groups who have to implement the decision in a particular way are represented, in order to develop such proposal. These groups must not exceed a certain size to be effective.

When the group decides on the proposal, there is not only the possibility to agree or disagree. Instead, there are six levels to which people can assign themselves. They are asked one after the other:

- ◉ **Minor concerns**—I think the proposal is basically good and I agree with it, but I have minor concerns. People get asked if they want to verbalize their concerns once again so that they can be taken into account when the proposal is put to work.
- ◉ **Major concerns**—I have major concerns but I agree nonetheless. Again, the persons can verbalize their concerns. If there are too many concerns and there is the space and time, the decision-making process will go through another round to produce a proposal that responds to these concerns.
- ◉ **Stand aside**—I let the proposal pass, but I am not involved in the practical implementation. This may be the case if I find the proposal (politically) wrong but do not want to stop the group. Many stand asides or stand asides of structures needed for implementation of the proposal lead to a new round of decision-making.
- ◉ **Veto**—I think the proposal contradicts our fundamental goals and ideas, this decision must not be taken. For us, one veto is sufficient to reject a proposal for the whole group. The process has to go through a new round or the decision cannot be taken.
- ◉ **Agreement**—I think the proposal is good and I agree!
- ◉ **Abstention**—I cannot take a decision because, for example, I arrived too late for the discussion.

All votes are documented in the minutes. We have had very good experience with this model. But of course, consensus must be practised! This applies to the moderation, who must interpret the results and make process suggestions. But it also applies to the group as a whole, which must learn to get involved in the processes.

Attention should also be paid to the **various barriers that exclude persons or groups of persons from the decision-making process.** These can include male-dominant speech behaviour, rooms that are not wheelchair accessible, a lack of awareness for racism in our structures, academic language, dependency on translation, plenary sessions that are too long, and many more.

A problem we are currently working on is that our plenary is now too large for holding good discussions. Therefore, we are experimenting with new forms of discussion, such as a council system which work similar to decision-making during actions (see below), in order to achieve a higher level of participation.

LONG TERM PLANNING

Our actions usually require a long time for preparation. The dates of our mass actions are often announced months in advance. Therefore decisions often have to be made months before our actions take place. Usually we make plans for about a year and the debate in advance takes one to three months. Various local groups, working groups and other structures use the mailing list, for example, to give their opinions on what they consider to be the politically exciting points of intervention in the coming period, what an action framework should look like, and what lies within their available capacities. Ideally, it will also be coordinated with the annual plans of other groups. This long-term planning enables us to have complex actions. We choose our topics ourselves and do not make them dependent on daily events. This way, we have a major political discussion and analysis at least once a year. More importantly, long-term planning also allows (working) groups and individuals to organise their time and structure their year. This is an important basis for sustainable activism. On the other hand, long-term planning may be a hurdle to react flexibly to spontaneous events—whenever we have to, it is an exhausting feat of strength.

DECISION-MAKING DURING ACTIONS

During actions, what we usually try to avoid often happens: there is not much time to make decisions, or they have to be made in stressful situations. Albeit to a lesser extent, this is similar with decisions that are made at the camp before an action. Here, we use **a system of spokes councils**. Affinity groups discuss the issues to be debated and send a delegate to this spokes council which takes decisions, if necessary after further consultation with the affinity groups. In this situation, the multi-stage consensus procedure (see above) can also be used, but is usually shortened. It is often only a matter of finding out what people are up to, as well as questioning serious concerns about the possible behaviour of other affinity groups. The action consensus described above is the basis for this.

It is very important to keep the spokes council protected and make sure that the police isn't able

to listen. For this purpose, it can help to form a very tight, multi-rowed circle which is shielded by people. Also the spokes council should work uninterrupted by constant new ›information‹ from outside. It can make sense to have ›filter persons‹ to whom new, important information can be given and who will carry it into the plenary if necessary.

Plenaries always slow down the dynamics in an action because they require time. That is why they are more suitable during a blockade or a police kettle than when a spot has to be reached and when moving is important. But even then they sometimes make sense, for example when many activists are much stressed and experience the action as negative. Plenary sessions can be a way to gather and support each other in that kind of stressful situation.



Logistics

5 In 2015, Ende Gelände was lucky to start its first action from the amazing Climate Camp Rhineland. The **big advantage to start a mass action from a climate camp** is that activists and the people involved in the structure have time and space to prepare themselves properly. Another advantage is that people that are attracted by the Climate Camp and its program in the first place get encouraged to take part in the action as well. A camp provides easier and more direct communication between the working groups due to short distances. And it creates the feeling of belonging together: not only the people going into the action are part of Ende Gelände but also those doing the background task.

In Ende Gelände we have a **Camp Working Group (wg)** that provides the infrastructure of the camp (camping area, group tents, toilets, ...) and that works closely with supporting groups (kitchen, electricity, camp security etc.). The Camp wg started its work after the existing climate camps said that Ende Gelände was getting too big to be hosted anymore. One of its major and most time consuming tasks is always to find a camp site with appropriate camping conditions (eg. large enough, access to running water ...) and which also makes it a suitable starting point for the action (eg. distance to possible targets, connection to public transport). To keep

costs low, it is important that the Camp wg has a good network for lending material.

In case of lack of suitable area or legal obstacles, it is also possible to do a mass action without a camp, like in the Ende Gelände actions in November 2017 and November 2019. In any case, large gathering points for action trainings, briefings and get-togethers afterwards are needed.

Moreover, **no action is possible without an Action Logistics wg**. This group takes care of the material that activists need in the action (eg. white suits, masks, straw bags). There is always a trade-off between what should or should not be provided centrally, giving the activists what they need without making the action an all-inclusive weekend trip. The Action Logistics wg also tries to outsource preparation work, e.g. a lot of local groups prepare the white suits themselves and the working groups of Ende Gelände take care of their own material (e.g. phones and computers for the Press Team). During the action, the Logistics wg makes sure that activists get water, food and shelter (if possible).

A big challenge for both the Action Logistics wg and the Camp wg is the storage of material in between two actions and the transport of material before, during and after the action. For that, it is advantageous to have good contacts to people with big sheds and garages and big cars and transporters.



**Burn Borders
not Coal!**



Going International

6 Our International Working Group (wg) is in charge of mobilising activists in other countries and convince them to attend the Ende Gelände actions and vice versa: it is also mobilising German activists to attend other European actions. This mobilisation task is divided along ›country coordinators‹, who are people in charge of keeping close contacts with activists (or even Ende Gelände local groups when they exist) in other European countries, either because they are based in this country or because they have a specific affinity with this country (and usually speak the language(s) of such country). Being a ›country coordinator‹ might involve a variety of assignments, including answering emails and making the link with other working groups, attending information events and even information tours to help mobilisation, helping with bus organisation ...

A key aspect of international mobilisation is to **ensure interpretation on the action camp**, so that international activists are included in the action plenaries (usually in German) and the action itself. The International wg is also in charge of finding interpreters before the action and has ›interpretation coordinators‹. Given the links with activists in other countries, it is possible to see in advance which languages are strongly needed (eg. if three buses are planned from Spain, it might make sense to provide interpretation to Spanish). Then, a call of interpret-

ers is launched via different European-wide mailing lists and several online meetings are organised to explain to future interpreters how things are going to happen.

Another dimension of international work is **information exchange**, which involves selecting and translating appropriate information so that local groups in other European countries can have the practical and background information needed to mobilise and to build a narrative which is relevant to their context. Indeed, the wg makes sure all necessary information on the website is translated in all necessary languages to facilitate local groups' mobilisation work. However, instead of translating everything by themselves, members of the wg rather ask a pool or volunteers to translate. Information exchange has a practical dimension which helps mobilisation work, by spreading information about action dates (including suggested dates for arrival and departure), location, trainings and action forms, interpretation on the camp, legal briefing, packing list etc. Moreover, translation work is more than just language-related, it also involves not only providing information about coal-mining developments in Germany but also showing its international dimension by stressing different sources of injustice that are relevant for climate justice activists outside Germany (eg. pollutions and greenhouse gas emissions, forced displacements, limits

to protest rights etc.). This selection and translation work takes place before and after the **Ende Gelände** actions.

ENDE GELÄNDE GOES EUROPE

Our International wg also coordinates **skill-share and support to other actions in other European countries**. Although **Ende Gelände** has always supported other European climate justice groups by providing skill-share and mobilising to their actions, this support has been formalised in 2018 with the launch of a proper campaign called **»Ende Gelände Goes Europe« (EGGE)**. This formalisation does not impede us from supporting other groups in more informal ways, though. Since 2018, we have supported through EGGE other European mass actions of civil disobedience against fossil fuels. In 2018, we supported Code Rood's blockade against fossil gas in Groningen (Netherlands), and Limity Jsme My's action against brown coal mining (Czech Republic). In 2019, our support went to Reclaim the Powers's action against the hostile environment and a gas fired power station (UK), and to actions in Venice with No Grandi Navi (Italy). Those included an action against big cruise ships and an action at the Venice film festival, protesting against Hollywood's blockbusting of climate change as an entertaining event. In 2020, the EGGE campaign supports 3 actions: **»Shell Must Fall«** in The Hague (Netherlands), a mass action by **»RadiAction«** targeting the nuclear industry (France), and the Turów action against coal-mining (Poland). This support depends on each

local groups' needs and the alliance's capacities but usually involves: mobilising by spreading the word about those campaigns and actions in Germany and across Europe, organising collective transport to those actions from Germany, supporting with outreach to the media and actual press work, devising/ supporting the planning of mass actions for large numbers of people, fostering the implementation of a more queer-feminist organising style, organising action plenaries, helping building web interface to organise sleeping spaces etc.

Finally, our International wg members also regularly takes part in strategic discussions with European comrades, for example by attending meetings of the Climate Justice Action network (CJA). CJA is the European network for climate justice which meets once or twice a year in order to discuss strategies, provide skill-sharing or exchange dates about

planned actions throughout Europe.



WHITE SUITS AND MASKS

Ende Gelände is often asked why we wear those white suits and masks during our actions. Over time, they have become a defining feature of mass actions of civil disobedience across Europe (even the world?). There are a number of reasons one might choose to wear white suits when blocking illegally yet legitimately a filthy lignite coal mine with many people:

- You might want to protect yourself against filth, dust, sometimes mud that is largely found in coal mines, across railway tracks and around power stations—the kind of visible filth associated with extracting and burning fossil energy
- Unfortunately government has not been able to read the signs and—believe it or not—the extraction and combustion of lignite coal is not banned (yet). By this logic preventing such dirty business operations and disrupting this model of generating profit at the cost of millions of people across the globe is illegal. The state, police and the courts try their best to prosecute, punish and thus suppress legitimate acts of civil disobedience that express public sentiment. But how about if it is hard to identify any individual cause because all of them wear those damn white suits and masks making it impossible to really prove whose done it.
- Ende Gelände did not pop up out of nowhere. There is a long history of civil disobedience and Ende Gelände draws on a large number of traditions and tactics. The Tute Bianche, an Italian social movement, active from 1994 to 2001 wore white overalls at one of their early demonstrations resisting the eviction of a squatted social centre. As one story goes, they wore those white overalls to evoke the ghosts that would haunt the empty social centre if the police were to succeed. White was chosen as a symbol of the youth workforce, mostly precarious, working on short term labour contracts, without rights or guarantees. In Germany, white suits were worn at anti nuclear actions in the German region of the Wendland in 2011 and 2012 with the campaign Castor Schottern¹. In the Rhineland, white suits were also worn at the first action at the edge of the mine in 2014. In short, white suits are not unique to Ende Gelände nor are they an exclusive trademark of Ende Gelände. Those suits illustrate the wide tradition and history that Ende Gelände draws from.
- Wearing suits, whichever colour has been picked up by many others across Europe. In 2016 activists in the UK wore red suits when blocking a coal mine in South Wales, drawing on the red lines created in Paris. In Spain in 2017 activists entering a waste dump near San Sebastian (Donosti) wore white suits. Others pick the more





›traditional‹ black when protesting. Ende Gelände opted tongue in cheek for white rather than black suits, concluding that white might be perceived as a more friendly colour than black. But whatever colour one might wear, we insist that All Colours Are Beautiful.

- What goes for the white suits goes for the masks: Lignite mining is truly a dirty, toxic business. The dust can have long term effects on your health as countless studies have shown. We consider it rightful, possibly even as our duty to minimise harm. If the nice side effect of wearing a mask is to disallow the authorities to identify you, we—let’s say—are happy to pay the price.
- We are aware that thousands of people wearing the same garment creates in a positive sense a form of unity during the actions. But we are also aware that a white suit might make you not necessarily less distinguishable to those hostile to our cause. We know that other traits defining people can not so easily be hidden. A white suit does not provide cover if your skin colour or hair differs to those around you. Especially now with Covid-19 a white suit and masks can be a traumatising reminder of isolation, loss and death that came with the pandemic.

OVERVIEW OF SOME PLACES OF DESTRUCTION AND RESISTANCE

HAMBURG

GRONINGEN

Code Rood carried out actions in Groningen and Amsterdam. Ende Gelände supported this group in the context of »Ende Gelände goes Europe«.

AMSTERDAM

In Datteln, a new hard coal-fired power plant went on line in 2020—breaking political concessions made the year before.

DATTELN

Lusatia is a place of coal fields with 3 mines: Since 2010: climate camps. 2016: Successful Ende Gelände action, the mining infrastructures were blocked during 3 days.

BERLIN

Turów is the location of a lignite mine and one of the largest power plants in Poland.

LUSATIA MINING

Leipziger land (or middle German region) has coal fields as well. Since 2018: climate camps.

LEIPZIG

TURÓW PLANT

HAMBACHER FOREST

COLOGNE

The Rhineland is a place of coal fields with 3 mines: Since 2009: DIY climate camps and small groups. Since 2012: Hambacher forest occupation, which got worldwide visibility during its 2018 eviction. Hambi became a powerful symbol against the destructive lignite industry. Since 2015: 5 Ende Gelände mass actions.

BÍLINA MINE

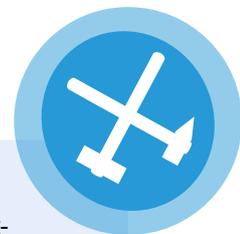
PRAGUE

Limity Jsme My carried out actions against coal-mining in Czech Republic. Ende Gelände supported this group in the context of »Ende Gelände goes Europe«.

In all lignite mining areas (Rhineland, Lusatia, Leipziger land) there are small villages which are threatened by the growing mines. The inhabitants are at risk of being evicted and their homes destroyed. The Climate Movement supports their networking and resistance.

MUNICH

About us



Ende Gelände is and has always been part of a broad European climate justice movement. We, the International Working Group, coordinate the transnational networking of Ende Gelände and maintain contact with activists, groups and alliances in Europe and beyond.

We are available for all international participants before and during our mass actions. We make sure that all important information is translated into several languages.

To strengthen the international climate justice movement and to learn from each other, we organise skill sharing. For this purpose we visit our international comrades or hold video conferences.

Since 2018, Ende Gelände has been mobilising every year as »Ende Gelände goes Europe« campaign for several mass actions outside Germany (→ *Chapter Going International, p. 21*). We take care of this cooperation and keep close contact with the organizing groups in the planning period. We enable exchange of experience, skill share and support through Ende Gelände structures.

Last but not least, we bring the international perspectives into the Ende Gelände alliance. We also contribute to the Climate Justice Action Network.

The members of the working group live in different countries (most of them not in Germany), so our working language is English. We also run a mailing list to exchange important current information in English.

If you want to support us with a donation, you can alternatively donate via Bitcoin or directly to us via bank transfer:

Recipient: Ende Gelände
IBAN: DE48 4306 0967 1120 8464 00
BIC: GENODEM1GLS

You can find all the information regarding donations here: <https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/donations/>

If you would like to join us, or want to contact us, please do not hesitate to send us a message! You can contact us here:

international@ende-gelaende.org

On our website you can find information in English and some other languages:

<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/>

More background information on »Ende Gelände goes Europe« can be found here:

<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/egge/>

And as a podcast here:

<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/podcast/#3>

You can access the Climate Justice Action Network (CJA) website here:

<https://climatejusticeaction.net/en/>

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There are many ways to fight for climate justice. Ende Gelände is part of an impressive and broad movement.

In the past few years, we have seen an increasing number of disobedient collectives all over the world and we are frequently asked about the way we prepare and carry-out our actions. That is why we would like to contribute to the growth of our movement by making our strategic, tactical, and organising choices more visible.

With this brochure, we hope we can help emergent collectives to better grasp how mass actions may look like and what they might involve in terms of organisation!

We want climate justice, and we want it now. Let's fight for it!