

2021

# People and planet: Making the case.

clientearth.org

ClientEarth<sup>®</sup>

“Once something becomes law, it becomes actionable and enforceable. Shortly afterwards, it becomes ‘common sense’.

It becomes possible for a small group of people to use the law to trigger big changes. The task is pretty daunting but the rewards are huge.”

— Brian Eno, *musician, artist and ClientEarth trustee*



## A singular crisis needs a collective effort.

As individuals, there are lots of ways to fight environmental breakdown. But the progress is incremental.

As part of ClientEarth, you're creating seismic change. You can take on governments, hold businesses to account, change financial markets. One well-placed, hard-won legal

victory can change the system. Enough of them can change the future.

That future can be one in which people and planet thrive together. It's not only possible, it's essential. It's this vision that we fight for every single day, using the most powerful tool citizens have: the law.

2010

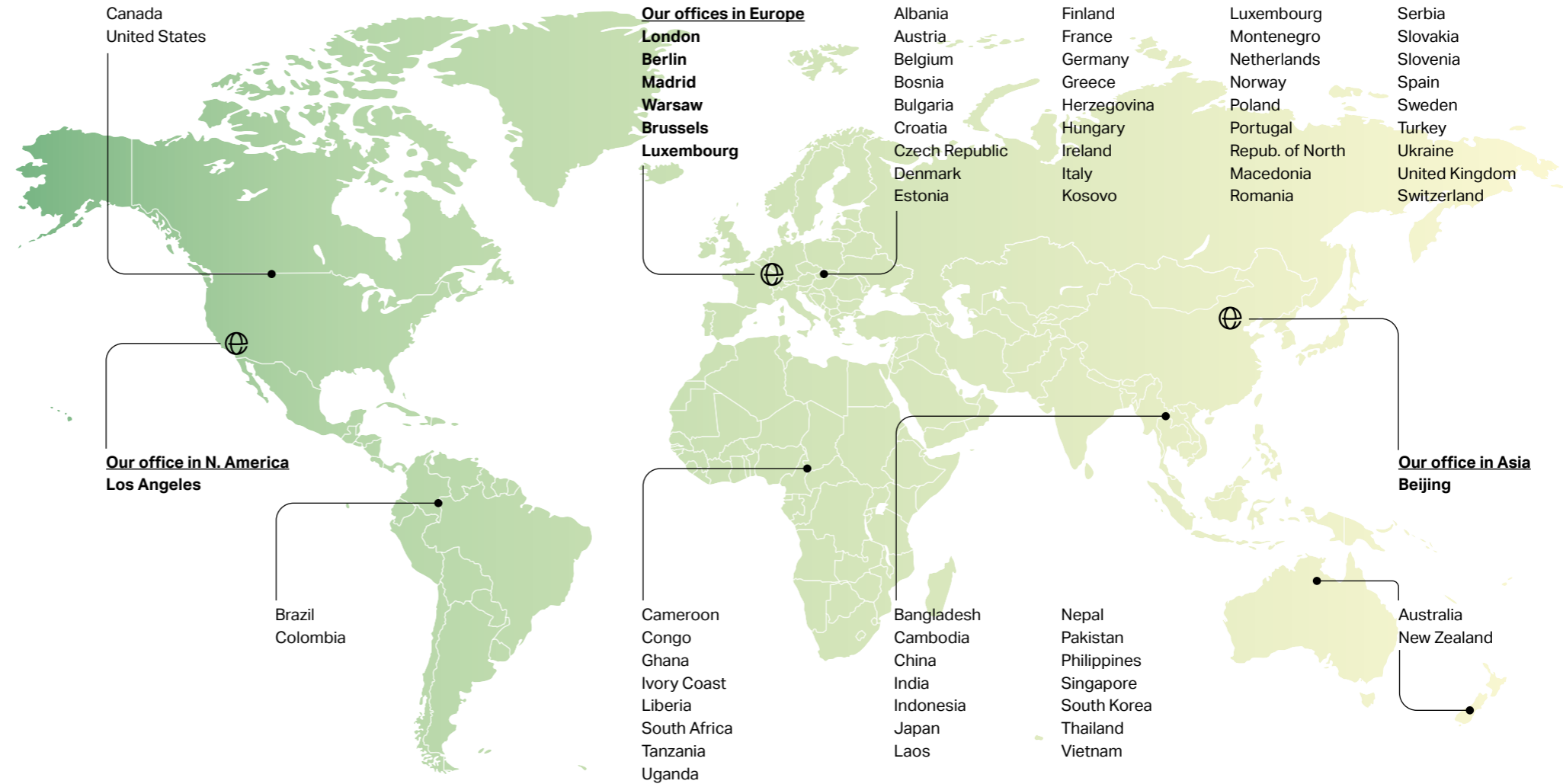
ClientEarth advises Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's 'Fish Fight' campaign. 760,000 people sign up, and overfishing is outlawed.

2011

We help write a new EU illegal logging law, banning the import of illegally harvested rainforest timber.

ClientEarth launches the EU Aarhus Centre, helping people use the law to protect themselves and their environment.

# Where we work



## We work on behalf of people.

We fight to strengthen citizens' laws and work to make sure everyone can access them.

A senior lawyer for ClientEarth is paid just under half of what they would get at a commercial law firm.

## We work in partnership.

We work in coalition with local individuals, communities, NGOs and other organisations, merging our experience with their on-the-ground expertise.

## We build better foundations.

We work with businesses to create robust legal frameworks, and train experts to uphold them.

## We secure stronger laws.

We work with legislators to strengthen planned laws and challenge existing ones.

## We hold power to account.

We monitor how laws are implemented and upheld, and force corporations and governments to be wholly accountable for their actions.

## We change the game.

We mount high-profile campaigns that change the conversation and force action.

## We get results.

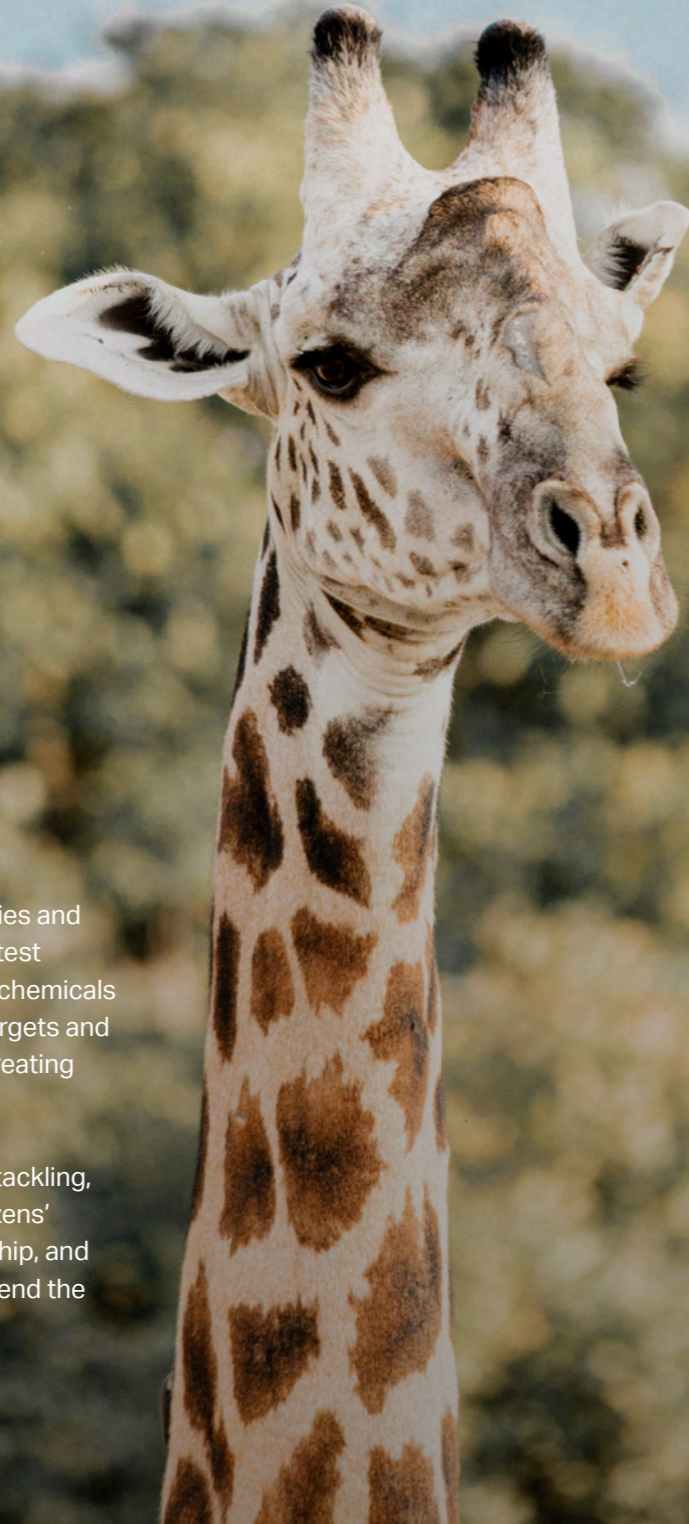
We aim to achieve the greatest possible impact and create precedents that can be taken up worldwide.

2012

Following our action, the Supreme Court declares the UK Government in breach of clean air laws.

We lodge a first-of-its-kind brief in the US to defend the Environmental Protection Agency's power to regulate carbon emissions.

# In our sights



We go after the worst-offending industries and institutions where we can have the greatest impacts: coal, plastics, finance, forests, chemicals and much more. We choose strategic targets and actions that set powerful precedents, creating opportunities for others to follow suit.

Wherever we work, and whatever we're tackling, our approach is the same: establish citizens' access to the law, work in local partnership, and use our expertise to strengthen and defend the laws that protect people and planet.

2013

We help draft the new EU Fisheries Law to ensure more sustainable fishing practices.



## Ending coal power

There's no doubt: coal power is the biggest contributor to the climate crisis.

We intend to end coal – globally. We block coal-fired plants and mines, both planned and existing. We defend communities' rights to protect their homes and ecosystems. We win groundbreaking legal victories that cut coal off from the finance it needs to continue business as usual.

Successful litigation against coal plants costs about €270k per plant in Europe. In Asia alone, we have 400+ plants to stop.

### So far, we've:

- Launched 72 legal actions against coal.
- Stopped or shut 48 large coal plants across Europe.
- Forced 15 national governments to move beyond coal.
- Prevented the construction of a huge new coal plant in Poland.
- Forced the owners of the worst carbon emitter in Europe, Belchatow coal plant, to plan its shutdown.
- Challenged the legality of government subsidies to dirty coal companies.

**2014** In Gabon, our first-of-its-kind 'forest law bible' enables local communities to protect and preserve the forests they depend on.



## Plastics: preventing oil's 'plan B'

Each year, about 335 million tonnes of plastic is produced – equivalent to the combined weight of every human on the planet.

Making a single plastic bottle uses the energy equivalent to filling it a quarter-full of oil. As energy generation moves away from fossil fuels, plastics are fast becoming the biggest driver of oil demand – but we're fighting it.

In Belgium, Europe's largest petrochemical company plans to build a €3 billion plant. We're using the power of the law to shut down construction before it can begin.

**2015** We win a second air pollution case against the UK Government in the Supreme Court.

## The future of forests

Since 1990, the world has lost areas of forest equivalent to the size of South Africa.

Forests are a critical piece of the battle against climate change, and home to some of the world's most diverse ecosystems. We're working to protect our forests for generations to come.

We're focused on reducing demand and supply. Less demand means less deforestation: we secure tougher laws and enforcement in countries where illegal timber (and other forest products) end up. We also prevent illegal logging at the source, collaborating with local communities, legal experts and NGOs.



**2016** In China, we begin training judges and prosecutors – more than 1500 to date – to uphold environmental law.



## Saving our seas

About 820 million people worldwide depend on fishing for their livelihoods.

Oceans are essential to life on earth. But the threats they face are many: chemical and plastic pollution, overfishing, loss of biodiversity, global heating and acidification.

We make sure marine laws are robust, and enforced. We push for better fisheries management and responsible fishing practices. We tightened EU-wide plastics legislation to reduce devastating marine pollution. We also established the powerful Sustainable Seafood Coalition – now a beacon of best practice for the industry worldwide.

Working with local partners, we block Polnoc, the largest new coal power plant in Europe.

## Coming clean about chemicals

60% of all chemicals in production are hazardous to the environment, and 40% to human health.

Behind the scenes, powerful corporations are lobbying hard to block or delay regulation that would prevent contamination of our water, soil and air. We're taking them on. With other NGOs, we secured a radical change: under new law, EU institutions must publish their studies on the safety of chemicals that end up in our food, including pesticides – telling people the truth about their harmful effects.



2017

After 10 years, the UN upholds our demand that EU citizens must be able to go to court to protect the environment.

With our input, Ghana passes a landmark forest law. It becomes the blueprint for similar laws in Ivory Coast and Republic of Congo.

Environmental funders vote ClientEarth the UK's most effective environmental charity.

## Cleaner air, liveable cities



Breathing polluted air causes around 400,000 early deaths across the EU each year.

We're working with citizens and organisations to slash illegal air pollution and realise a new vision of cities with people at their heart.

In the UK, ClientEarth has won three major court cases against the government, forcing action to drastically improve air quality. A ban on the sale of petrol and diesel cars from 2030 has been

announced in the UK. In Germany, we brought more than 40 cases, forcing a radical shift towards electric. We're helping clean up Krakow's air with wins that have banned domestic burning of solid coal and wood. Now we're working in Belgium, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland to ensure they follow suit.

In London, the resulting rollout of the Ultra Low Emissions Zone saw a 29% reduction in NOx emissions in its first six months.

## Changing terms of business

Scientists warn that we have just 10 years to stop global warming going above 1.5 degrees, beyond which drought, floods and extreme heat will affect hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

Meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement – the first universal, legally binding agreement to keep global warming to well below 2°C – will require radical change in our laws, economies, policies and businesses. But political and corporate will is often too weak or too slow for the task.

We're working to ensure governments establish climate laws, plans, policies and targets to meet their commitment to the Agreement. We monitor and challenge the worst-performing countries to slash their emissions.

We're focusing on corporations too, fighting to force companies to be responsible under law for the emissions and climate change they create. We've thwarted the UK's plans to build Europe's largest gas plant and forced BP to pull its multi-million pound greenwashing campaign.

Next, we're cutting off finance to climate-destroying industries. Our influence persuaded the European Investment Bank to end all lending to fossil fuels in 2021. We're pressuring the pension sector to come clean to investors about the extent of their investment in climate-wrecking projects, and we're taking on the banking sector too.



2018

We launch the Clean Air Parents Network, pressuring the UK Government to clean up illegal air pollution.

We win our third victory on air pollution in the High Court. The judge praises us as "a valuable monitor" of the UK Government and its inaction.

2019

We win a world-first climate risk case preventing the construction of Europe's last coal-fired power station.

Our legal action saves one of Europe's last primeval forests, Poland's Bialowieza, from destruction.



## ClientEarth in numbers

# 48

polluting coal power plants blocked since 2007 – including 60 million tonnes of CO2 emissions prevented annually in Poland alone.

# 100+

organisations globally work in partnership with us.

# 28

EU countries were forced to tackle dirty air after our court victory against UK Government inaction on air pollution.

# 10 cities

in Germany banned dirty diesel after our successful actions.

# 100,000

legal challenges launched in China against polluting businesses and government since we began work in 2017.

# 2 months

after our complaint, BP withdraws its greenwashing advertising campaign.

# €100,000

fine levied against the Polish Government for each day they allowed illegal logging to continue in Bialowieza Forest. Logging stopped immediately.

# 80%

of UK supermarkets voluntarily sign up to stringent environmental standards as members of our Sustainable Seafood Coalition.

# Where to now?

To meet the scale of the challenge before us, we're expanding and scaling up as swiftly as we can.

## In Europe:

- Pursuing world-first cases protecting rights to clean air.
- Pressuring finance leaders to align their investments with the Paris Agreement.
- Litigating against governments illegally using pesticides banned in the EU.

## Elsewhere:

- Bringing our innovative climate finance strategies to the US, to impact the world's largest financial markets.
- Laying the groundwork to expand our crucial forests work to Brazil.
- Working with the EU, the UN and China to protect biodiversity.
- Post-Brexit, we're shaping the future of UK environmental policy – stronger laws, powerful oversight bodies and a more positive vision of nature's place in our society.

## We're taking everything we've learned to Asia:

- Working with national partners on legal interventions across Asia, including in Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines.
- Working to protect forests in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia by securing communities' legal rights to manage them.
- Recruiting our team, building partnerships, and looking to open a new base in the region.

## In China:

- Training judges and prosecutors to protect the environment.
- Helping to write and implement tougher environmental laws.
- Promoting greener overseas investments and trade, including the Belt and Road Initiative.
- Improving co-operation between the EU and China on the environment.

We're already using the law to prevent the development of more than 7GW of new coal power capacity in Japan and South Asia.





# It's our world. These are our laws. This is our work – join us.

Our work is making a real and lasting difference for the planet and all that inhabit it. Thanks to the generosity and vision of our supporters, we have achieved a great deal.

However, there is much more to do – will you join us?

You can help our work by making a gift, or become a regular supporter online by visiting:

**[clientearth.org/join-us/community](http://clientearth.org/join-us/community)**

Or you can get in touch and start the conversation about how you can make an impact. We would love to hear from you.

**[clientearth.org/supportus](http://clientearth.org/supportus)**

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