

Statewatch Activity report 2022



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This is a truncated version of our annual report and accounts, which are available [here](#).

Statewatch produces and promotes critical research, policy analysis and investigative journalism to inform debates, movements and campaigns for civil liberties, human rights and democratic standards. We began operating in 1991 and are based in London.

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statewatch.org

(+44) (0) 203 393 8366

c/o MayDay Rooms

88 Fleet Street

London EC4Y 1DH

UK



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Introduction

Rights, freedom and democracy: the struggle is continuous

In a media and information environment dominated by clickbait, sensationalism, misinformation and outright propaganda, the work of *Statewatch* remains uniquely valuable for its commitment to cold, hard, facts; clear and critical analysis; and straightforward language.

In the midst of multiple ongoing crises that are, in various ways, being used to enhance state power and accelerate militarisation and ‘securitisation’ – wars, the mass displacement of people, racism, the growing normalisation of the far-right, huge increases in the cost of living, ecological devastation – we have continued to carry out our core task of providing critical research, policy analysis and investigative journalism that aims to contribute to the movements and struggles that seek to address them.

In 2022, we did so in the framework of the new strategic plan that we drew up over the course of 2021. This is the first time that *Statewatch* has adopted such a detailed, long-term plan. It does not introduce any fundamental changes in what we do or why, but has provided an invaluable framework and reference to guide our work, clarity over our objectives, and has already led to some important achievements.

Our first overarching objective is to strengthen civil society’s access to information. In 2022, the primary means by which we pursued this objective was by providing direct access to official documentation that would otherwise not be public: we published more than 100 documents that allow people to see for themselves what is normally discussed behind closed doors, enabling interventions by civil society organisations into secretive legislative deliberations that should take place in public, democratic fora.

Our second overarching objective is to expose and challenge new means of surveillance, coercion and control. We have undertaken in-depth investigations into the externalisation of EU border controls, the new powers granted to EU police agency Europol, post-Brexit policing and security cooperation between the UK and EU, and published an in-depth guide to the EU’s ballooning security budgets.

These issues may not always have immediate impact, nor obvious media appeal – but they represent broader structural changes in state activity that will have a substantial impact over the years to come. The fact that many of our investigations from previous years continue to be cited by other civil society organisations demonstrates the long-term value of this approach.

At the same time, we have also sought to address more ‘immediate’ issues. Our work on the EU’s Artificial Intelligence Act has contributed to a vital civil society effort to seek human rights protections in a law that, if it does as its drafters intend, will shape the global regulatory environment for a key technology for many years to come, and which will have substantial effects on policing, security, immigration and criminal justice policy. Equally, our news service continued to provide a vital source of information to campaigners, advocacy organisations and journalists seeking up-to-date information: over the course of 2022, we published almost 160 news articles to draw attention to key developments in ongoing legislative and policy discussions.

The third overarching objective set out in our strategic plan is to build a more effective and sustainable organisation. This has required making more time for one-to-one discussions between the director and other staff, ensuring that questions of training, learning and staff development are regularly discussed, and that any problems or concerns can be frankly and openly discussed. It has also required an improvement in material conditions: despite our work largely being financed by grants for projects, in 2022 it was possible to institute a pay increase for all staff. As always, the board has been invaluable in providing advice, guidance and support with these and other questions.

These improvements should not disguise the fact that all our work was carried out on a limited budget and with extremely limited staff time – a total of just 14 working days per week. The size of the organisation is a constant surprise to people familiar with our work but unfamiliar with our internal administration, and the amount achieved in 2022, as every year, is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the staff, the board and *Statewatch's* network of contributors and volunteers.

As this report demonstrates well, 2022 was another productive year for *Statewatch*. Our reporting, analysis and publications continue to be widely-used by advocacy groups, campaigning organisations, lawyers and many others, and our work is regularly featured in the press across Europe and the wider world, influencing public and political debate. Our audience continues to grow steadily and our work is considered reliable, authoritative and timely. The question for 2023 and beyond is how to build upon these foundations so that we can more effectively contribute to the movements for rights, freedoms and democracy that are so desperately needed in Europe and beyond.

Chris Jones
Executive Director

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Objective 1

Strengthen civil society's access to information

Key developments and impact

Pushing for transparency at EU agencies

In 2022 we continued to seek implementation of the new access to documents framework for EU justice and home affairs agencies that was set out by the European Ombudsman, in response to a [successful complaint we filed in 2020](#).

159 news articles and 8 in-depth analyses

In 2022 we published 159 news articles (an average of three per week) and eight in-depth analyses, providing a vital resource for activists, researchers, journalists, civil society organisations, and others. Over the years, the news section of our website received almost 140,000 hits.

100+ official documents made public

Along with those articles we made more than 100 official documents (primarily from the Council of the EU) public, providing access to key primary sources on crucial policy-making and legislative discussions.

39 citations in 19 media outlets

Our work received 39 citations in 19 media outlets operating across seven individual countries, as well as regionally and globally, including *la Repubblica* (Italy), *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong/global), *Público* (Spain) and *Wired* (global).

24 public citations by civil society organisations

Our work received citations in public reports by at least 24 civil society organisations including *Algorithm Watch*, *Human Rights Watch*, the *Global Investigative Journalism Network*, the *Mixed Migration Centre* and *ProAsyl*.

Our work has also been used for advocacy by organisations including *European Council on Refugees and Exiles*, *Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migration*, *European Digital Rights* and *Amnesty International*.

8 citations in institutional publications

Our work was cited in seven reports produced for the European Parliament, as well as the Danish government's foreign policy and security strategy.

Objective 2

Expose and challenge new means of surveillance, coercion and control

Key developments and impact

5 in-depth reports

We published five in-depth investigative reports in 2022, examining:

- [post-Brexit EU-UK policing and security cooperation](#);
- [the use of new biometric technologies by European police forces](#);
- [the EU's ballooning security and migration budgets](#);
- [the EU's proposed Artificial Intelligence Act and the need to include protections for migrants and refugees](#); and
- [the expanded powers granted to EU policing agency Europol](#).

2 public events

We organised two online public events in 2022, with a total of 148 attendees in 32 different countries, primarily in Europe but also Canada, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey and the United States of America:

- [AI at the borders: Negotiations, regulations and fundamental rights](#)
- [Secrecy and the externalisation of EU migration control](#)

Dozens of news articles

Through our regular publication of news on key topics – the expansion and implementation of identity databases, the development of new security technologies, the expansion of police powers, the reinforcement of border controls, and the growing powers of EU agencies, we continued to provide a vital source of information for other civil society organisations, journalists, activists, researchers, lawyers and many others.

2 evidence submissions

We coordinated a joint submission to the European Parliament's Frontex Scrutiny Working Group drafted by members of our Frontex researchers' network, and submitted a [response to a European Commission's call for evidence](#) for its evaluation of the 2019 Frontex Regulation.

1 interactive map

We launched [an interactive map](#) to help people inform and educate themselves about the EU's vast biometric identity infrastructure for policing and migration. The map will serve as a long-term resource that can be expanded and edited as the EU's "interoperability" infrastructure is developed further.

2 joint position papers

Working with other members of *European Digital Rights (EDRi)* and staff from the *EDRi* office in Brussels, we supported the drafting of two position papers on important new EU legislation: the [Artificial Intelligence Act](#) and the [Prüm network of police databases](#).

2 parliamentary questions

Our research was used as the basis for two questions put forward in the European Parliament, on the issues of the surveillance, artificial intelligence and algorithms to be used against people travelling to the EU; and the extensive new powers given to EU police agency Europol. The questions were directed to Frontex and Europol officials and the chief executive of Europol, respectively. The information provided in response was neither particularly detailed nor useful, but the questions themselves demonstrate the value of our work to elected representatives.

1 meeting with MEPs

Our Executive Director, Chris Jones, met with a delegation of MEPs from the European Parliament's LIBE committee, who were visiting London on a fact-finding mission about the UK's proposed data protection reforms and the potential impact upon EU-UK trade and law enforcement cooperation.

Objective 3

Build a more sustainable and more effective organisation

Key developments and impact

Income from donations increased by 66%

Our income from individual donations increased from £7,182 to £11,003.

1 new funding partner

In 2022 we received funding for the first time from the *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*, who supported our project on [secrecy and the externalization of migration control](#).

Recruitment of 3 new trustees

At the end of the year we recruited three new trustees – Gabriel Almeida, Marie-Laure Basilien-Gainche and Laure Baudrihaye-Gérard – who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the board.

Ongoing focus on staff development

Staff attended a total of seven training courses throughout the year, and the issue of learning and development is discussed in both weekly staff meetings and monthly one-to-one meetings.

1 meeting of the contributors group

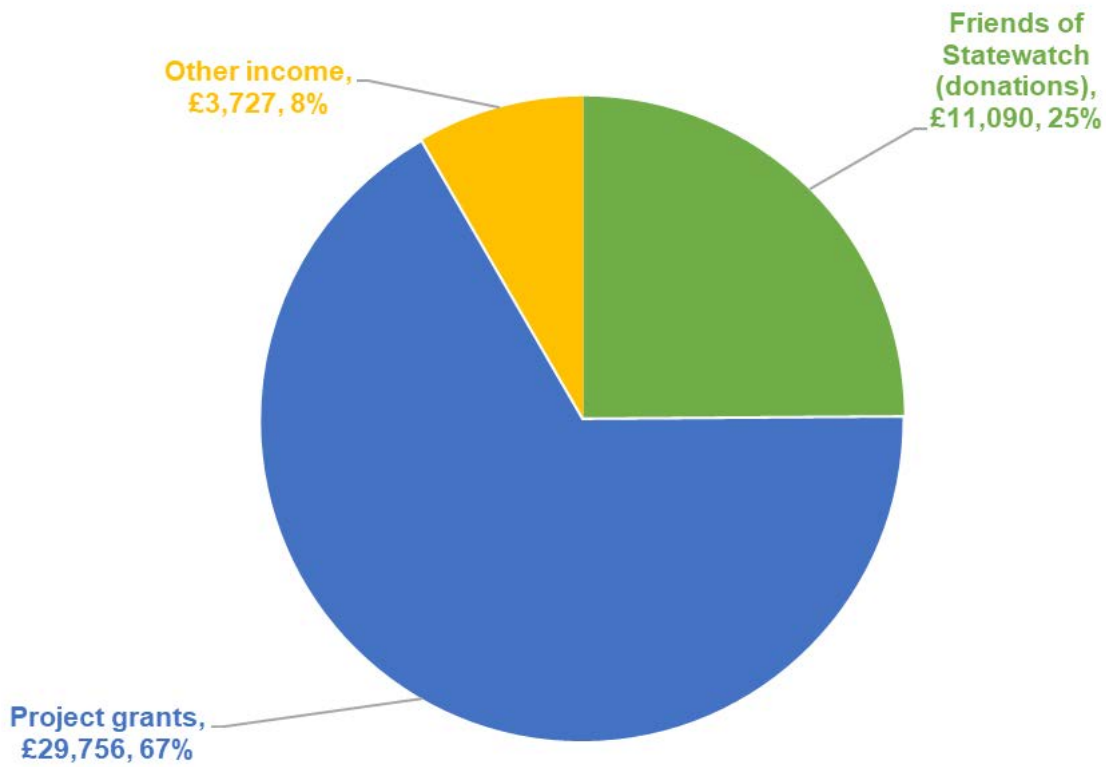
In October 16 members of the *Statewatch* contributors group, from 10 different countries, met for the first time since 2020 to share information and ideas on key issues.

Increase in followers, web users and subscribers

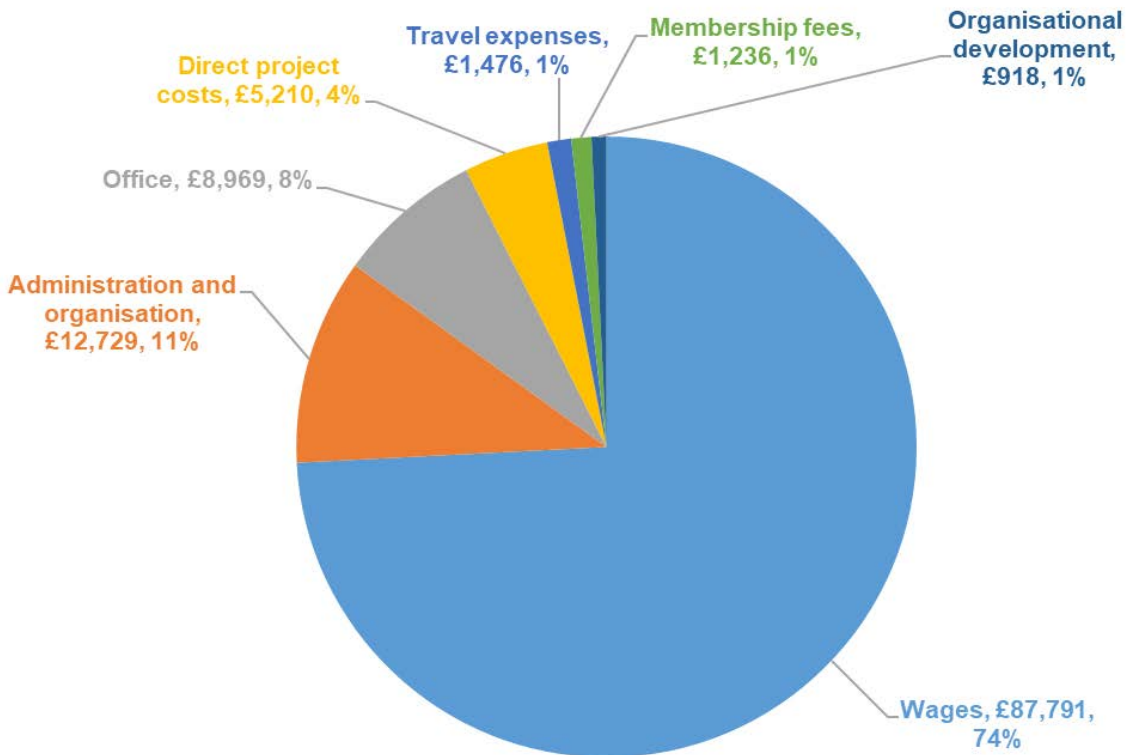
We gained a total of 882 new Twitter followers and around 400 new Facebook followers over the course of the year, the annual number of visits to our website increased to 153,000, and by the end of 2022 our mailing had nearly 11,000 subscribers.

Income and expenditure

Income



Expenditure



Our total income in 2022 was £44,023 and our total expenditure was £118,109.

Although our income in 2022 was low (£44,023), we were able to sustain the organisation through a tie-off grant received from *Open Society Initiative for Europe* in 2021, and by the end of 2022 had secured the majority of the income needed to maintain the organisation in 2023. We are grateful for the continued support of *Privacy International*, as well as that of the *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*, with whom we had not worked before, in 2022.

The amount of income received from one-off and regular donations increased by 66% in 2022, growing from £7,182 to £11,003. This is also 29% higher than the amount received in 2020 (£8,659). The number of regular donors also increased substantially compared to 2021 (from 56 to 79, a 41% increase), as did the number of one-off donations (14 to 21, a 50% increase).

In April a 10% pay increase for all staff was introduced, following on from a 10% increase in 2021. Trustees committed to considering a further increase in 2023, dependent on income. The two increases instituted in 2021 and 2022 go some way to bringing wages closer to those in comparable organisations in the sector, and to ensure the sustainability of the organisation with regard to any future recruitment.

How you can support Statewatch

Become a Friend of Statewatch

Friends of Statewatch provide regular donations to support our work. This gives us a stable, regular income that we can depend on, use to plan for the long-term and keeps our work independent.

In return, Friends of Statewatch receive a twice-yearly newsletter; advance invitations to workshops and events; and know that they are crucial to the work of Statewatch.

Become a Friend of Statewatch online at:

statewatch.org/donate

Or contact us if you'd like to talk about donating another way.

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Email comms [at] statewatch.org

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88 Fleet Street
London EC4Y 1DH
UK

Become a contributor

Our work is greatly enhanced by our network of volunteer contributors across Europe. If you would like to contribute material to Statewatch, please read [our guide for contributors online](#) and get in touch.

Tell us what you think

We are always looking to improve our work and would love to know what you think about what we do. If you have any questions, comments, ideas or suggestions, please feel free to get in touch by email, phone or post using the contact details above.

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