

Company registration number: 08480724

Charity registration number: 1154784

# The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as

Statewatch

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

Field Sullivan Limited  
9 Hare & Billet Road  
Blackheath  
SE3 0RB

**The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

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## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

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### **Reference and Administrative Details**

<b>Trustees</b>	Marie-Laure Basilien-Gainche
	Laure Baudrihayé-Gérard
	Jonathan Bloch
	Victoria Canning
	Nadine Finch
<b>Secretary</b>	Jonathan Bloch
<b>Charity Registration Number</b>	1154784
<b>Company Registration Number</b>	08480724
<b>Registered Office</b>	The charity is incorporated in England and Wales.
	88 Fleet Street
	London
	EC4Y 1DH
<b>Independent Examiner</b>	Field Sullivan Limited
	9 Hare & Billet Road
	Blackheath
	SE3 ORB

# **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

## **known as Statewatch**

### **Trustees' Report**

The trustees present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

#### **Introduction**

2024 made even clearer what many of us have been saying for some time: authoritarianism and racism are firmly on the rise, and despite many brave and important struggles against it, definitive responses are yet to be found. Our work throughout the year reflected this ongoing tension; it also shows reasons for optimism, despite the gloomy political outlook.

We exposed, reported on and analysed ongoing attempts to undermine the rule of law, basic rights and liberties, and democratic safeguards: plans to offshore asylum processing; the influencing of police and internal security officials over new laws; increased surveillance powers; and crackdowns on protest and free speech. In doing so, we continued to provide a vital resource for activists, advocates, journalists and others.

That reporting and analysis is, in and of itself, a form of opposition to these nefarious developments. Within the terms of our charitable status, we also gave our support to movements and campaigns seeking to oppose them more directly: amongst others, those demanding that states uphold the rights of refugees and the right to asylum; halt new measures for ethnic profiling; ensure democratic scrutiny of border externalisation policies; ban invasive and authoritarian surveillance technologies; and to halt European governments' complicity in breaches of international law in Palestine.

That complicity has helped to further derail and undermine the international norms and institutions created to halt military violence against civilians and civil infrastructure. This has had horrifying consequences for those subject to displacement, and to attacks on the ground and from the air. Faced with widespread popular protest against these positions, many European governments have resorted to unjustifiable restrictions on protest and freedom of speech, including through the use of criminal and anti-terrorism laws.

It is however by no means an entirely new situation. Foreign policy has always been linked to domestic repression and rights abuses.

It was demonstrations against the Vietnam War in 1968 that led to the formation of Britain's Special Demonstration Squad, an undercover police unit tasked with infiltrating and undermining left-wing and progressive movements. Europe's strategic alliance with Turkey means supporters of Kurdish autonomy and independence continue to face suspicion (at the very least) from European authorities. The 'war on terror' was and is animated by racism and criminalisation, in particular against Muslims – but it was prefigured by history, such as the British response to campaigns for self-determination in Ireland and other colonies.

As Tony Bunyan, Statewatch's founder, Director (1991-2020) and Director Emeritus (2020-24) wrote in 2006:

Five years on we know that the 'war on terrorism' is going to be permanent, not temporary. This is not just because of 11 March 2004 (Madrid), 7 and 21 July 2005 (London) and terrible terrorist bombings elsewhere. It is also because the pre-conditions for further attacks persist and show no signs of abating – Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, US militarism, Guantanamo Bay, rendition and global free market economics which perpetuate poverty and gross inequality.

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In September last year, Tony passed away. Though age slowed him towards the end of his life, his commitment to the cause never wavered: he was constantly planning, plotting and proposing. He was born in 1941, and his early experiences and involvement in political activism in the 1960s and 1970s profoundly influenced his outlook on the world for the rest of his remarkable life. He made profound contributions to the struggle against state secrecy and for civil liberties, and while he himself never set foot outside Europe, he was deeply-aware of and informed by political events and struggles elsewhere in the world.

He took this view with him when he founded Statewatch, along with a similar-minded group of other activists, journalists and lawyers in 1991. We have always been primarily concerned with the state of civil liberties in the European Union and the UK, but Europe is not an isolated island – the very reason it remains one of the richest parts of the world is because plunder, exploitation and expropriation carried out elsewhere.

This history, the present it has created, and the implications of both are becoming increasingly well-known – though there of course legions of people doggedly opposed to honest discussion and dissection of the legacies of racism, colonialism and empire.

It is this latter group that have been in the political ascendancy for some time now. Halting their ongoing attacks on rights and liberties is no small task, but it is more urgent than ever. It would be simple to say that the results of failing to do so do not bear thinking about – but, in fact, the results of failure can already be seen, from Los Angeles, to the Mediterranean Sea, to Gaza.

With that in mind, it might seem difficult to be optimistic. Yet there are still many reasons for optimism. They can be seen throughout the campaigns and movements we worked alongside throughout 2024, and will continue to provide information and analysis to in the future. And they can be seen in the growing number of groups and organisations that, regardless of growing state repression, continue to stand up for the rights of themselves and others.

It is these struggles that Statewatch has always sought to support with its work. Into 2025 and beyond we will build upon our legacy and past achievements, to increase our role in the struggle against state secrecy and repression, for rights and freedoms, and, ultimately, for a better world.

#### **Objective 1**

##### **Strengthen civil society's access to information**

##### **Key developments and impact**

**1 training workshop on access to information**

**2 workshops on data protection, immigration and asylum**

**1 online panel on digitalisation and the security state**

**80 news articles and 20 in-depth analyses**

**50 official documents made public**

**9 publications in collaboration with other groups and individuals**

**Visits to the Statewatch Library & Archive from students, lawyers and researchers**

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#### **1.1. Training and education: Workshops and courses**

Objective: Provide individuals and organisations with the skills and knowledge needed to investigate complex powers, policies, procedures and practices.

##### **Access to EU information and documents**

In January we led a training workshop for members of the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN). The workshop covered access to EU information and documents, in particular in relation to budgets for immigration and border controls. There were 14 people in attendance. The training was very well-received and BVMN have confirmed that they have used the knowledge and skills shared in their work.

##### **Data protection, immigration and asylum**

In November and December, we hosted the first two in a series of workshops on using data protection law to uphold the rights of migrants and refugees. The workshops form a key part of our project on data protection, immigration and asylum.

The two workshops had a total of 30 attendees. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with all the respondents to a survey saying they would recommend the workshop to others interested in the topic. Further workshops were to be held in 2025.

##### **Digitalisation and the security state**

Material we produced in collaboration with Fundación Karisma (Colombia) on “digitalisation and the security state” were part of the curriculum for an online course run by the Transnational Institute. We moderated an online panel on the topic in mid-May. There were around 90 attendees.

#### **1.2. Providing resources for rights**

Objective: Work with national and international groups to support their campaigns and advocacy on EU justice and home affairs policies by making use of our unique level of access to official EU documents

Over the course of the year, we published a total of 80 news articles and 20 analyses across all our thematic areas. Alongside these articles we published 50 internal EU documents that would not otherwise have been made public. Articles produced in cooperation with other organisations are detailed below. Others are detailed under the relevant headings in this report.

These articles provided a vital resource for journalists, researchers and campaigners working on EU justice and home affairs policies, including many of those listed in the next two sections of this report. We cooperated with a range of outlets and organisations to make documents and information public.

We also published dozens of internal EU documents published as part of our bulletin on border externalisation (discussed further in section 2.3).

##### **EU funding for Israeli drones**

In March, we worked with the German organisation Informationsstelle Militarisierung (IMI, Information Centre on Militarisation) to publish an article on EU funding for Israeli drone technology. This revealed that drones supported with EU research funding being used in the war on Gaza. The article was cited multiple times in international press outlets.

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The article followed our publication of a statement calling for the EU to stop providing research funding to Israeli entities. The statement was initiated and open for signature by academics. The initiators approached us to publish and host the statement, which ultimately received more than 500 signatures. It was subsequently cited in the press.

Later in the year, we supported other initiatives on European support for Israel's war on Gaza: a statement condemning the renewal by the European Commission of 'data adequacy' status for Israel; a call to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement; and the publication of a case filed at the ICC calling for the prosecution of Israeli officials for incitement to genocide.

#### **Who's using our work?**

'EU funding drone technology used by Israel in Gaza war, claim monitors', euronews

'EU funds multiple Israeli drone projects used in Gaza: Watchdogs', Al Mayadeen

'Armi e droni made in Europe complici della devastazione della Striscia', Il Manifesto

'EU finanziert Drohnentechnik aus Israel', nd

'Opazovalci: EU Financira tehnologijo brezpilotnih letal, ki jo je Izrael uporabljal v vojni v Gazi', Senior24

'BE financon teknologjinë e dronëve të përdorur nga Izraeli në luftën me Gazën, pohojnë monitoruesit', Klan Kosova

'Uni Eropa (UE) Danai Pengembangan Drone Israel yang Digunakan Serang Warga Gaza', Fusilat News

'L'argent européen pour la guerre à Gaza: comment le financement de la recherche par l'UE soutient l'industrie israélienne de l'armement', Agence Media Palestine

'EU sponsert Israels Drohnen', Junge Welt

#### **Frontex collaboration with the so-called Libyan coast guard**

With journalists from the Sveriges Television programme Mission Investigate, we jointly published an article on Frontex's collaboration with the so-called Libyan coast guard to arrange 'pullbacks' of the refugee boats in the Mediterranean.

#### **Digital technologies at European borders**

We worked with two organisations to produce magazine articles based on a report we published in 2023, on the digital technologies deployed at Europe's borders. Gisti, the publisher of Plein Droit, is a French organisation working on migrants' rights, and Welt Sichten is a magazine associated with the German anti-militarist movement.

#### **Who's using our work?**

'Le techno-contrôle des migrations', Plein Droit, 19 June

'Grenzschutz mit Drohnen und Datenkraken', Welt Sichten, 11 April

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##### **Frontex transparency and EU-Arab League police cooperation**

We co-published two articles with The New Arab in 2024. The first exposed how the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) is collaborating with the Arab League's political extradition body in spite of its human rights obligations. The second examined how a complaint to the European Ombudsman had forced EU border agency Frontex to improve its transparency measures.

##### **Who's using our work?**

Bailiwick of Guernsey Data Protection Authority, 'Beyond our Shores – August', 30 August

##### **EU-Tunisia migration deal**

We produced two articles in collaboration with Migration-Control.info that analysed leaked documents on the EU-Tunisia migration control deal. Migration-Control.info are the co-publishers of our bulletin on EU border externalisation (examined in more detail below).

##### **Police access to encrypted data**

Working with journalist and longstanding Statewatch contributor Staffan Dahllöf, we obtained a Swedish government note circulated to other EU member states that called for weakening data protection safeguards to ease police access to data. An article based on the document was published by EUobserver.

##### **Who's using our work?**

'How Sweden pushes for EU access to encrypted data', EUobserver, 24 July

##### **Reception conditions on the Greek islands**

We supported the Boat Refugee Foundation with a number of access to documents requests to the European Commission about reception conditions on the Greek islands. The responses, due in 2025, were to form the basis of a report.

##### **Colonial continuities in migration control measures**

Working with our long-standing friends from Bürgerrechte & Polizei, we published a translation of an article from their regular journal, on the colonial continuities in past and present migration control measures in the West Africa.

#### **1.3. Learning from history: 'activating' the Statewatch Library & Archive**

Objective: 'Activate' our extensive Library & Archive through targeted events and output related to key themes in our work, in order to inform the present by learning from the past.

Throughout the year we received visits from researchers, lawyers and students interested in exploring material in the Library & Archive, including:

- a solicitor representing non-state core participants in the Undercover Policing Inquiry;
- international relations students from the University of Westminster researching western interference/intervention in Global South countries;
- students from the University of Essex studying EU asylum law;



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- researchers from the Criminal Justice & Policing Accountability Project (India), investigating policing, biometrics and surveillance during British colonial rule; and
- a filmmaker interested in producing video material to support our work, and a documentary on the history and activities of Statewatch.

In January, we participated in the MayDay Rooms open day, which saw several dozen people visit the Library & Archive and learn about its history and content.

In March, our Director also gave a presentation to post-graduate students at Gettysburg College (USA) on the history and work of Statewatch.

#### **1.4. Barriers to implementing our objectives**

##### **Taking action against state secrecy**

Objective: Ensure compliance with the law and improve access to information for all

The aim of this objective was to take complaints to the European Ombudsman in order to improve access to information and documents, following on from our previous work on Europol and Frontex. With no dedicated funding for this work, it has been impossible to take it forward. At a time of increasing EU institutional secrecy, opacity and obfuscation, including outright attacks on transparency rules, we will continue to seek funds for this important line of work.

##### **Training on access to EU information and documents**

Objective: Provide individuals and organisations with the skills and knowledge needed to investigate complex powers, policies, procedures and practices.

We have managed to develop the best part of a 'curriculum' for a training course on access to EU information and documents, and one session was provided to Border Violence Monitoring Network, as noted above. However, a lack of dedicated funding has prevented the full development of a training course, which needs more time to finalise the curriculum, plan and organise the structure of the course, and promote and manage it. We continue to seek funding for this activity.

##### **'Activating' the Statewatch Library & Archive**

Objective: 'Activate' our extensive Library & Archive through targeted events and output related to key themes in our work, in order to inform the present by learning from the past.

The Library & Archive remains an under-utilised resource, due to a lack of dedicated funding to organise, promote and 'activate' the collection. We did not identify any potential funding sources in 2024, but will continue to seek opportunities in 2025.

##### **Objective 2**

##### **Expose and challenge new means of surveillance, coercion and control**

##### **Key developments and impact**

##### **1 in-depth report**

##### **1 public event**

##### **1 evidence submission to the UN**

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**At least 27 references in the press**

**At least 17 public citations by other civil society organisations**

**1 event bringing together migrant and refugee rights organisations facing state repression**

**4 events bringing together researchers, campaigners, activists, elected officials and others working on border externalisation**

**2 sets of parliamentary questions**

**Working with and supporting 10+ other organisations**

### **2.1. Challenging international police data-sharing**

Objective: Challenge the development of a network of police facial recognition databases linking EU and UK authorities

This work concerns the EU's 'Prüm' system of interconnected national databases, letting police conduct cross-border searches and sharing of DNA, fingerprint and vehicle registration data. The UK continues to participate in the system as part of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

In early 2024 an updated Prüm Regulation was approved by the European Parliament and the Council. We have been unable to undertake any further substantive work on this issue due to a lack of dedicated funding.

Nevertheless, our Director gave an interview on the topic to Civicus Lens, and we have informed the UK-based Stop Facial Recognition Coalition of the law and its potential impacts. The coalition is organised by Big Brother Watch. Other organisations involved include Liberty, Open Rights Group, Privacy International and Race on the Agenda.

We will continue to monitor the implementation of the new law in the EU and the UK's potential involvement in the expanded system, and engage with developments when possible.

### **2.2. Limiting travel surveillance and passenger profiling**

Objective: Prevent schemes for the automated police surveillance of travel and profiling of passengers being extended from air to rail and sea transport

Through the introduction of Passenger Name Record (PNR) and Advance Passenger Information (API) schemes, states and international organisations are implementing an integrated, networked global system for the surveillance of travel and the police profiling of passengers. These schemes are currently largely reserved to air travel, but there have been longstanding plans to extend them to rail, boat and coach journeys. There is a clear need to ensure, at the very least, strict controls and limitations on the introduction of such systems.

Throughout 2024 we continue to work towards this objective through a research project with the Funders Initiative for Civil Society. This seeks to establish an evidence base on the scale, scope, and potential effects of the "transnational security architecture" in particular with regard to civic space. The term "transnational security architecture" encompasses the global establishment of API, PNR and other systems for the international gathering and exchange of personal data, in the name of security and counter-terrorism.

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Initially intended for publication in 2024, the research will now be published in 2025, due to the need to balance this work with other projects. The intention is to lay the foundation for further empirical research in a number of states around the globe that will look at the effects of transnational security obligations and new technologies upon civic space.

In 2024, along with continuing research and writing, in January we hosted a session at Privacy Camp in Brussels to explain and discuss our work in this area, with Privacy International, the academic Monish Bhatia and Caitlin Chandler, an investigative journalist.

We also used our research for a submission to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' call for input on Use of Administrative Measures in Counter-Terrorism.

#### **Who's using our work?**

'The EU will soon have the largest hoard of biometric data on earth – and travellers could suffer', The Telegraph, 9 December

#### **2.3. Exposing and opposing the externalisation of borders**

Objective: Establish an evidence base on the EU's "operational partnerships" with third countries for the externalisation of border controls

In March, we began working towards this objective through a project funded by four German organizations: Brot für die Welt, Medico International, Miseror and Pro Asyl. The aim is to inform and facilitate the work of campaign and advocacy groups, journalists and elected officials seeking to hold states to account for the human rights violations that accompany the border externalisation agenda.

The project involves the production of a regular bulletin that uncovers and explains developments in the EU's border externalisation projects and policies. The bulletin is based on the systematic monitoring of European and international institutions, agencies and bodies, access to documents requests, and access to leaked documents.

In 2024, we published four editions of the bulletin, alongside which we published nearly 70 official documents that would not otherwise have been made public.

We also held four meetings that brought together campaigners, researchers, MEPs and parliamentary assistants, lawyers and others, to discuss the content of each bulletin and related issues. These provided a useful forum to share information, ideas and to jointly plan and strategise.

A dedicated mailing list for the bulletin and events had almost 200 subscribers at the end of 2024, including researchers, campaigners, parliamentarians and their assistants, journalists and academics.

Articles and documents published with the bulletin have been used by the media, parliamentarians and civil society organisations, as listed below. Journalists from El Salto, and The New Humanitarian, and a researcher from Strasbourg University, also sought our expertise on border externalisation to inform their work in 2024.

#### **Who's using our work?**

'Egypt and Tunisia 'not interested' in migrant deals with EU', The Telegraph, 21 October

'Egypt and Tunisia reportedly reluctant to co-operate with EU on migration deals', European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 17 October

'Egypt and Tunisia show 'little interest' in EU migration deal despite billions', EUobserver, 14 October

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'EU deflects blame as ICC prosecutor asked to look into Tunisia migrant abuse scandal', EurActiv, 25 September

Parliamentary question: 'Human rights violations by EU-funded forces in Tunisia', European parliamentary question, 24 September

'EU brushes off report it funds Tunisian forces accused of mass rape', EUobserver, 24 September

'The brutal truth behind Italy's migrant reduction: beatings and rape by EU-funded forces in Tunisia', The Guardian, 19 September

'Fallstricke der Externalisierung der europäischen Migrationspolitik', Stiftung Leben und Umwelt, 11 September

'The role of Courts in the era of EU externalization policies: A focus on Libya, Tunisia, and Niger', Refugee Law Initiative, 19 July 2024

'Política de externalización migratoria, o 'yo te pago y tú me paras a los migrantes'', RTVE, 9 May 2024

'Europa atrapada en su propia trampa', RTVE, 9 May 2024

'EU-Tunisia Deal Outlines Different Measures Addressing Migration by Tunisians & Non-Tunisian Nationals', European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 22 March

#### **Frontex and externalisation**

An in-depth research project looking at the role of EU border agency Frontex in the externalisation of the EU's borders continued throughout the year. The report, which will be co-published with the Transnational Institute, has been subject to a number of delays, but is due for release in 2025.

#### **2.4. Identifying and challenging the 'collateral damage' caused by attacks on immigration and asylum**

Objective: Contribute to efforts to halt the ongoing criminalization of human rights defenders, obstruction of journalists and undermining of the rule of law as a consequence of immigration control measures

##### **The 'security playbook'**

Throughout 2024, we worked towards this objective in cooperation with the Fund for Global Human Rights. Research was carried out in 2023 and early 2024 on the 'security playbook': the use of security narratives and measures to justify crackdowns on migrant and refugee rights activism. An internal report detailing the findings was produced in April, and served as the basis for a convening of FGHR grantees in Tirana, Albania in December.

Working with a professional facilitator and FGHR staff, we crafted an agenda and plan for the convening that allowed time to discuss the research, its implications, other relevant information from the participants, and strategies for dealing with the ongoing criminalization and repression of refugee and migrant rights activism.

Participants provided positive feedback about the event, the organization and the discussions that took place; we therefore consider we successfully achieved the immediate goal of supporting the holding of the convening. There are however longer-term questions – in particular, strategies and actions for dealing with criminalization and repression – that remain open. We will seek to pursue further work on this topic in 2025.

##### **Who's using our work?**

30+ grantee organisations of the Fund for Global Human Rights facing or working on the repression and criminalisation of support for and solidarity with migrants and refugees

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#### **Criminalising solidarity: the EU Facilitation Package**

Through the year we engaged with other civil society organisations on the EU's proposed Facilitation Package. This revises a 2002 law on the facilitation of irregular migration, which provides one of the key legal loopholes that lets member states punish acts of solidarity/humanitarianism – for example providing food, clothes, or information to people crossing borders.

The new law would introduce more severe criminal penalties and introduces extra-territorial jurisdiction for punishing facilitation and related crimes, amongst other things. The new Facilitation Directive was published alongside a proposal to increase the powers of Europol.

There has been substantial civil society advocacy on both the Facilitation Directive and the Europol proposal. We have supported this by publishing news, analysis and official documents, and contributing directly to the work of the #ProtectNotSurveil coalition on the Europol proposal.

Two of our articles on the Facilitation Directive were produced by external contributors: one, an individual from the group working on advocacy on the law, and the second by a member of staff at the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migration.

At the February meeting of the Europol Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group, Saskia Bricmont MEP used information we provided to question Europol officials on their work on migrant smuggling. Our work on this topic has also been referenced by the European Parliamentary Research Service.

#### **Who's using our work?**

La Strada International, 'EU Members Reach Agreement on Law on Migrant Smuggling', 16 December

'Immigration : l'Europe veut « mieux criminaliser » les exilés et leurs soutiens', l'Humanité, 21 August

'Stronger role for Europol to fight migrant smuggling and human trafficking', European Parliamentary Research Service, March

#### **2.5. A watchdog for EU justice and home affairs policies**

Objective: Monitor the activities of EU justice and home affairs institutions and agencies in order to identify projects or plans that go beyond legal remits, or threaten to undermine rights, liberties and democratic standards

#### **Following the roadmap: unmasking the EU's security AI plans**

Work continued to finalise our report on the EU's development and deployment of AI for security purposes, due for publication in early 2025.

#### **Data exchange, exclusion and denial at the borders**

This project aims to improve lawyers' and refugee and migrant rights organisations' ability to challenge the use of secret evidence against an immigration or/and asylum decision in the states that make up the Schengen area. Part of the project involved the workshops discussed in section 1.1 of this report.

Throughout the year we also conducted research on the issue of secret evidence and international data exchange affecting migrants and refugees arriving in Europe. This involved desk research, access to documents requests, a public questionnaire that was distributed in nine languages, and interviews with lawyers and NGO workers in Lesbos, Greece. Outputs based on this research will be published in 2025.

The project was also presented at a meeting of the EuroMed Rights network in Athens in May.

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#### **Monitoring European police**

Working with European Digital Rights, Refugee Project Egypt and other organisations, we prepared an open letter to the European Commission on plans to increase cooperation between Europol and the Egyptian police, for publication in January 2025.

That cooperation would be based on a working arrangement between Europol and Egyptian authorities. Although this type of arrangement does not allow the exchange of personal data, the letter warned that “even limited information exchange risks “whitewashing further human rights violations in Egypt and in the EU.”

In Egypt, torture and ill-treatment by police officers, prison guards and military personnel is widespread, as are unlawful arrest and detention, enforced disappearances, unfair trials and use of the death penalty.

This was part of our ongoing cooperation with the Resist Europol network, an open group of activists, researchers, lawyers, journalists, prison and police abolitionists, civil society organisations and more with a shared concern of the expanding EU policies, practices and agenda driven by criminalisation, surveillance and punishment. We regularly participated in discussions with the group in 2024, and helped to organise an in-person meeting in Amsterdam.

#### **Who's using our work?**

Saskia Bricmont MEP and Mounir Satouri, ‘Europol-Egypt working arrangement’, Question for written answer E-002718/2024, 2 December

#### **‘Going dark’: police access to data**

Working with European Digital Rights and member organisations IT-Pol Denmark and Privacy International, we helped to develop a paper on new EU proposals to make it easier for law enforcement agencies to access digital data.

The paper was submitted in February to the High-Level Working Group, “Going Dark”, convened by the European Commission to deal with the supposed problem of law enforcement agencies being unable to access certain types of digital data – for example, due to encryption.

#### **Funding for police and border agencies**

Reports we have published in recent years that explain state funding for and expenditure on new security and surveillance technologies continue to provide an important resource for other civil society organisations. These include our 2022 report on the EU’s security, defence and border budgets for the 2021-27 period, another report from 2022 on EU funding for AI-powered border technologies, and many other publications on similar topics going back almost two decades.

We were also interviewed by a journalist from La Via Libera on EU policing, borders and security budgets, and from Follow the Money on Europol. We also gave an online talk to students and staff at the University of Amsterdam on how EU research funds are distributed to Israeli entities, including military and security companies.

#### **Who's using our work?**

‘The Automated Fortress Europe: No Place for Human Rights’, Algorithm Watch, May

‘Automation on the Move — Bibliography’, AlgorithmWatch, 13 November

‘EU migration policy as a global health crisis’, Salud por Derecho, October



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'Technologies, migration, and human rights: the role of European NHRIs', European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, September

#### **Technologies of surveillance, security and control**

As with our work on budgets and funding, past work on technologies of surveillance, security and control continues to remain highly relevant. In 2024, reports from as far back as 2014 were cited by a range of organisations. Staff were also interviewed on this topic by a Danish documentary filmmaker and a journalist from The Sunday Times.

We presented some of our work on border security technologies at an AlgorithmWatch workshop in Berlin in May, and in December at a conference organised by HIAS Greece (online).

#### **Who's using our work?**

'What happens if I'm rejected for an Etias – and can I appeal?', the i paper, 26 August

'Cyfrowe granice. Jak algorytmy mają strzec Europy [wywiad]', Fundacja Panoptikon, 14 June

'The Digital Border: Migration, Technology and Inequality', 21 May, Amnesty USA

'Spotlight on European and French funding in Tunisia: Migration cooperation at the cost of human rights?', CCFD and Terre Solidaire, May

'Between privacy and border control: Tech in the Migration Pact', EurActiv, 19 April

#### **Migration, deportation, databases, policing, and more**

Our regular provision of news and analysis on both EU and national state powers, policies and practices continues to provide a vital source of information to journalists, civil society organisations and others. As well as the links below, we were also regularly interviewed by Radio Blackout (Italy) and Radio Student (Slovenia) to discuss developments in EU and UK immigration and security policies. We were also present at a meeting held by The Left group in the European Parliament (April) on ways to deal with the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum, and presented an overview of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum at the Berlin Humanitarian Congress in October.

#### **Who's using our work?**

'Will Frontex's expansion lead to more oversight and accountability?', The Parliament, 4 December

Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte, 'Das europäische Einreise-/Ausreisensystem', December

'Deutschland drängt auf EU-weite Verfolgung und Überwachung von Fahrzeugen', Heise Online, 17 November

'Fondettes: une galerie expose « Calais après la jungle »', La Nouvelle Republique, 15 November

'Deutschland treibt EU-weites Abhören in Fahrzeugen voran', Netzpolitik, 14 November

'Spain asks Frontex to patrol African waters to curb migration', InfoMigrants, 11 October

'EU und Kanada: Neues Abkommen zur Übermittlung von Fluggastdaten steht', Heise Online, 4 October

Så gick Frontex från liten myndighet till högteknologisk propagandamaskin, Dagens ETC, 3 October

'Bundespolizei für Internetüberprüfung von Schengen-Reisenden', nd, 19 September

'How should Europe deal with its migration crisis?', Al Jazeera, 16 September

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

### **known as Statewatch**

### **Trustees' Report**

'Le Maroc n'accepte que 8% des expulsions de ses ressortissants émises par l'UE, selon un rapport', Telquel, 12 September 2024

'Marruecos solo acepta el 8% de las expulsiones de sus nacionales emitidas por la UE', El País, 11 September

'Planned new European travel restrictions follow US precedents and pressure', Papers, Please!, 6 September

'Frontex goes drone shopping as EU looks to keep migrants out', EurActiv, 21 August

'Come funzionano i voli di rimpatrio forzato dall'Italia alla Tunisia', Internazionale, 24 June

Expulsion des Tunisien·nes d'Italie : la complicité discrète des compagnies aériennes, Inkyfada, 24 June

Meijers Committee, 'Comment on Europol's data subject categorisation based on the amended Europol Regulation', May

Met police to pay 'five-figure sum' to French publisher arrested under anti-terror laws, The Guardian, 29 April

'How the EU Death Machine Works', Verfassungsblog, 27 February

#### **2.6. 'Global Britain' and civil liberties**

Objective: Monitor the activities of the new law enforcement and security institutions set up by the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, as well as other cooperation initiatives between the UK and other states, to identify projects or plans that go beyond legal remits, or threaten to undermine rights, liberties and democratic standards.

We continue to monitor the situation in the UK and the UK's cooperation with the EU and other states and entities. Our ability to produce any outputs on this topic is extremely limited due to a lack of dedicated funding.

Nevertheless, we produced a small number of articles and signed joint statements and open letters throughout 2024, on topics including:

- UK-German cooperation against migration across the Channel;
- facial recognition;
- police accountability for privacy invasions;
- automated decision-making;
- the Rwanda Bill; and
- accountability for state-related deaths.

We are also members of a number of UK coalitions. While we are not particularly active in these, they remain a useful way to receive and share information and occasionally contribute to advocacy or campaigning efforts. Those networks are:

- the Digital Sanctuary coalition, coordinated by Open Rights Group;
- the Human Rights Act coalition, coordinated by Liberty; and
- the Stop Facial Recognition coalition, coordinated by Big Brother Watch.

#### **Who's using our work?**

'Migration 5: The truth about the shadowy scheme to check identities', The New Zealand Herald, 16 June 2024



## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

### **known as Statewatch**

### **Trustees' Report**

#### **2.7. Other**

##### **The right to a fair trial**

In March, we published a report by exiled Turkish lawyers on an important case at the European Court of Human Rights: *Yüksel Yalçinkaya v. Türkiye*. The case concerned the prosecution of an individual for the use of an encrypted messaging app, ByLock, which the Turkish government alleges is solely used by individuals involved in the organisations that allegedly launched the 2016 coup attempt.

Thousands of people have been imprisoned because they have used the app, with no substantive evidence presented against them. The ECtHR judgment provides a corrective to this disturbing practice, though the Turkish government is yet to implement. The judgement also sets out important standards on the use of digital evidence in criminal trials.

The report itself was covered in Turkish-language press and was well-received on social media. It was cited in a decision of the Austrian Administrative Court in December. We co-signed a letter to the Council of Europe in July, requesting that the Committee of Ministers ensure that judgment is properly implemented by the Turkish authorities.

##### **Who's using our work?**

Austrian Federal Administrative Court ruled: 'The Hizmet Movement is not a terrorist organization', 30 December

##### **Objective 3**

##### **Build a more sustainable and more effective organisation**

##### **Key developments and impact**

**Expenditure of £195,370 and income of £153,002**

**New communications strategy**

**Development of a visual rebrand for the organisation**

**5 new funding partners**

**20% increase in website visits**

**32% increase in website visitors**

**Ongoing cooperation with our networks**

#### **3.1. A more sustainable organisation**

Objective: Obtain an increased amount of core funding over the next four years, seeking a diverse range of funding sources for different elements of our strategy; continue to seek project funding for activities that align with our strategy

##### **Funding**

In 2024 our total expenditure was £195,370 and our total income was £153,002. While our expenditure was therefore greater than our income, we ended the year with a balance of £160,576.

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

### **known as Statewatch**

#### **Trustees' Report**

The overall financial picture for the year was relatively healthy, it remains the case that Statewatch generally lacks long-term, stable financial support. This support would need to be both underpinned by, and to enable, a shift away from the short-term project-based model upon which we have now been reliant for many years.

One contact made with a foundation in 2024 will, we hope, play a part in facilitating that shift. Elsewhere, we received funding from two new sources:

- the European AI & Society Fund (EASIF), for a project on the EU's development and use of artificial intelligence for police, border, immigration and criminal justice purposes; and
- European Digital Rights, for a project undertaken in collaboration with an investigative journalist, designed to complement the EASIF-funded work.

Towards the end of the year, we were also able to agree another grant with EASIF to undertake a project on predictive policing that was effectively abandoned by another organisation. It took some nine months to organise, and we are grateful to EASIF for their patience, assistance and support during that time.

In 2024, our work was supported by:

- Brot für die Welt, Misereor, medico international and Pro Asyl
- European AI & Society Fund
- European Digital Rights
- Friends of Statewatch
- Funders Initiative for Civil Society
- Garden Court Chambers
- Global Fund for Human Rights
- Open Society Foundations

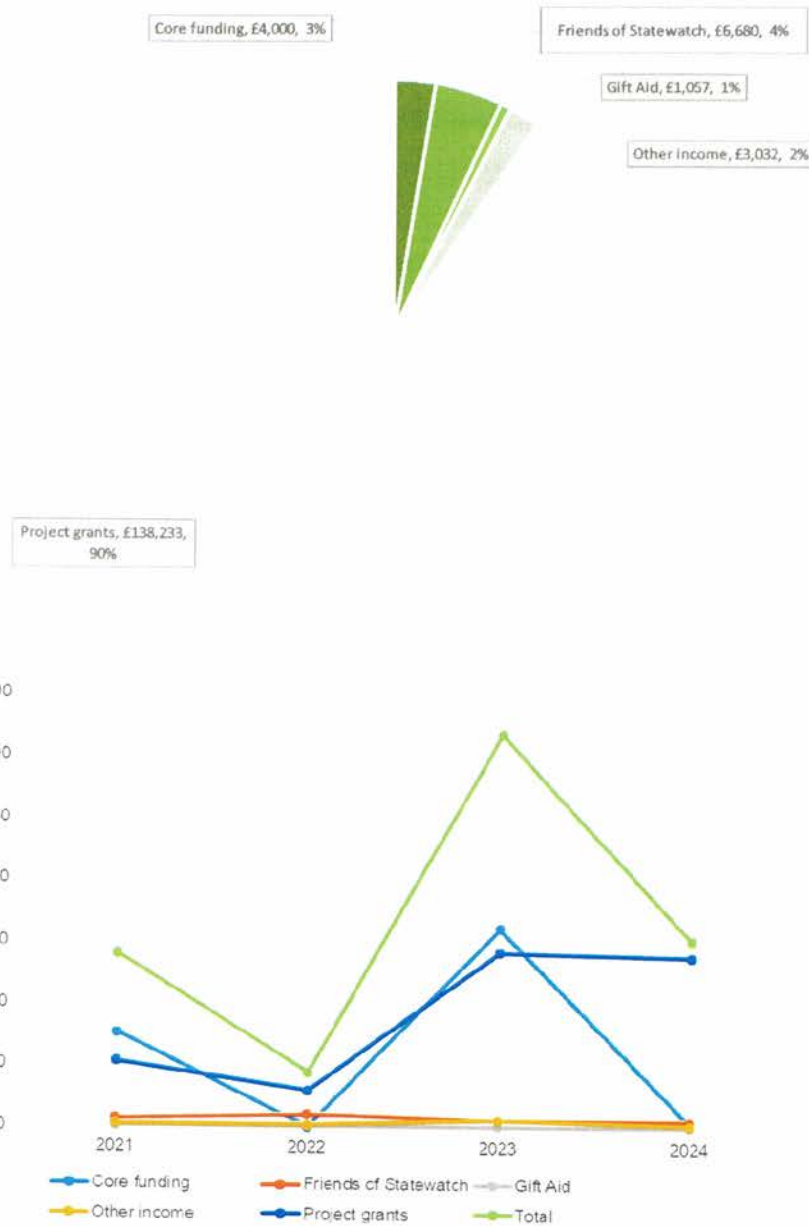
We are grateful for the support of all our funders and supporters and hope to continue working with them into 2025 and beyond. We will continue to seek new funding partners so that we can work towards the objectives set out in our strategic plan that, as highlighted in this report, we were unable to work on in 2024 due to a lack of dedicated resources.

# The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

## Trustees' Report

### Income in 2024

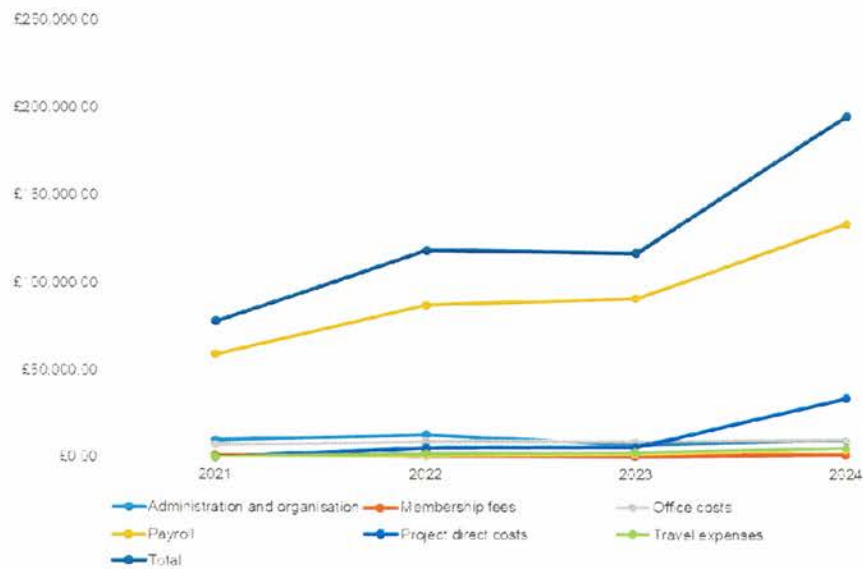
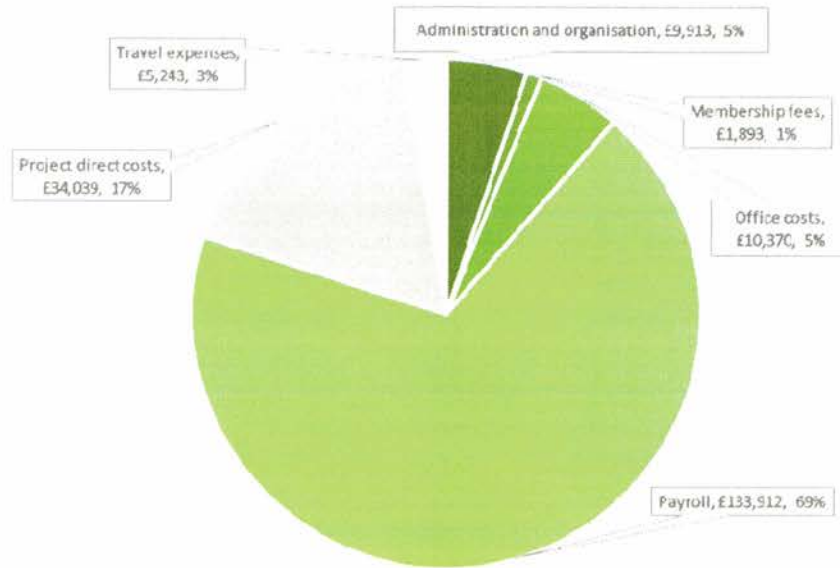


# The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

## Trustees' Report

### Expenditure in 2024



# **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

## **known as Statewatch**

### **Trustees' Report**

#### **Friends of Statewatch**

Regular payments from the 64 Friends of Statewatch provided £5,556.94 to the organisation in 2024. This is a decrease compared to 2023, when 58 Friends of Statewatch provided £6765. In 2024 we also received 22 one-off donations with a total value of £738.57.

#### **Financial management and administration**

In October 2024, the board of trustees adopted a Financial Procedures Manual for the first time, to ensure our financial management and administration is carried out in a transparent, coherent and consistent manner.

#### **Statewatch in the EU**

Objective: Establish a formal presence in EU jurisdiction to mitigate possible risks for our work caused by Brexit

Since the Brexit vote we have explored options for establishing a formal Statewatch presence within EU jurisdiction and now have a clear overview of what those options are and how to pursue them if deemed necessary. So far, the effects of Brexit have only caused minor procedural obstacles to our work, for example the ability to make requests for access to documents as a UK-based organisation. The option to establish a presence in EU jurisdiction remains open to us, if and when deemed necessary.

#### **3.2. A more effective organisation**

Objective: Ensure that Statewatch has the people, knowledge, skills and contacts needed to achieve its objectives

We seek to meet this objective by ensuring that learning and development is at the centre of our work, that we thoroughly monitor and evaluate the way we work, that we are able to make good use of the voluntary work that people are willing to offer the organisation, and that we play an active and meaningful role in the networks of which we are a part.

#### **Learning and development**

Our strategic plan commits us to adopting a staff learning and development programme and individual learning and development plans for each member of staff. In practice, these goals are met by keeping the question of learning and development as a standing item on our weekly staff meetings and in monthly one-to-one meetings between each member of staff and the director. These took place every month apart from in August (for the summer break) and September (due to the death of Tony Bunyan, Statewatch founder and, until his death, Director Emeritus).

During the year, staff participated in the following training courses and events:

- 'From activist to manager' Leadership Programme, European AI & Society Fund
- Fundraising, European AI & Society Fund and Slovak Fundraising Center
- Charity finance strategy, National Council of Voluntary Organisations
- Retreat on strategic litigation, Digital Freedom Fund

Materials and resources provided during training courses are made available to all staff and volunteers for reference.

# **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

## **known as Statewatch**

### **Trustees' Report**

#### **Monitoring and evaluation**

In June, staff and some members of the board of trustees were able to meet in London for a valuable mid-term evaluation of our strategic plan. It also allowed for broader reflection on the increasingly-difficult environment in which we work, and how we go about our work. This was also the first opportunity for a number of the staff and trustees to meet one another in person – something that is made difficult due to the distributed locations of our staff and board, and the fact that we usually have to operate with restricted funding.

#### **Maintain and develop the Statewatch contributors group**

We stayed in contact with the contributors group throughout the year, primarily via the mailing list but also through individual contact and conversations. We developed a plan to increase engagement with and contributions from the group, but it proved difficult to fully carry this out.

As a first step, a questionnaire was sent to all members of the group to better understand their interests and availability. Unfortunately, it was not possible to make progress beyond this point.

Over the course of the year, 18 articles were written by external contributors, either on an ad-hoc basis following a request to the contributors mailing list, or through another form of cooperation, such as the Outsourcing Borders bulletin.

#### **Contributed articles**

EU: New migrant smuggling law to ensure criminalisation of solidarity, 10 December

Frontex's increasing role in reintegration policy and its effects in West Africa, 25 November

Ignoring the root causes of disaster: the EU and Sudan, 14 October

Frontex flights and fatalities in the Channel, 13 September

EU watchdog intervention forces Frontex to improve transparency, 20 August

Implementing the Pact: obligation for fundamental rights monitoring, 16 July

EU: Council lowers threshold for migrant smuggling prosecutions, 15 July

How the EU police training agency is cosying up to the Arab League's political extradition body, 2 July

Frontex collaboration with Libya: "we call them and try to persuade them to take them back", 12 June

Analysis: The politics behind the EU-Mauritania migration partnership, 29 April

Policing migration: when "harm reduction" means "multipurpose aerial surveillance", 9 April

European money for the war in Gaza: how EU research funding supports the Israeli arms industry, 22 March

"Action file" on Tunisia outlines EU's externalisation plans, 15 March

Parliamentary lawyers: democratic oversight needed for EU-Tunisia migration agreement, 15 March

ByLock Prosecutions and the Right to Fair Trial in Turkey: The ECtHR Grand Chamber's Ruling in *Yüksel Yalçınkaya v. Türkiye*, 13 March

The case of *Civipol*: commodified mobility policing in West Africa and its colonial continuities, 28 February

Deportations: EU considers stepping up visa sanctions after Iraq and Gambia change policies, 13 February

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

### **known as Statewatch**

### **Trustees' Report**

Germany: Fatal police shootings in 2022, 8 January

#### **A more active and effective role in our networks**

*Burgerrechte & Polizei (Civil Liberties & Policing, CILIP)*

We remain in regular contact with CILIP and in 2024 published translations of two articles originally published in the CILIP journal.

*European Digital Rights*

We are regularly in touch with European Digital Rights (EDRI) staff and member organisations. In 2024 we attended the general assembly in Crete (in May) and the year participated in the working group redesigning the network's internal complaints procedure.

*Migreurop*

In 2024 we continued in our role as a co-president of Migreurop's conseil administrative, and continued to engage with the internal working group on Frontex. We attended the conseil meeting in Tunisia in May, which was an important opportunity to meet in-person and to show solidarity with Tunisian organisations targeted by state repression. We also attended the general assembly in Marseille in November. In September we presented a report on migration and asylum policies in the UK to other members of the network.

*#ProtectNotSurveil*

We remain up-to-date with the work of the #ProtectNotSurveil coalition and participate actively when possible, given time constraints. In 2024 we contributed to the network's position paper on a proposal to give Europol more powers, ostensibly to deal with migrant smuggling. This was due for publication in 2025.

*This Is What Police Tech Looks Like*

We attended a number of meetings held by This Is What Police Tech Looks Like, to share information with other groups from across Europe, and also attended an in-person meeting in Greece in May.

#### **Other relevant events**

We attended back-to-back conferences organised by Systemic Justice, and Weaving Liberation/Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice in Berlin in June.

#### **Improving our communication**

##### **Head of Communications**

At the end of 2023 we were able to recruit, for the first time, a member of staff to work solely on communications. This was an important step for the organisation and led to an improvement in our external and internal communication throughout 2024, which we expect to continue into 2025 and beyond.

##### **Communications strategy**

The communications strategy was approved in May and implemented from that point onwards. A full review is yet to be conducted, but it has already led to more consistent and clear writing and social media output.

Staff and the board agreed upon a visual rebrand for Statewatch in autumn, which was due to be implemented for public outputs (reports, social media material, and so on) as of 1 January 2025. A rebrand of the website is also planned but requires dedicated funding.



## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

### **known as Statewatch**

### **Trustees' Report**

#### **Internal communication and coordination**

In autumn we began using project management software for the first time, to improve internal coordination for the multiple projects we have ongoing at any one point. While this is likely to take some time to fully embed use of the software in the organisation, it is a welcome step.

#### **Use of our resources**

Compared to 2023, the total number of visits to our website grew by 20% in 2024, to a total of 201,177. While this figure may be slightly skewed by lower-than-expected figures in 2023, due to server downtime, it is nevertheless impressive. The total number of individual visitors also grew substantially: by 32%, from 133,486 in 2023 to 176,041 in 2024. The total number of downloads, however, fell by 11%, from 17,586 to 15,691. This may be a result of the publication of fewer documents in 2024 than in 2023.

The total number of followers across all our social media accounts (Twitter/X, Facebook, LinkedIn, BlueSky, Mastodon) grew steadily, but slowly, increasing from 16,396 in January to 17,614 in December.

At the end of the year, the number of subscribers to our mailing list stood at around 11,500, a small increase from around 11,100 at the end of 2023.

#### **Policy on reserves**

At year end 2024 the organisation had £160,576 available, though no specific amount of this was dedicated to reserves that would make it possible to meet any unexpected shortfall in income, or meet any necessary expenditure to protect or expand the Trust's work. Trustees will endeavour to increase reserves if income permits. Although we have taken steps towards the adoption of a formal reserves policy, no such policy has yet been finalised or adopted by the board.

#### **Changes to board membership in 2024**

After joining us in early 2023, Gabriel Almeida stepped down from his post on the board due to taking up employment that prevented him acting as a charity trustee. We are grateful for his input and insight, and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

#### **Risk analysis**

##### **Staff development and retention**

Statewatch employees are employed part time and are highly skilled in our specialist field of work. Our priority is to improve the working conditions of current staff whilst acquiring enough funding to recruit additional staff members, in order to better fulfil our mission.

In recent years we have been able to significantly increase staff wages. In 2021 and 2022 we implemented an across-the-board pay increase of 10. In 2023 there was a 15% pay rise for all staff, and a further 10% in 2024. This has made a significant contribution to bringing our salary levels closer to a decent level for our sector.

##### **Review and monitor action to reduce our projected pension deficit**

We have an action plan in place with the Pensions' Trust, our pension provider, to reduce our deficit by paying additional annual contributions. The estimate from the Pensions Trust of employer liability on withdrawal is £4,621 (as at September 2024), an increase from £4,209 in September 2023.



# **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

## **known as Statewatch**

### **Trustees' Report**

#### **Operating environment**

One risk for the organisation is an increasingly hostile operating environment, driven by government and media attacks on independent, critical voices. In relation to our work, this manifested in 2024 in the form of a European parliamentary question about a leaked document that we published.

An MEP for the extreme right-wing Patriots for Europe group asked the European Commission whether it was “considering taking action against the Statewatch website and does it strive to ensure that restricted-access EU documents are not published online, whether that be by Statewatch or any other organisation, person or entity?”

While no such “action” has emerged, this intervention highlights the importance of source protection and ensuring that we have access to adequate legal support, should the need arise.

#### **Annex: Projects in 2024**

##### **Data exchange, exclusion and denial at the borders**

Funder: Privacy International

Duration: September 2023-May 2025

This project aims to improve lawyers' and refugee and migrant rights organisations' ability to challenge the use of secret evidence against an immigration or/and asylum decision in the states that make up the Schengen area. It will do this by:

- investigating the scale and scope of the use of secret evidence, the extent to which target groups make use of data protection law in all stages and types (administrative, pre-judicial, judicial) of proceedings against the use of secret evidence and the extent to which authorities, supervisory bodies and courts are enforcing data protection standards;
- informing the target groups about the possibilities of using data protection law as a means to seek access to an effective remedy for individuals threatened by a migration or asylum decision informed by secret evidence;
- pushing for more rigorous oversight and enforcement of data protection law by EU bodies in relation to existing and forthcoming databases and information exchange mechanisms through advocacy and campaigning with other civil society organisations, and by supporting the work of other organisations addressing related issues.

The project will explore a new avenue to support due process rights in immigration and asylum proceedings, in particular the equality of arms between the applicant and the authority in the context of the use of secret evidence, in accordance with articles 8 and 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (the rights to a fair trial and an effective remedy in this proposal should be understood as reference to general questions of due process, and not freestanding rights in and of themselves).

##### **Following the roadmap: unmasking the EU's security AI plans**

Funder: European AI & Society Fund

Duration: January-December 2024

The goal of this project is to increase democratic scrutiny and oversight of the EU's ongoing security AI plans. We will do this through an investigation of the 'state of play' of the security AI roadmap and the projects it encompasses, as well as other related ongoing work (for example, that carried out under the auspices of Europol's Innovation Hub).

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

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### **Trustees' Report**

#### **Outsourcing borders**

Funders: Brot für die Welt, Misereor, medico international and Pro Asyl

Duration: March 2024-February 2025

This project aims to make the EU's border externalisation policies, plans and practices public. In doing so it seeks to highlight their impact on the rights of people on the move, as well as democratic standards, transparency and accountability. It addresses a lack of public information by publishing relevant EU documents, in this phase primarily those produced or discussed by the Council of the EU. It also tackles the overflow of information that results from a variety of EU institutions, working groups and national governments involved in the externalisation agenda by summarising thematic and regional developments, and by analysing key issues in depth.

#### **Transnational security architecture, civic space and human rights**

Funder: Funders Initiative for Civil Society

Duration: February 2023-September 2025 (extended due to delays)

Our research aims to complement and support nascent civil society and local, activist-led research and advocacy in this area. We will do this by:

- establishing a more substantial evidence base on the establishment, financing and implementation of international counter-terrorism and security norms and their implementation at the national level, in particular as regards:
  - o the bodies and agencies involved, including informal and private bodies;
  - o the actual or potential adverse effects of those norms and measures on civic space and human rights;
  - o the pathways through which those norms (and, in particular, key emerging priorities such as biometrics, travel surveillance and 'watchlisting') are generated and implemented and the implications for democratic scrutiny, oversight, accountability and the involvement of civil society;
  - o the interaction of the international, regional and national levels in the making of global security law and governance;
- identifying targets, pathways and potential allies for change, in particular by:
  - o analysing how emerging priorities in international security governance are or can be used to restrict human rights and civic space;
  - o identifying how those international norms shape localised counter-terrorism responses pathways through which those norms are implemented;
  - o identifying key actors involved in the generation, financing and implementation of norms and states and/or institutions that may be amenable to/supportive of efforts to counter negative developments;
  - o broadening the array of civil society actors aware of and engaged with efforts to counter international counter-terrorism and security norm-setting that undermines civic space and human rights.

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

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The project aims to provide a springboard for campaigning and advocacy that seeks to ensure, at a bare minimum, greater democratic and public scrutiny and oversight of transnational security institutions, with the long-term aim of rolling back and ultimately halting the development of an unaccountable, invasive and harmful global security architecture.

#### **The "security playbook" and migrants' rights activism**

Funder: Fund for Global Human Rights

Duration: October 2023-May 2024 (research), July 2024-January 2025 (convening)

A research project investigating how states are using security discourses and measures to repress migrant and refugee rights activism. In 2024, we also supported the organisation of a convening in Albania, for groups affected by state repression to discuss our research and to consider strategies in response.

#### **Trustees and officers**

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	Marie-Laure Basilien-Gainche
	Laure Baudrihayé-Gérard
	Jonathan Bloch
	Victoria Canning
	Nadine Finch
	Lilana Keith (resigned 30 April 2025)
	Gabriel Almeida (resigned 3 June 2024)

Secretary:	Jonathan Bloch
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#### **Statement of trustees' responsibilities**

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Libertarian Research and Education Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

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### **Trustees' Report**

- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The financial statements on pages 29 to 45 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 18 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



.....  
Jonathan Bloch  
Company secretary and trustee

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

### **Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Libertarian Research and Education Trust ('the Company')**

I report to the charity trustees (who are also Directors for the purpose of company law) on my examination of the accounts of the The Libertarian Research and Education Trust ('the charitable company') for the year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and related notes on pages 29 to 45.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

#### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of The Libertarian Research and Education Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of The Libertarian Research and Education Trust are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit goes beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

#### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of The Libertarian Research and Education Trust as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

**The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

**Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Libertarian Research and Education Trust ('the Company')**

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Tim Sullivan FCA  
Field Sullivan Limited  
9 Hare & Billet Road  
Blackheath  
SE3 0RB

18 September 2025

**The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**  
known as Statewatch

**Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**  
**(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)**

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>							
Donations and legacies	3	11,737	128,211	139,948	169,498	129,048	298,546
Charitable activities	4	12,905	-	12,905	13,675	-	13,675
Investment income	5	149	-	149	68	-	68
Total income		24,791	128,211	153,002	183,241	129,048	312,289
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Charitable activities	6	(19,966)	(175,404)	(195,370)	(32,222)	(86,653)	(118,875)
Total expenditure		(19,966)	(175,404)	(195,370)	(32,222)	(86,653)	(118,875)
Net income/(expenditure)		4,825	(47,193)	(42,368)	151,019	42,395	193,414
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	(2,646)	2,646	-
Net movement in funds		4,825	(47,193)	(42,368)	148,373	45,041	193,414
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>							
Total funds brought forward		155,751	47,193	202,944	7,378	2,152	9,530
Total funds carried forward	17	160,576	-	160,576	155,751	47,193	202,944

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The notes on pages 33 to 45 form an integral part of these financial statements.

**The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**  
**known as Statewatch**

**Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**  
**(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)**

The funds breakdown for 2023 is shown in note 17.

The notes on pages 33 to 45 form an integral part of these financial statements.



# The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

(Registration number: 08480724)

## Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	11	1,088	1,200
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	12	38,728	18,613
Cash at bank and in hand	13	<u>132,178</u>	<u>211,363</u>
		170,906	229,976
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	14	<u>(6,797)</u>	<u>(24,023)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>164,109</u>	<u>205,953</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		165,197	207,153
<b>Provisions</b>	15	<u>(4,621)</u>	<u>(4,209)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u><u>160,576</u></u>	<u><u>202,944</u></u>
<b>Funds of the charity:</b>			
<b>Restricted income funds</b>			
Restricted funds		-	47,193
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>			
Unrestricted funds		<u>160,576</u>	<u>155,751</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	17	<u><u>160,576</u></u>	<u><u>202,944</u></u>

For the financial year ending 31 December 2024 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

### Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The notes on pages 33 to 45 form an integral part of these financial statements.

**The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

**(Registration number: 08480724)**

**Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024**

The financial statements on pages 29 to 45 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 18 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



.....  
Jonathan Bloch  
Company secretary and trustee

The notes on pages 33 to 45 form an integral part of these financial statements.

# **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

## **Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

### **1 Charity status**

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is:

88 Fleet Street

London

EC4Y 1DH

These financial statements were authorised for issue by the trustees on 18 September 2025.

### **2 Accounting policies**

#### **Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates**

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

#### **Statement of compliance**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Second edition October 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They also comply with the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011.

#### **Basis of preparation**

The Libertarian Research and Education Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

#### **Going concern**

In common with many similar organisations who receive the majority of their income from public funding, the viability of The Libertarian Research and Education Trust is dependent on finding continuing sources of funding. As set out in the trustee's report, the company's financial situation remains challenging, but the trustees are working to address these issues. Accordingly, the trustees believe it is appropriate to prepare the accounts on a going concern basis.

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

#### **Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement**

The charity opted to early adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

#### **Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the directors are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the periods in which the estimate is revised where revisions affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revisions affects both current and future periods.

#### **Income and endowments**

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

#### ***Donations and legacies***

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

#### ***Grants receivable***

Grants are recognised when the charity has an entitlement to the funds and any conditions linked to the grants have been met. Where performance conditions are attached to the grant and are yet to be met, the income is recognised as a liability and included on the balance sheet as deferred income to be released.

#### ***Deferred income***

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

#### ***Investment income***

Dividends are recognised once the dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the dividend due.

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

#### **Expenditure**

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

#### ***Charitable activities***

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

#### **Support costs**

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

#### **Taxation**

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

#### **Tangible fixed assets**

Individual fixed assets costing £500 or more are initially recorded at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

#### **Trade debtors**

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

#### **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

#### **Borrowings**

Interest-bearing borrowings are initially recorded at fair value, net of transaction costs. Interest-bearing borrowings are subsequently carried at amortised cost, with the difference between the proceeds, net of transaction costs, and the amount due on redemption being recognised as a charge to the Statement of Financial Activities over the period of the relevant borrowing.

Interest expense is recognised on the basis of the effective interest method and is included in interest payable and similar charges.

Borrowings are classified as current liabilities unless the charity has an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting date.

#### **Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the charity has an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that the charity will be required to settle that obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

#### **Fund structure**

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

# The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

### 3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted		Total	Total
	General	Restricted	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Donations and legacies;				
Committed giving	6,680	-	6,680	6,707
Gift aid reclaimed	1,057	-	1,057	1,195
Grants, including capital grants;				
European Digital Rights	-	5,929	5,929	-
Garden Court	4,000	-	4,000	4,000
Open Society Institute	-	-	-	157,596
Privacy International	-	34,505	34,505	11,501
Fund for Global Human rights	-	40,148	40,148	19,254
Funders' Initiative for Civil Society	-	-	-	98,293
Network of European Foundations	-	47,629	47,629	-
	<u>11,737</u>	<u>128,211</u>	<u>139,948</u>	<u>298,546</u>

### 4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	General	2024	2023
	£	£	£
Service level agreement	10,022	10,022	7,101
Fees and supplies	484	484	366
Other income	<u>2,399</u>	<u>2,399</u>	<u>6,208</u>
	<u>12,905</u>	<u>12,905</u>	<u>13,675</u>

# The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

### 5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	149	149	68

### 6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Note	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Staff costs	9	85,829	67,950
Computer software and maintenance		7,545	3,731
Printing, postage and stationery		134	287
Trade subscriptions		1,214	1,321
Sundries		312	15
Project costs		34,039	5,663
Travel and subsistence		5,243	2,732
Support costs	8	61,054	37,176
		195,370	118,875

### 7 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year.



# The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

## Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

### 8 Analysis of support costs

#### Support costs

	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Rent	7,500	9,555
Insurance	972	693
Accountancy	-	180
Independent examination	2,484	2,412
Consultancy	48,083	22,987
Legal and professional	13	817
Bank charges	276	132
Foreign currency (gains)/losses	1,230	-
Depreciation of office equipment	496	400
	<u>61,054</u>	<u>37,176</u>

### 9 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Staff costs during the year were:</b>		
Wages and salaries	80,206	65,207
Social security costs	1,407	153
Pension costs	4,151	2,392
Other staff costs	65	198
	<u>85,829</u>	<u>67,950</u>

## The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	<b>2024 No</b>	<b>2023 No</b>
Charitable activities	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

#### 10 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

#### 11 Tangible fixed assets

	<b>Furniture and equipment £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Cost</b>		
At 1 January 2024	1,600	1,600
Additions	<u>384</u>	<u>384</u>
At 31 December 2024	<u>1,984</u>	<u>1,984</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
At 1 January 2024	400	400
Charge for the year	<u>496</u>	<u>496</u>
At 31 December 2024	<u>896</u>	<u>896</u>
<b>Net book value</b>		
At 31 December 2024	<u>1,088</u>	<u>1,088</u>
At 31 December 2023	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,200</u>

**The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

known as Statewatch

**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

**12 Debtors**

	2024 £	2023 £
Prepayments	981	2,499
Accrued income	36,691	14,919
Other debtors	1,056	1,195
	<u>38,728</u>	<u>18,613</u>

**13 Cash and cash equivalents**

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash at bank	<u>132,178</u>	<u>211,363</u>

**14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	2024 £	2023 £
Other taxation and social security	3,063	2,564
Accruals	3,734	3,620
Deferred income	-	17,839
	<u>6,797</u>	<u>24,023</u>

**15 Provisions**

	Pension contributions provision £	Total £
At 1 January 2024	(4,209)	(4,209)
Utilised during the period	<u>(412)</u>	<u>(412)</u>
At 31 December 2024	<u>(4,621)</u>	<u>(4,621)</u>

**16 Related party transactions**

There were no related party transactions in the year.

The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

17 Funds

	Balance at 1 January 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 December 2024 £
<b>Unrestricted</b>				
<i>General</i>				
General Funds	155,751	24,791	(19,966)	160,576
<b>Restricted</b>				
PI Project	5,462	34,505	(39,967)	-
The Fund for Global Human Rights	-	40,148	(40,148)	-
Funders' Initiative for Civil Society	41,731	-	(41,731)	-
European Digital Rights	-	5,929	(5,929)	-
Network of European Foundations	-	47,629	(47,629)	-
	<u>47,193</u>	<u>128,211</u>	<u>(175,404)</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>202,944</u>	<u>153,002</u>	<u>(195,370)</u>	<u>160,576</u>

The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

	Balance at 1 January 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 December 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted</b>					
<i>General</i>					
General Funds	7,378	183,241	(32,222)	(2,646)	155,751
<b>Restricted</b>					
PI Project	2,152	11,501	(8,191)	-	5,462
The Fund for Global Human Rights	-	19,254	(21,900)	2,646	-
Funders' Initiative for Civil Society	-	98,293	(56,562)	-	41,731
	<u>2,152</u>	<u>129,048</u>	<u>(86,653)</u>	<u>2,646</u>	<u>47,193</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>9,530</u>	<u>312,289</u>	<u>(118,875)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>202,944</u>

## **The Libertarian Research and Education Trust**

**known as Statewatch**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024**

Protecting Migrants Communities by Future-Proofing the Immigration system  
Funder: Privacy International

Summary: In order to inform civil society organisations, journalists and European and national parliamentary representatives about EU justice and home affairs agencies' roles in this complex information network and its impact on individuals' rights, this project produced an interactive online 'map' and a series of short briefings to explain and critically analyse:

- the processing of personal data by Frontex, Europol and the EU Asylum Agency in the context of the EU's 'interoperability' initiative, including new roles and powers granted to the agencies in relation to interoperable systems and how this compares to the status quo ante as well as their more general data processing powers; and
- the impact of that data processing on fundamental rights.

Transnational security policy, civic space and human rights  
Funder: Funders Initiative for Civil Society

Summary: Investigating transnational security and counter-terrorism obligations originating from the UN Security Council, their implementation by international and regional intergovernmental organisations, and their impacts and effects on civic space and human rights at national level.

Transparency on AI technologies in migration: Europe's techno-border  
Funder: EuroMed Rights

Summary: A study to provide an overview of the links between European migration policies - namely specific files contained in the so-called EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, such as the Screening Regulation - and the use of security-focused technologies, including AI. The study included a focus on Italy and Spain, as key countries for the implementation of screenings of asylum applicants at external borders.

Civic space, security, and Migrants' Rights Research; the security playbook and migrants' rights activism  
Funder: Fund for Global Human Rights

Summary: A project investigating how governments in Europe and beyond have used security narratives and measures to crack down on migrant/refugee rights work.

Data exchange, exclusion and denial at the borders  
Funder: Privacy International

Summary: This project investigates the use of secret evidence in asylum and immigration proceedings in the EU, and looks at how data protection law may be used to provide improved access to an effective remedy for people in those proceedings.

Advocacy and Campaign  
actions at national level related to the AI Act and its implementation  
Funder: European Digital Rights

## The Libertarian Research and Education Trust

known as Statewatch

### Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

The goal of this project is to increase democratic scrutiny and oversight of the EU's ongoing security AI plans. We will do this through an investigation of the 'state of play' of the security AI roadmap and the projects it encompasses, as well as other related ongoing work (for example, initiatives carried out under the auspices of Europol's Innovation Hub).

#### 18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total funds at 31 December 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	1,088	1,088
Current assets	170,906	170,906
Current liabilities	(6,797)	(6,797)
Provisions	(4,621)	(4,621)
Total net assets	<u>160,576</u>	<u>160,576</u>

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 December 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	1,200	-	1,200
Current assets	182,783	47,193	229,976
Current liabilities	(24,023)	-	(24,023)
Provisions	(4,209)	-	(4,209)
Total net assets	<u>155,751</u>	<u>47,193</u>	<u>202,944</u>