



My name is Meike and I am doing a PhD at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL) in the field of forensic phonetics. In addition, last year I started my own company *Lingua Forensica*, where I do casework, lectures and trainings in forensic linguistics. The main theme and motivation in my life is fighting injustice. If I am working and studying in the field of justice, how can I contribute to the suffering of animals other than humans and of all the generations after us? As Martin Luther King said, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” This is why in everything I do, I incorporate a sustainable lifestyle, which for me means reducing my ecological footprint in any way possible, including veganism, zero waste, and minimalism.

Before covid, I visited a lot of international conferences. At first, I used to fly to these events when the train ride would take me more than six hours, as is the university’s policy. The final conference I visited was the roundtable of the Germanic Society for Forensic Linguistics (GSFL) in 2019, which took place in Graz. I went there by train, equipped with a tote bag, steel water bottle, reusable coffee mug, food container, bamboo cutlery, an old nametag, and my own pen and paper – my ultimate zero-waste conference pack. To my surprise, the conference organizers did not hand out any paper programs, pens, and papers, and the badges were collected at the end to be reused. At the General Meeting, it was announced that the conference would turn into a biennial rather than an annual conference, reducing the societies’ ecological footprint by an impressive 50 per cent.

Afterwards, I wrote an email to complement the GSFL and offer my help in their transition towards a sustainable academic society. This led to my appointment as Environmental Officer in the Executive Council of the GSFL. So far, my role has been fairly easygoing; all conferences since my appointment have been cancelled due to covid. My main task at the moment is to take care of the GSFL Goes Green Newsletter, which is sent to all members four times a year. So far, I have written about topics as veganism, zero waste, animal-friendly language, and cognitive dissonance. With the newsletter I hope to inspire members to make sustainable choices, especially when we will meet again in person in the future.

In addition, in my free time I do volunteering work in the animal rights and sustainability sector. I am secretary at the non-profit organization Stem voor Dieren (Voice for Animals) which is based in Leiden. We aim to fight animal abuse in the “livestock industry” and in general by providing information and by exploring legal steps that may be taken. I am also a board member of the Party for the Animals in

the Zuid-Holland department and treasurer of their Leiden workgroup. All these activities give me fulfilment in life besides just working on my own research.

When studying academic articles regarding climate change, the environment, the benefits of a plant-based diet, and the like, I can sometimes feel a bit despondent and powerless. By taking action in my personal life and by making efforts to change the world through helping different organizations, I feel more optimistic and in control. I am glad that the university has an organization such as LUGO, which aims to make positive organization-wide changes. I believe that all scientists are inherently motivated to not just discover the world, but also make it a better place. In my opinion, aiming for a just, sustainable, empathetic society is the least we can do.