

FYEG Activity Report 2016/17

The last General Assembly held in Prague last year had set several priorities for this year that we, both with the EC, the office, and the help of the Member Organisations and partners of FYEG, have been working on the implementation of diverse activities, campaigns and processes that will be defined in this document. Obviously, plans are challenged and need adaptation when facing reality, and this year has again been challenging in these regards.

Externally, the threat of a rising far-right has continued to grow, despite notable defeats - including by Green candidates - in several countries. The refugee crisis is far from resolved and the messy Brexit process keeps casting a shadow of uncertainty on the entire European project. Internally, great challenges arose from a difficult relationship between bodies, as well as naturally from the continued growth of FYEG as an organisation, as well as the growth in size and frequency of our events.

Despite that, thanks to the directions given by the previous activity plan, the renewal of our structures and activists, but also thanks to the support and cooperation with our MOs, we could still carry out, rather successfully, various regular activities all year long. We organised a successful and huge Summer Camp in Serbia, gathered a big number of activists in Marrakech for the climate negotiations, dared to experiment with new formats to highlight our host country Morocco's tarnished human rights record in Western Sahara and survived a hyper-intense month with a non-male event in Turkey, our arms-trade seminar in Liverpool and attending the biggest Green gathering of all times in the same city.

Structural activities, including Working Group Meeting and SPM, as well as many MO visits filled the rest of the space in what has been a very tightly tacted year for the EC and the federation as a whole. Nonetheless, we managed to keep in close contact and improve our relations with key partners throughout the year by successfully placing people close to FYEG in key position at some of our important partners - at times even against the odds.

The report will be structured along the lines of last year's activity plan to show the coherence of our activities with the plan approved by the General Assembly in Prague and explain any potential deviations.

Activities: Events and Communication

“2016/2017 WILL BE A YEAR OF TRIAL AND ERROR. WE WILL EXPERIMENT WITH NEW FORMATS OF POLITICAL OUTREACH AND EVENTS BUT ALSO INTENSIFY AND ENHANCE WHAT WE ARE GOOD AT AND WHAT WE SUCCESSFULLY ESTABLISHED.”

And trial-and-erroring we were!

Going beyond traditional campaigning

2016 and 2017 we focused a lot on new types of communications and projects around this topic. With a new communications officer we organised a side-event to our COP-related activities in Marrakech that aimed at equipping our activists with the right skills to produce high-quality media outputs around their causes themselves.

The study visit to Western Sahara presented a very new format as well. We used some of the money from the “ad-hoc projects” budget line to send a small group of people to conduct a study visit again with a focus on media output which was shared on a dedicated facebook page. A certain degree of controversy around this experimental project certainly helped one of the aims to process our visit to Morocco as a country with a very difficult human rights record.

While our Arts, Crafts and Politics seminar had to move to autumn and into the next EC’s mandate for capacity reasons, our communications officer covered a great amount of important events and prepared it for social media right after starting in his new position, according to a social media plan he prepared. For the French elections the EC worked together with individual activists from the Working Groups, as well as the Ecosprinter in a new format as well, by sending an activist to cover the elections himself live from France.

Seminars

As agreed in the activity plan, COP22 in Marrakech featured large in the last half of 2016. We gathered 40 activists in Morocco for an alter-COP seminar in conditions that were very new to FYEG. Having never organised an activity in Africa we were dependent on local support, which worked out to different extents. Despite challenging conditions, we managed to provide a unique and inspiring experience to participants, for many of whom it was the first time to attend COP or visit another continent. As described above, the event was actually two activities in one with a seminar for the majority and a smaller media project on its side.

We delivered the planned non-male project “Demasculinisation of Politics”, which took place in Istanbul in March and was a refreshingly new format that was very well received by participants, as

well as widely shared on social media. The project included exclusively non-male participants to give them space to discuss, exchange ideas and support each-other. Additionally, project took place against a background of a turbulent political situation in Turkey.

Resistance is fertile! In Liverpool can as well be seen under the header of trial and error. We gathered almost 40 activists in a squat to discuss Europe's role in wars around the world. The novelty was not only the space, which was a new and valuable experience to many participants, but also the fact that we were joined by several guests from overseas, who added a valuable perspective to the seminar that we have not usually access to.

Straight after Resistance is fertile! we kept the promise to support a Global Young Greens Congress happening in parallel to the wider #Greens2017 event. Through Resistance is Fertile! We brought around 30 activists to this event, in addition to coordinating those who were there in other functions and by other means. Uniting the different European and global perspectives on GYG we managed to structure the debate, agree on important points and outsource critical debates to the post-congress space. GYG and #Greens2017 in general was an important and good opportunity for people to forge a global network that would now benefit greatly from continued FYEG tutoring.

Going beyond small events

FYEG events this year had a tendency to be very big, both in terms of participants and length. Marrakech with 40 participants, Liverpool with 40 people and a summer camp with 60 people in Serbia, all of them lasting about a week, comes with particular challenges and raises questions about how we can maintain a steady incorporation of new activists. Building on this idea we have planned even bigger Summer Camp in the summer of 2017. In terms of format we are also reaching a point when the non-formal methods we used so far reach their limits and other structures need to be found to ensure the learning outcomes and aims of the event can be met. That said, going big came with a distinct advantage of enabling more activists than ever to discuss their ideas and connect to fellow young Greens on a European level. With regards to the 2019 elections big events give a great opportunity to built up a large network of European activists to fight for a good result for the Greens.

The idea of European Action Days was not pursued for capacity reasons.

Internal Events and internal communication

As every year, 2016 saw a working group meeting in Brussels. We took this opportunity for the Ecosprinter board to meet in person, as well as for the EC to meet with our Brussels-based partners. The meeting was accompanied by a visit to European Parliament.

In December 2016 Strategic Planning Meeting was held in Brussels. During the 3-day seminar delegates from our Member organizations discussed development of FYEG in 3 key areas: common platform, structures and activities. Results of the meeting were later reported to the EC. Additionally, inclusion audit was carried during and after the meeting to identify areas for inclusion improvement

in the organization. SPM was accompanied by Future of Europe seminar during which delegates could exchange views with MEPs and political advisors on current trends and political upheavals in Europe. Delegates also participated in conference "resetting the EU" organized by European Green Party. This meeting saw a new logistical format, in which all activities were held in one venue.

Early Summer 2017 will see our General Assembly happening in Madrid together with a Spring Conference on progressive alliances. This will allow delegates from our Member Organisations to learn about the current discussions and challenges for Europe's progressive forces at local, national and European levels. This year FYEG's Spring Conference, will be focusing on the emergence of new political forces, often resulting from a convergence of struggles, within the progressive camp, strong enough to defeat the conservative neoliberal narratives and the rise of the far right. Based on the examples in Southern Europe, where the fight against austerity has led new coalitions to exist in the political game, we will analyse, exchange and build strategies for Greens to be at the forefront of these progressive fronts in each of our societies.

The Executive Committee met regularly throughout the year. After kickstarting the year with a retreat in Serbia before the Summer Camp we met several times, including two meetings in Brussels, one in Madrid and a second retreat in Mainz to readjust our course and reflect after the largest part of the mandate was over. Minutes from these meetings were published on the website and sent to MOs by the office. Besides that, online EC meetings took place regularly every second week.

After hiring a new communication officer, our professional communication both internally and externally got a massive boost. While MO Skypes did not happen for capacity reasons, a regular flow of newsletters has been set up in the recent weeks.

Membership

One of our members faced a major crisis this year. Austrian Young Greens lost their status as youth wing of the political party over internal disputes. The Executive Committee was in close communication with Junge Grüne throughout the discussions and wielded its influence to mediate the crisis. We continue to stand on the side of our Member Organisation.

We are delighted to see that some members proactively sought to meet and connect beyond the FYEG framework, as seen in the exchanges between i.a. Germany, Serbia and Norway.

Regional collaboration keeps being difficult due to the different sizes and ways of working between MOs, as well as for funding reasons.

Long-standing issues with some members have been settled and the Irish Young Greens will seek to return to the FYEG family in Madrid. More interest from other potential MOs in Northern Ireland and Valencia keeps raising questions about the structure of our membership more general. Contacts have been established with a Danish Young Green Movement, which has only recently been formally established, but is interested in becoming an FYEG member at some point.

Skill Trainings

As mentioned before, training our activists has been a priority in several of our events, both through dedicated training events like Marrakech's media training, as well as through training sessions at other events, e.g. training on policy paper writing in Liverpool. Training on political campaigning skills "Arts, Crafts and Politics" has been moved from April to September, but will be implemented this year with - hopefully - even better program.

Work on the Pool of Trainers has stalled due to a lack of capacities.

Ecosprinter

Following the recommendations of the last activity plan, the Ecosprinter had a lot of space to develop itself and its relationship to the Green European Journal. The Editorial Board together with the Executive Committee managed to publish a print version on the summer camp and its topic social rights last December. Copies have been shared with MOs and a second print edition on Resistance is Fertile is due to be published before the GA.

For more, please refer to the separate Ecosprinter Report.

Office

This year we saw a marked and much needed growth in the office.

We hired an additional part-time office assistant to take care of reimbursements and support the work in the office. This additional support proved to be extremely valuable, especially through a difficult year in terms of EC-Office relations.

In addition, the new position of a Communications Officer was created in preparation of the 2019 elections and to professionalise FYEG's communications. FYEG's former project manager transitioned into this new position and a new project manager was hired instead. Both have been a great support for the Executive Committee and an invaluable addition to FYEG's work force and capacities.

Numerous procedures have been implemented by the office to improve the financial management and transparency of the organization. Bookkeeping and cash management were significantly improved. Additionally, procedures were developed to allow Treasurer approve project budgets and transactions thus ensuring greater control and transparency.

Office developed detailed timeline of projects and activities and was responsible for logistics of each project and activity, including statutory meetings, visits, political work and networking. During EC travels and meetings tickets were booked and accommodation provided by Secretary General.

The relationship between EC and Office were oftentimes challenging, with conflicting views and expectations towards each other. However, both EC and Office showed a lot of good will to sit

together and discuss through the differences to find common solutions. This allowed for solving conflicts without the need for external mediation and a continuity of cooperation between EC and Office throughout the year. During the retreat in Mainz Secretary General decided to step down and EC and SecGen agreed that there should be a new Secretary General elections at the GA in Madrid.

Audit of Office-EC relationship was not carried out this year.

Working Groups

Working with priority working groups proved to be a good system to focus sufficient energy on the working groups which are of particular importance for FYEG's overall work. Some of the priority working groups have been particularly active throughout the year and supported the development and implementation of projects and statements, as well as contributing their own.

In autumn 2016 we held our annual Working Groups Meeting in Brussels that allowed its members to get to know each other and structure their activities.

Inclusion Audit

GA 2016 mandated the EC to start working on the Inclusion Audit process of the organisation. The process on itself was completely new to the organisation, so EC needed to review different models of Inclusion Audit (IA) and to have a clear vision on how to do it until the end of the mandate. The main goal was to investigate on how much of inclusive FYEG's structures, activities and atmosphere are. With inclusion we specifically mean the inclusion of groups that are traditionally marginalised in decision making, such as women, trans persons, minorities, persons with disabilities, migrants, and other groups.

EC representatives, Gender WG and the Structural Subgroup, worked together in order to evaluate the different projects the Federation had throughout the year and to have an internal study within our MOs based on gender perspective. To make this happen FYEG in cooperation with the prep-teams of each project, they have send an evaluation rubric after every project, since December 2016, to the participants. After taking participant's answers, the IA team summarised the results in order to provide the EC with a report.

Commitment to Open Source tools

The Executive Committee spent a lot of time investigating open-source technology for its own use at the beginning of the year and actively started to use Mumble for its meetings. After a while though, unfortunately, this did not prove to be a viable solution and we had to switch back to Google Hangouts.