

MOTIVATIONAL LETTER

Dear green friends,

I am putting myself forth as a candidate for the Executive Committee of the Federation of Young European Greens, because I love this federation and I wish to put in the work to make it even grander.

My first touch with FYEG was the GA in Madrid in 2017, and since then I have had the pleasure and privilege of getting to know this beautiful federation of ours and its amazing people in many contexts and from many different angles from participating in events and working groups to organising collaboration directly between Finnish Young Greens and other MOs. Through my role as the international secretary of the Finnish Young Greens FYEG has been my main area of work for the past couple of years, and I would now like to take that special relationship to a whole new level.

I started my green journey in 2015 in a tiny local organisation of a handful of people, where our entire budget was a handful of coins and bills in a glass jar. From there I've held numerous positions and postings within the green movement, and the path has taken me to the Executive Committee of one of the biggest and most influential political youth organisations in Finland, as well as the party council of the Finnish Greens. This experience with organisations that are very different from each other, will hopefully serve well in terms of organisational development within FYEG.

My activist background is in minority rights and the climate movement. My people, Karelians, were colonised, conquered, brutalized and nearly destroyed by the forces of Russian imperialism and Finnish nationalism decades before I was born. The pain of that doesn't really abate even after generations, and I want to for my part fight so that less and less people would have to feel that pain in the future. In 2019 I got together with a bunch of friends, and we founded the first ever Karelian youth organisation in Finland. In under three years we have grown into a nationwide organisation with hundreds of members. We have gotten our message loud and clear through to the masses and to the very top of Finnish political institutions.

During the last few years, I have also been heavily involved in the climate movement, particularly in Fridays for Future Finland. I have been organising climate strikes, demonstrations and campaigns, with a particular focus on attacking fossil giants and exposing their greenwashing. I have also been negotiating public appearances and writing speeches and manifests. I'm a simple guy who takes pleasure in the smaller things in life – any day when I can inflict PR losses on immoral fossil companies is a day worth celebrating.

But no fight can be won without allies, and it is my firmly held opinion that young greens make the best allies on this continent. Whether it's the fight against imperialist Russian aggression, the fight against fossil capitalism or the fight against the far right poisoning our societies from within, we the young greens must be there to fight the forces of evil and provide help and solidarity to those in need. Over the years I have been both an ally and the person in need of help, and I hope that this experience will help me in serving our people and MOs whenever they need help, no matter the type of help they need.

I am running for the EC because I want to fight. I have run successful campaigns both in elections and in setting the agenda in public discussion. I have developed organisations both big and small, overseen them rise from nothing, flourish and survive through inner and external crises, whether it's a budget slash or a global pandemic. I have organised events and protests and mediated alliances. Whatever resources at hand, whether it's a few good people and a jar with some money in it, or a full-fledged office and thousands of members, I know how to turn it into meaningful societal action.

These skills, this experience and my full heart and passion I wish to give to FYEG. Because I believe in this community, and I believe in us. And I believe I could make this fantastic federation even fiercer and more efficient than it already is.

VISION STATEMENT

We are a movement spanning this entire continent. Whether it's east or west, north or south, green politics and green movements are at the forefront in the fight for a cleaner, safer, more equal more just world. Although our struggles and values transcend borders, these fights still mostly take place locally. Although we are a federation of organisations with shared goals and ideas, the MOs still do most of their work in their respective countries and regions. Thus, the role of FYEG is to serve the MOs in their respective struggles. FYEG is the forum in which MOs come together to think globally, in order to help them act locally.

MEDIATION AS A BRIDGE TO MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

One of the main functions of FYEG is to bring green people and green movements from all over Europe together, to learn from each other and to discuss green ideas and green politics. By sharing and debating ideas we not only improve the ideological readiness of our respective MOs, but also shape the ideology of the green movement overall. We come out of that process stronger not only as MOs and individuals, but as an international movement as well.

Such cooperation, however, is not without its own challenges and issues. Although we are united by common values such as equality, feminism and climate justice, there are individual issues that divide us. Furthermore, we also come from very different societies with different histories and presents, as well different cultures when it comes to political discussions and debates. Because of this it is possible to sometimes fail to account for issues that are sensitive for others, and this also means fertile grounds for possible misunderstandings. To counter this I would like to further develop moderation and safer spaces policies for FYEG events so that we can provide participants from various backgrounds truly safe and comfortable spaces to discuss and debate issues and ideas. For the well-being of the federation, it is also vital to create space to disagree with one another in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

FEDERATION OF REGIONAL NETWORKS

Besides providing a platform for all our MOs to work together, FYEG can also encourage and facilitate collaboration directly between different MOs. The MO-to-MO trainings are an excellent example of this, and that concept I would very happily see continued and developed further.

I believe that regional collaboration between MOs is also something that the entire FYEG benefits greatly from. There are already good examples of this being done well. Collaboration between the Nordic countries has been very fruitful, and under my term as the international secretary of the Finnish Young Greens this collaboration has become steadier and more functional than ever.

One region where I see great potential for such closer collaboration is the Baltic countries. FYEGs presence in the region is still relatively new and has just grown with the acceptance of Estonian Young Greens as a candidate organisation. Getting an MO from Lithuania would strengthen the region still, and fostering regional collaboration not only within the Baltic, but also together with Nordic countries could be very beneficial. I have lived and studied in Lithuania and Estonia is a very familiar country to me as well, so this is something that I would be more than happy to further. Of course, such collaboration is first and foremost up to the MOs themselves to decide, but I believe that FYEG is in a fantastic position to serve in mentoring and mediating roles not only in the Baltics, but wherever such regional bonds can be formed and fostered.

Furthermore, when it comes to regions, I believe that at the moment it is especially important for FYEG to pay extra attention to its Eastern region. There are MOs to be helped in their development and potentiality for the recruitment of new members as well, particularly in the Balkans where ever stronger regional collaboration between countries can hopefully be fostered as well. The MOs know the best what would help them and what their needs are. Often the best thing that an ally can do is to detach their own opinions and to listen. Currently it is also Eastern Europe that is the stage for the biggest threat all of Europe has faced in decades – brutal Russian aggression. FYEG must make sure that the fight is never forgotten in the West and must keep pushing for bigger and stronger support for Ukraine.

HERE TO SERVE

In the end I do believe that the main function of FYEG is to serve its MOs. The best this federation can do is to lift the MOs up, aid them in their local efforts and to provide them with possibilities to realise themselves internationally as well. The MOs decide the course and it is FYEG's job to set the sails and steer the ship.

FYEG can serve the MOs in a multitude of fashions, whether it's mentoring, capacity building, communications, consultation or education. Our MOs come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, and what works for one MO can be completely redundant for another. The key is to listen and to understand the different situations and resources that the MOs have at their disposal. I have worked in young green organisations both tiny and large and have steered well-established organisations as well as created a new one from the scratch. Organisational development is indeed one of my passions (it may sound boring but some of my other passions include dictionaries and birdwatching, so I guess I'm a pretty boring guy).

In that same vein, I do believe that the main function of an EC member is to serve the MOs. If elected, my lines will always be open to you, no matter how big or small the issue. And if some of my ideas make about as much sense as Eurovision without glitter, I'm happy to be called out on my crap.

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Keating". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.