



FEDERATION OF YOUNG
EUROPEAN GREENS

GENERAL 27-29 AUG
2020 **ASSEMBLY**
BRUSSELS, BE / ONLINE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 2019-2020



This year's Executive Committee started its mandate in August 2019, following the FYEG General Assembly in Istanbul. It was first composed of Mina Tolu and Antoine Tifine as co-spokespersons, Stefanie De Bock as Treasurer and Stalo Demosthenous, Eleanor Morrissey, Kristy Louise Rhades, Nils Rübemann and Mariam Vatsadze as members of the EC. In April, Kristy resigned from the board and Wanja Kaufmann was elected to replace her.

This mandate has been the first one after the Greens' success in the 2019 European Elections and the election of several young green MEPs. This mandate was especially marked by the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, due to which all in-person international activities taking place after March 2020 have been canceled and the GA was moved from May to August 2020.

WORKING AS A TEAM

Task division and organisation of work.

The European Elections last year meant that FYEG's General Assembly was held in August rather than in May as it usually is. Therefore, contrary to past Executive Committees that have organised an EC retreat and taken the time to get into their role during the summer (a rather calm period politically and personally), the beginning of our mandate coincided with an intense political period, and for many of us an intense personal period (new studies, new jobs, etc.).

During our first in person EC meeting, right after the GA in Istanbul, we divided the first tasks between us to be able to start our job immediately. Four weeks later, in September, we held our first EC retreat in Brussels, during which we finalised the task division and got way deeper into the topics. The task division was adapted along the year to fit to each of our availability and in reaction to the resignation of Kristy in April. It is annexed to this report.

The EC met once a week online between September and July 2020, first on Wednesdays then on Mondays in the evening, for a total of more or less 45 EC meetings. Based on previous years' practice, we had a fixed agenda and

rotated among us for moderating and taking minutes. Following the trend in the last years, most of our communication took place on Telegram and less by emails. All the relevant documentation was stored on the FYEG online drive. Following that, we recommend that the Advisory Committee would be given access to this drive.

Working in a feminist organisation

For several years, FYEG has been working to become a more inclusive and feminist organisation, not only in words but also in practice. The adoption of the Inclusion Plan, the Safer Spaces Policy in the 2019 General Assembly was a clear call from Member Organisations for us to work in this direction.

This year's Executive Committee was the second one elected following the implementation of the 50+ quota in FYEG. It was composed of 5 women, 2 men and 1 trans person. Despite that, we have witnessed from the beginning of the year usual patterns of male dominated spaces with, for example, male members of the Executive Committee taking more space during debates, mansplaining or maninterrupting. Instead of ignoring those behaviors, we have worked individually and collectively towards eliminating or reducing them. The work is still a long way to comply with the high standards we

are advocating for.

This concern was especially present during our long (live) EC meetings. During our first live EC meeting in September, we organised a training for all EC members on preventing harassment situations, with the help of the organisation Period. During our second live meeting in January, we organised a training on facilitation tricks and good practices in meetings. During our third long meeting (organised online due to the pandemic) in April, we held a discussion on making our structures more inclusive.

Challenges linked to Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic and the associated travel restrictions measures strongly affected our work in the EC. From March onwards, it hasn't been possible for FYEG to organise any in-person meetings. The main consequences were the decision to postpone the GA from May to August, making the EC mandate three months longer, the cancelation of all planned international activities, and the fact that the Executive Committee didn't meet in-person between January and August 2020.

Associated with the effects of the lockdown measures on mental health, on personal mood, and on the personal and professional life of each of us, this represented an unprecedented challenge for FYEG and its Executive Committee. While this was of course the source of tiredness, tensions or frustrations, it also brought our team closer.

This also highlighted the importance of caring for each other's well being and mental health in the EC, beyond the weekly check-in that we have at the beginning of our meetings. Members of the Executive Committee really appreciate that Stefanie volunteered to be the "happiness officer" of the EC, regularly offering tips or advice on dealing with the unusual situation.

This period nevertheless had an impact on the functioning of the EC as this is when Kristy

resigned and where the involvement of Mariam, because of the political situation in Georgia and her admirable commitments there, significantly dropped.

Structural challenges

While offering her resignation, Kristy highlighted that one of the reasons she had run for EC member was "to enhance our internal processes in terms of inclusivity, transparency and democracy" and that she resigned, among other reasons, because the current structures didn't allow her to push for the changes we wished for.

The question of our structures and our work in the EC and with the office has been the subject of many discussions, with the aim to find the best functioning considering the need for efficiency and to deliver on the Activity Plan, the different availabilities of each EC members, the need to offer good working conditions to FYEG employees, and our wish for more horizontal structures and decision making processes. Misunderstandings or differences of views regarding the repartition of some responsibilities led to tensions that could have been avoided. For example, the division of tasks and the regular contacts that the two spokespersons and secretary general had led to the feeling that part of decision making was concentrated in the hands of few. The fact that only one person from the previous Executive Committee was a member of this Executive Committee also contributed to that feeling of concentration of decision making.

The organisation of team work is specific to each team and to the individuals that compose it, their working habits and their experience. We hope nevertheless that the reflections that our team had will be amplified in the upcoming years.

RELATIONS WITH MEMBER ORGANISATIONS / TRANSPARENCY

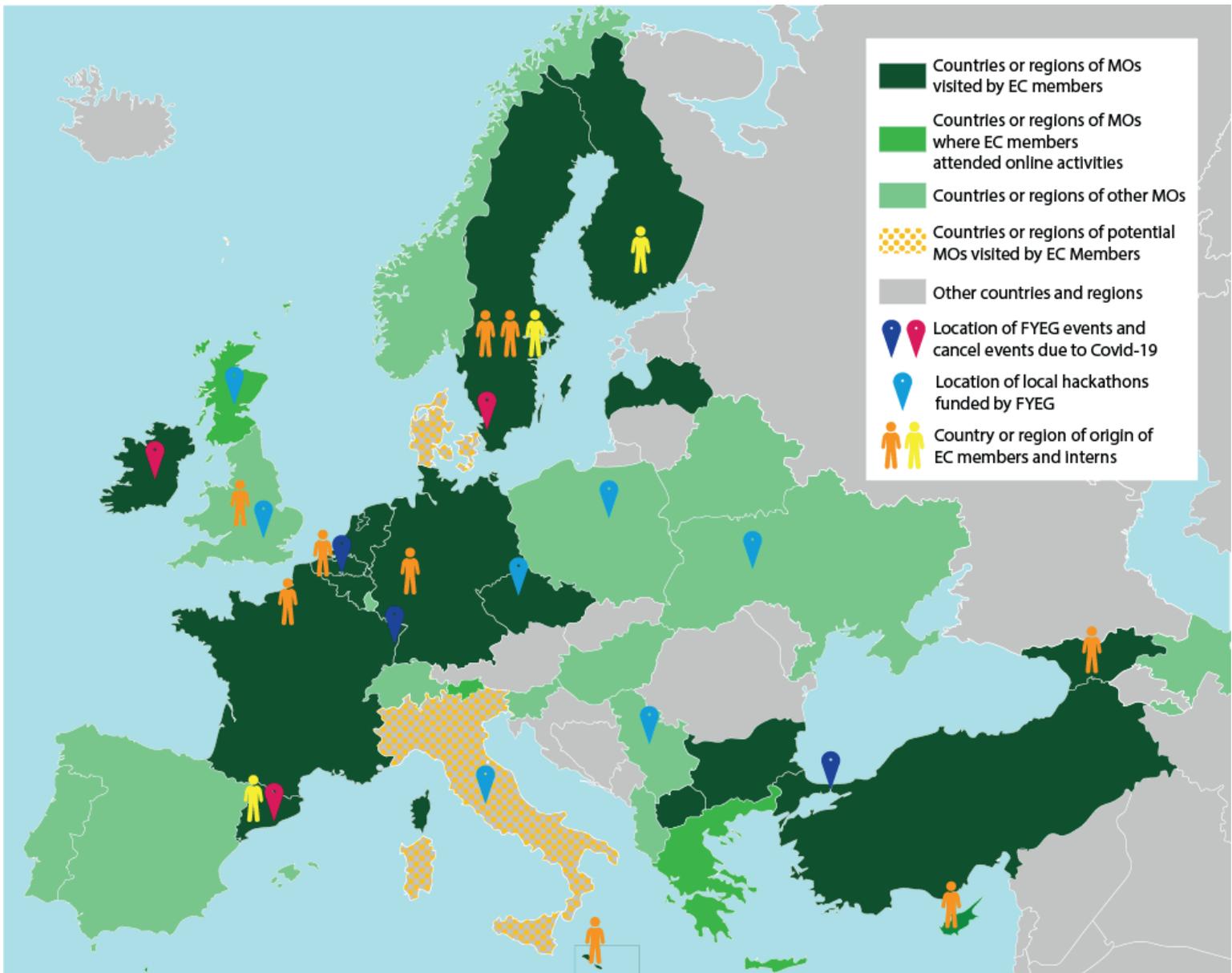
EC monthly reports

Our EC committed to transparency in its actions. Following the practice initiated last year, we published EC bi-monthly reports, summing up all the work done and the main decisions taken by our EC. These bi-monthly reports were coordinated by Stefanie De Bock, sent to all member organisations and published, for the record, on FYEG website.

Visits to MOs and study visits

The EC committed to ensuring deeper relations with member organisations. At the beginning of the year, we identified “priority countries”, based on factors such as the last study visit of an EC member, the last time the MO had EC members, the general involvement of the MO in FYEG activities, with the aim of ensuring strong relations with all MOs.

In that direction, we organised and planned several visits to Member Organisations. The Covid-19 pandemic stopped the possibility to organise in-person visits to MOs but, as many events were organised online, it was easier for EC members to join those activities when invited.



MO Forums

During the 2019 General Assembly, the Strategic Planning Committees, which was meant as a formal way to consult MOs, were deleted from FYEG meetings. The Activity Plan replaced it with MO forums, which were our main ways to consult MOs and to create spaces for debates.

An in-person MO forum was meant to be organised in March 2020 but was moved online due to the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite that, we managed to have fruitful discussions. We didn't organise as many online MO forums as thought in the Activity report and only organised one on MO fees and two prior to the GA (at the beginning and at the end of July).

During the year, we've kept in touch with Member Organisations through regional Telegram chats, that gathered international officers (sometimes chairs) of members organisations of the same region. While we believe they were an efficient way to spread information, they never became places for debates. Following Wanja's proposal, we've experimented creating chats for MOs with similar interests, by creating one for MOs in governments.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT EC

Avoiding GAs in August - Smoother transitions

Having General Assemblies in August is not ideal to ensure smooth transitions. If the 2019 and 2020 were postponed respectively to mid-August and late-August, we believe it's not a sustainable solution and invite the next EC to consider a GA either between May and the end of June. Also strong, early team building, ideally with the support of external professionals, starting early in the mandate, might be helpful. Part of this could be an in person meeting with some members of the AC, so people in these bodies can build up personal relationships and

exchange experiences.

Mental health

The level of professionalism FYEG has reached sometimes makes us forget about our own mental health and each other's well being. The Covid-19 pandemic was the moment we started to be aware of it. But it shouldn't take a pandemic to think about each other's well being. We advise the next EC to keep this issue high in their minds and to implement structure to take mental health in account, such as the idea of a happiness officer who is responsible for the EC's wellbeing. It is a good practice to plan ahead taking holidays from FYEG also as EC members and to be offline from FYEG communications for these days.

Nomination of EC candidates by MOs

Member organisations play an important role in the selection of Executive Members when they nominate candidates. As most delegates in a GA don't know the candidates, they heavily rely on the trust of the nominating organisations. We believe Member Organisations should better reinforce the way they organise this nomination process, drafting their own guidelines on how to nominate EC candidates: this should include explaining to potential EC members, with the assistance of the current FYEG EC and previous committee members, what the position entails and check if their candidate matches the criteria.

Continue the work on MOs

We invite the next Executive Committee to follow up on the work we have done towards welcoming new member organisations. Several contacts were made in the last year, some of them leading to candidacies at GA, others that might require more time and work before. We invite the next Executive Committee to put an even stronger focus on supporting the development of member organisations in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe.

Preparation of EC meetings

We encourage the next Executive Committee to look into further clarifying the process of preparing Executive Committee Meetings. This can include, among others, a deadline for adding new points to the agenda and the clear division of responsibilities for preparing the agendas, keeping track of each member tasks, drafting of EC reports, etc..

Continuing the reflexion on EC Structures & structural reform proposals

The decrease of workload for EC and office members due to Covid-19 and the resignation of an EC member gave the people in structures

the occasion to reflect on the structures of FYEG and especially its EC. It is important to reflect on the drop out and burn out rate of the employees and volunteers in our structures, as well as on the external and internal factors that hinder us in becoming the anti-racist, regionally balanced, inclusive and diverse organisation we strive to be. This reflection has already been part of the ECs in the past and will be continued in the form the new EC wishes to take.

PERSONAL COMMENTS

Mina Tolu (co-spokesperson)

Certainly, as with any work that we do, there were highlights and low moments. One particular highlight was working with our kick-ass delegation and other awesome youth delegates at the EGP council in June, which was held online, and where we were extremely successful, influential and inspiring as young greens! One low moment was observing how anxiety, imposter syndrome, depression and other issues wrought their way into the hearts and minds of EC and Office, it hurts to observe these struggles and realise that sometimes, when the factors are external you are powerless to do anything about it. Where I had power, as co-spokesperson and responsible for the Office, it was my greatest pleasure to work with Ozge and actively discuss these issues, particularly on how to make the work environment for our staff members as healthy as possible. I think there is still a lot of work to do in this regard for FYEG.

I have grown as a person, learned a lot more about myself and about where my skills lie (public-speaking, in person facilitation, conflict mediation, creative solutions, and procrastination) and confirming where they absolutely don't (event organising, replying to emails, and financial reporting). I worked an average of 12 hours a week for FYEG since the start of my mandate, and recommend that the next EC makes it a practice to keep track of their work, and also recommend them to have a set amount of time for holiday away from this voluntary role.

Antoine Tifine (co-spokesperson)

This second and last year in FYEG Executive Committee was an even greater personal challenge than the first one but also a true learning and life-changing experience. Being for the first time in the position to coordinate a team, together with Mina and being the only member of the previous EC to have continued, I felt a lot was expected from me and I had to take responsibility for a lot of things. This led me to making mistakes and created legitimate concerns. But thanks to the alert and

the support of the whole team, I've worked on it, I've learned to let things go and did my best to take less space, to eliminate toxic behaviors and to empower others. This personal work continues. I am grateful for this and for all the joy and good moments being in the EC brought. I'm really glad I had the privilege to work for the amazing organisation FYEG is and surrounded by truly inspiring people.

Stefanie De Bock (Treasurer)

Last year, the EC report started with "Nobody leaves FYEG's Executive Committee as the same person they were once they stepped into committee work". I remember thinking at the time that this would be a bit exaggerated. But today, after a year in FYEGs EC, I agree more than ever. The past year wasn't always easy. Starting in August meant immediately getting involved in the storm. At the same time, I started my new job and organised a study session on the Future of Activism. It took me more time to catch up with my tasks as treasurer and I didn't feel like I was doing a good job. But luckily, you are never doing your tasks alone in the EC. I was surrounded by an amazing office and team who help you out when it's just too much. It's thanks to this team that eventually I caught up on my tasks and started to really enjoy them. It has been an honor to be a part of such a professional, caring and inspiring team.

Eleanor Morissey

This team has had its eventful moments, we challenged each other where needed but always had each other's backs. I, and others, definitely started off with "imposters syndrome" so a supportive team is essential, and I am glad to have gotten closer to everyone. Overseeing the Social Europe working group was one of my highlights, especially as so many who were new to FYEG and hopefully will stay involved for a long time! Other personal highlights from this year were: coordinating the Lockdown Lounges; working with the Global Young Greens and campaign team; the online EGP Council; and getting to know MOs better through events and calls. I wish I had invested more time into MO coordination and working with foundations. I fell into the trap of taking on too much while managing a demanding full-time job, so setting realistic expectations of FYEG and our own selves for our mental health is particularly important.

Kristy Louise Rhades

Whether it's my former positions as working groups responsible, gender and inclusion officer or regional coordinator, there are many instances where I can take the opportunity to provide positive feedback and my gratitude.

Equality and inclusion are an essential part of FYEG's organisational development, and trying to implement them on all levels through thorough and positive communication was my call. As former gender and inclusion officer, I listened to peoples' concerns and gave guidance on structural improvement.

Thanks to more recognition of their project-related performances, the working groups were able to significantly expand their potential. I really appreciate all the hard work, creativity, and energy all three working groups put into it, for example into the 8th fo March campaign by the Feminist Network or the Just Transition working group's engagement in the annual project plan.

As regional coordinator, it was very helpful for me to catch CDN's and Northern member organisations' perspectives. I learned about their accomplishments and opinions, which allowed me

to gain valuable insights and build trust. Building lasting relationships between MOs and making their voices heard is quintessential in a federal organisation like FYEG.

I acknowledge there have been some very difficult months on the job. It's remarkable how the teams I was part of have managed to keep everything running. I thank everyone who supported me and really appreciate your hard work and perseverance.

Mariam Vatsadze

Mariam's personal comment hasn't been received yet and might be added later on.

Nils Rübemann

In this year in the EC and as part of the Campaign Team for the European Elections I have learnt more than in my 5 years of university studies. From the 6 Organisations and companies that I have worked in till now, FYEG was the most professional. But these experiences also came with a price. I paused my studies for 1,5 years to be able to volunteer full-time in FYEG, I neglected my labour work, movement activism and sometimes also social circles. It is very hard to balance academics, labour work (telework helps a bit) and professional volunteering, and the risk of being overworked is very high. As an organisation, we should help volunteers to find the individual balance of education, volunteering, private life and labour work that is good for them.

The pandemic has also shown that many aspects can be moved online or organised more efficiently, FYEG should use this experience and newly developed skills to find the best mix of online and offline events for EC and participants, taking also the burden of travelling a lot into account. EC members having positions in FYEG and MOs at the same time can lead to tensions and additional stress due to the increased workload and conflicts of time and interests. Politics are emotionally demanding, because we are passionate about it and we need to work and argue with our friends. It would be good to leave enough room for political & strategic debates as well as emotional care work.

Nevertheless, I would not want to miss this year in the EC and it has been a very valuable experience. Working with Social Movements, Young MEPs, EGP councils, dedicated FYEG activists in the current and past structures has been especially rewarding.

Stalo Demosthenous

This mandate has been a gift for me. I have grown as a person and I sat down and thought about issues I never considered. Through respectful discussions, I have learned a lot and had the opportunity and do so next to people that never discouraged me or judged me. As a person that was fairly new to green politics and international politics, I feel like I could gain some more friction with these issues before running for a position in the EC of FYEG. However, my lack of knowledge and experience was never an obstacle because I had the support I needed to go on with the mandate.

This year, life outside the FYEG was very difficult for me because of personal situations but also with the pandemic and lockdown. There were times of being overwhelmed but FYEG gave some, much needed, structure to my life. I know, I gained more than I gave to FYEG but a friend told me that this is almost always the case with our organisation. Above all, I am thankful for the people that I got to know and for the people that I get to call friends today.

Wanja Kaufmann

As a fairly new member of the Executive committee, I have not experienced an operational year as long as the other committee members, but I've still experienced enough to say that my first two months in the EC (two of many more to come, I hope!) have both given me SO much and also highlighted the challenges that need to be met in order to build an even more efficient and well-functioning organization that works foremost in the interests of its member organizations and for real political change. A greater medial presence is clearly needed, just as well as a change in the EC member role, from a (as of today, as I have experienced it) purely organizational to a more political role. Even though the EC is to some extent already fairly professional, a lot of professionalization can (and should, in my opinion) also still be initiated — by to a larger and better extent clarifying the roles and the scopes of the EC membership, both versus spokespersonship and the EC member's role in relation to other EC members, a lot of the fatigue and risks of burnouts that I have understood have marked the last operational year can hopefully be avoided. I hope to be able to continue this important professionalization work in the coming operational year — it's well needed!

In terms of communication with the member organizations, I think that there are two big challenges as of today: 1) the MO work is not very strategic, and 2) it is sometimes unclear to the MOs whom they shall contact for different purposes. More specific strategic approaches applied on the contact with each and every MO (or potential MO), just as well as clearer internal communication structures could help (at least to some extent) with this.

ANNEX

Task Division - Comparison between September 2019 and July 2020

Tasks	Responsible in September 2019	Responsible in July 2020
General tasks		
Spokespersons	Mina & Antoine	
Treasurer	Stefanie	
Office Responsible	Mina	
Gender & inclusion Officer	Kristy	Stefanie & Mina
Awareness Group	Stalo & Nils	
Alumni Network	Nils	Nils & Wanja
Transparency and Privacy (including EC reports)	Stefanie	
EcoSprinter	Mariam	(office)
Educational Activities/ Strategic indicators	Stalo	
Volunteer Management - Green Team	Nils	
Internal Documents	Mina	Wanja & Antoine
Happiness Officer / Mental Health		Stefanie
Relations with Partners		
CDN	Mariam & Kristy	(office)
European Green Party	Mina & Antoine	
Green Group in the EP & Young MEPs	Antoine & Stefanie	Antoine, Stefanie & Nils
Foundations (GEF, HBS)	Eleanor & Mariam	Mina
Global Young Greens	Eleanor & Mariam	Eleanor
European Youth Forum	Mina & Stalo	
Movements	Nils	
Relations with Member Organisations		
Membership Coordinator	Eleanor	
Center-West	Eleanor & Nils	
South	Stefanie & Stalo	
North	Kristy & Antoine	Wanja & Antoine
East	Mina & Mariam	Mina & Wanja

Tasks	Responsible in September 2019	Responsible in July 2020
Working groups		
WG Coordinator	Kristy	
Social Europe WG	Eleanor	
Just Transition WG	Mariam	Nils
Feminist Platform WG	Kristy	Mina & Stalo & Wanja
Working groups		
General Assembly 2019	Antoine & Mina	
General Assembly 2020	Mariam & Mina	Antoine & Mina
Social Rights WP	Eleanor	
Future of Activism Study Session	Mariam & Stefanie	
Member Organisations Training	Stalo & Antoine	
MO Forum	Eleanor & Kristy	
Just Transition WP	Antoine & Mariam	Antoine & Nils
Political Platform	Stefanie & Eleanor	Wanja & Antoine
Young Candidates platform	Nils & Mina	Nils
Webinars/ podcasts/ digital education	Eleanor & Mariam	Eleanor & Mina
European Ideas Lab		Antoine
Workplan 2021		Stefanie
European Youth Together		Wanja & Antoine