



FEDERATION OF YOUNG  
EUROPEAN GREENS

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SECRETARY GENERAL REPORT 2019-2020



I am now ending the first year of my mandate with FYEG as the Sec-Gen. I have been overwhelmed and humbled by the trust put in me by FYEG Member Organisations when they elected me unanimously for this position. I hope I was able to deliver and live up to your expectations.

In organisations like ours the work of previous generations contributes highly to the work of current generations, and each generation relies on the momentum that was gained earlier. The accomplishments that we have achieved this year as FYEG wouldn't have been possible without the extremely hard work of the former Sec-Gen and the EC and I would like to recognize that.

This year it was definitely a challenge to continue our work and our activities during the COVID-19 Crisis. It meant that we had to do and undo a lot of work, have plans A, B, and C ready at all times, and try to work extra hard to push forward our Green vision in this crumbling universe. Meanwhile, we were terrified for ourselves, our families and the world in general at all times. I am proud and thankful for all the members of the FYEG Office and FYEG EC for their hard work in these weird times.

Özgecan Kara  
FYEG Sec-Gen

## MANAGING THE OFFICE

When I started my role, I wanted to manage the FYEG Office with [feminist leadership principles](#). To me this means most importantly to create a safe environment where everyone can openly share not only their vision and their successes but also their fears and their failures.

FYEG is very lucky to have extremely competent staff members. Our staff are not working for FYEG because of the extremely good working conditions. In fact we need to further invest in the working conditions of the office. Our staff is working for FYEG because they believe in everything Young Greens stand for and they want to work to take it to the next level. Even though we are all staff members on a payroll, we are also volunteering for this cause. That is why it was extremely important for me to make sure that the FYEG office is a place of joy, solidarity and a real home for all of us.

On 13 March 2020, Friday, at an extraordinary FYEG Office meeting, we agreed to start working from home. To this day, working from home continues to be the norm for the FYEG Office. We continue our weekly Monday office meetings online. As you can imagine, working from home was challenging, as we live in flatshares without quiet spaces or decent working stations. We tried to support the Office with their snack costs, and internet and phone bills. During the COVID-19 crisis I told the FYEG Office every week that we are not working from home, but rather we are at home during a crisis trying to work. We don't know how long this crisis will last, but I am proud of the FYEG Office, which still kept up their daily tasks and then some during this crisis. I am also thankful for the EC's and especially Mina's support for putting the office's mental health first.

At the end of May the European Green Party moved to a new office space and so did we.

Our Office Manager, Caroline Matthieu, oversaw the relocation. Right now we are in a space almost twice as big as the previous space that accommodates our growing office.

## Office Manager

Caroline Matthieu has been working with FYEG as a part-time Office Assistant since 2018. In January 2020, the EC decided to increase Caroline's working hours, increase her responsibilities and change her title to Office Manager.

In addition to her regular tasks, Caroline is now working more with the Treasurer and the Sec-Gen on the financial planning and fundraising of the organisation. She is also responsible for the wellbeing and the management of the Office, together with the Sec-Gen. She is supporting the Sec-Gen with the logistics and finances of the statutory activities and the Project Manager with budgeting and financial reporting for the projects.

Caroline brings a high-level of professionalism and expertise to the FYEG Office. Together we are planning to work more on the Office Management Guidelines, bringing protocols in recruitment, and supporting inclusivity and diversity in the FYEG Office.

## Project Manager

At the beginning of 2020 we said goodbye to our former Project Manager Katarina Pavlovic, who has been working as the Project Manager since 2018. In 2019, Katarina Pavlovic was working on supporting the Local Hackathons and finalising the 2019 Annual Work Plan reports. She also supported the Member Organisations' Training in November 2019. Katarina worked with CDN's Project Manager Mariam Dzneladze in the application of the Study Session "Work That Works For All: Shaping Europe's Future of Work", which will take place in October 2020.

Katarina has brought FYEG's non-formal

educational activities to a higher level and we are thankful for all her contributions.

Katarina announced that she was not planning to extend her contract, which was due to end in February 2020. In December we opened a call for Project Manager. We received 25 applications and invited 4 applicants to an interview. In January the EC selected Cristiana Cerri Gambarelli. Cristiana has been in various prep-teams of FYEG and CDN, she organised a local hackathon in Italy and she was a member of the Ecosprinter Editorial Board. In January Katarina and Cristiana had a transition of two weeks.

Cristiana is able to work independently and she has very good management and personal skills. She was able to manage FYEG's educational activities during the Corona Crisis. We had to cancel the first and second International Activity of the Just Transition Work Plan due to COVID-19. Cristiana supported the prep-team during this time and together they shifted the offline activities into online "Learning Labs". The cancellation of the live activities also meant going back to the drawing board and redesigning and rebudgeting the whole activity in line with the aims and objectives of the initial plan and our strategies, and coordinating all the changes with the project partners and funders.

During this stressful time, Cristiana was able to successfully apply for the work plan 2021 on democracy. While I am writing this report she is also coordinating and writing the application for the European Commission's European Youth Together call.

Even though it was stressful for Cristiana to have to work from home within a month of starting a new job, having all the activities cancelled and re-planning almost a whole activity year with a lot of uncertainties, she managed it very professionally and she is a very devoted and valuable staff member.

## Campaigns and Communications Officer

Jan Steurs started working in FYEG in November 2018 as the Communications Officer. He announced that he was not planning to extend his contract for another term. Kelsey DePorte who was a freelance campaigner jointly working on EGP and FYEG election campaigns expressed an interest to start working for FYEG as the Communications Officer. After an assessment of Kelsey's successful work on the election campaign and considering the fact that the Sec-Gen and the EC were very new to their roles, the EC decided to offer this position to Kelsey DePorte.

Besides working on the Communications and Campaigns, Kelsey was also the Course Director of FYEG's Study Session "Actions Speak Louder Than Words" which took place in October 2019.

Kelsey has a very strong campaign background and her campaigning skills were already very beneficial for FYEG and EGP's Election Campaign. Now Kelsey is managing FYEG's Climate Campaign that has evolved into a System Change Campaign following the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As the Communications Officer role has been rather new in FYEG and the staff members have been staying at most one year in this role, we are lacking necessary communication guidelines, strategies and analytics. Kelsey, together with the support of the interns Milla Susi and Cinta Gonzalez Sentis has been working on developing a comprehensive FYEG Communication Guideline and Strategy.

We applied for Kelsey's work permit and she has a permit until February 2021.

## Interns

Since the previous GA three Greens/EFA - FYEG interns worked in FYEG Office. Milla Susi did an internship between September 2019 - February 2020.

As per the new Framework Agreement between the Green Group in the European Parliament and FYEG, we now have two joint interns per semester, in total four interns in one year. One of the interns is to work on communications and the other on project management.

Henry Winckle and Cinta Gonzalez Sentis started their internship in February 2020. Unfortunately, in a couple of weeks after the start of their internship FYEG Office and the European Parliament started working from home. This was a challenge for our interns as they were not able to have the full internship experience. Thankfully, the Greens/EFA offered another six month term to all the interns considering that they were not able to have the normal, full internship experience. Henry is starting a Master's degree therefore he turned down the offer but Cinta will be working with FYEG and Greens/EFA for another six months. In September 2020 Anja Perushkina will start her internship.

I extend my special thanks to our amazing Interns, firstly Milla for being very patient and generous with me while I was trying to adjust my role as a new Sec-Gen and Henry and Cinta for keeping their devotion and trying to get the most out of their internship under these crazy conditions.

## ADMINISTRATION

It is the Secretary General's responsibility to manage the administrative grants. I have successfully applied for the European Youth Foundation (EYF) of the Council of Europe and Erasmus+ Grants. The EYF Grant is approved for two years 2020-2022 and the Erasmus+ for three years 2019-2022. I also submitted the reports of EYF Admin Grant of 2018-2020 and the Erasmus+, which were approved. I also had to communicate the changes to our statutory activities due to COVID-19 to the funders.

Applying, managing and reporting of the administrative grants were not a challenging task for me, as I have extensive experience on this.

However, registering the new EC with Belgian authorities, the bank operations and the work permit applications have been stressful and challenging due to lack of my language skills and extremely complicated Belgian bureaucracy. Caroline Matthieu has taken over most of these tasks.

## STATUTORY MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

My mandate started fast as September - December tends to be the busiest period. In November we had a Member Organisations Training that I was responsible for organising from the Office side and I also organised two live EC meetings before the COVID-19 crisis hit. I coordinated the Member Organisations Forum that was supposed to take place in March, YO!Fest and European Youth Event that was supposed to take place in May and the General Assembly that was also supposed to take place in May. All these activities were either moved online, canceled or postponed. This meant that we had to “undo” most of the work that has been done, like canceling bookings, and “redo” to adapt to the new schedules and mediums. There was support from other staff members for all events.

This was not the most challenging aspect of the job for me as I have extensive knowledge on Project Management and I like crisis management especially when it comes to projects, logistics, finances and administration.

## REPRESENTATION & PARTNERSHIPS

Before joining FYEG, I was familiar with the Green European Foundation (GEF), European Green Party (EGP) and Greens/EFA in the European Parliament (GGEP). During my mandate I represented FYEG at GEF General Assemblies. I also had the chance to attend the GGEP meetings as starting from this year we are regularly invited to the meetings. FYEG Co-Spokespersons represent FYEG at EGP Committee meetings therefore I didn't attend them, I only took part when the Co-Spokespeople needed my on the spot support.

It was very interesting and sometimes challenging to represent FYEG in these settings and I value every occasion I get. I think the practice of Co-Spokespersons and at times Sec-Gen taking the lead on FYEG representation is very useful and it shouldn't be taken lightly, ever. It is the hard-work and seriousness we put in these representations that brings the respect and value back to FYEG.

I was able to attend EGP Council in Tampere in November 2019 as part of the FYEG Delegation. Usually the Sec-Gen doesn't take part in the FYEG delegation but they go there to support the delegation. This case was unique due to the unavailability of FYEG EC. It was very interesting for me to observe the Council as a delegate. Even though I took part in many EGP Councils before, I was never there as a delegate. I think this experience made me understand the role of a delegate better and hopefully it will be useful for the next EC as I will be able to support them better. I hope I will never have to attend another EGP Council as a delegate because the delegation needs full support of Sec-Gen on arranging meetings, networking, supporting technicalities and communications. I also attended the Online EGP Council in June, this time to support the FYEG delegation. In both Councils FYEG was able to achieve its main aims and more. This is a result of very hard work,

commitment and passion and I am extremely proud of the FYEG EC.

During the first months of my mandate, the former Sec-Gen arranged numerous meetings for me to meet various partners in Brussels as part of the transition, which was very useful. I had a chance to meet different political groups and try to understand their work better. Unfortunately, representing FYEG requires a lot of time that is not possible for me to allocate with the current workload. I am very happy to delegate these occasions to other EC members and Office members where appropriate as I believe these are great opportunities for many to benefit as well.

Finally, we frequently have visits in the office from Greens and Young Greens from around Europe, who usually come for a Parliament visit. We organise presentations of FYEG and our activities to these groups whenever requested and possible. These, of course, came to a halt with the COVID-19 crisis.

## SUPPORT TO FYEG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OTHER FYEG BODIES

I have attended almost all of the FYEG Executive Committee meetings both online and offline but I haven't been very closely involved with the Working Groups or the Ecosprinter Editorial Board due to lack of time and more independent nature of these bodies.

7 out of 8 members of the EC were in the EC for the first time. As a new Sec-Gen and as a rather new Office, I felt that my presence was needed and useful to ensure smooth coordination between the Office and the EC. It is truly challenging to understand where the role of the Sec-Gen stops and the EC starts as the Sec-Gen is also an elected position. I tried to follow

the example of my predecessor and as a rule of thumb I refrained from voting and making the decisions on political and higher administrative issues, like recruitment or budget approvals.

Unfortunately, it was not like picking flowers in heaven during the whole mandate. As with any EC there are times where disagreements and discussions needed to be mediated, including the workload and responsibilities. Additionally EC member Kristy Louise Rhades resigned in March 2020 and EC member Mariam Vatsadze has been inactive in the EC since February 2020.

In particular the resignation of an EC member and inactivity of others at times made me question my work as the Sec-Gen and whether I could have done more, mediated more, used different methods or tools to ensure that every member of the EC feels motivated and supported to carry out their work.

## CONCLUSION

This job makes me think of my mother. My dad was working abroad, she was raising me and my brother alone while working full time. We always had a home cooked meal, she cleaned our apartment and ironed all of our clothes. She had an industrial scale iron for home. Why would someone need an industrial scale iron to iron a bunch of clothes? I think she was thinking that if she made everything that was within her capacity excellently, if she cooked veggies every night and made sure that the house was sparkling clean and all our shirts were flat ironed, we would make all the right decisions and become good people.

That is what I tried to do. For this role it meant to make detailed plans, use structures, and report vigorously. Of course, having perfectly ironed shirts or very rigid structures doesn't stop one from making mistakes.

This is a job that involves many people with a lot of passion on the issues they care about. Moreover, the Executive Committee and other FYEG bodies are volunteering for this work on top of very demanding normal life, like studying, working and local and national political engagement.

I learned two things about myself and this job that the Sec-Gen Selection Committee was already aware of, (1) I thought a lot of other people would take care of things and I would have to coordinate and oversee things, but not necessarily do things. I didn't understand how much time and effort it required as a Sec-Gen just to keep running things and also (2) I avoid conflicts.

These two things fed into each other and I tended to avoid time consuming conflicts until the last moment. I see this now, I think it came with a great cost and I would like to think that I learned from this.

I think I am much better prepared for the second year of my mandate but I am not sure if I am at my most confident self. This job has many aspects that need different kinds of work, attention and care but there is very rarely the time to reflect on this and evaluate. I will use my summer break to think about myself, to reflect, to evaluate and try to grow.

I would like to thank the amazing Office and the EC but in particular co-spokepersons Mina and Antoine for their support. I also would like to thank Teo Comet, our former Secretary General, for the great transfer and I am grateful that he was one Telegram message, one call, and one flight of stairs away all the time.