



FEDERATION OF YOUNG
EUROPEAN GREENS

Protests' application for full membership Executive Committee Assessment

Context

For the last 2 years, activists who are now members of Protests have been taking part in CDNEE's and FYEG's activities. An exploratory visit of FYEG Executive Committee Members took place in January 2019 where they met with Protests members and recommended to further develop relations with them, among other things through inviting them to FYEG events.

Protests was officially founded in January 2019 by a group of members of the political party Progresivie. Despite not having the official status of the Youth Branch of Progresivie, many members of Protests are members of Progresivie (for example 4 of the 5 current board members) and they have good relations and Protests benefit from logistical support of Progresivie (access to party facilities, etc.)

In July 2019, Protests applied to be a candidate organisation for FYEG. In 2019, the FYEG General Assembly, following a positive recommendation by the Executive Committee, granted Protests the status of Candidate Organisation. In line with FYEG Internal Rules of Procedure, the EC organised a study visit to visit the candidate organisation.

In July 2020, FYEG received the application of Protests for full membership of FYEG.

Study Visit

The study visit to Protests took place in the middle of February 2020. FYEG was represented by its Secretary General Özgecan Kara and one of their co-spokespersons, Antoine Tifine. The aim of the study visit was for the FYEG to check if the organisation is suited and ready to become a full member organisation, by trying to develop a better understand of the context in which the candidate organisation evolves in and meeting the organisation's members, its partners, as well as other organisations or activists close to FYEG values.

During the study visit, FYEG representatives met with the office of the European Parliament in Riga, members of Fridays For Future Latvia, board members of the political party Progresivie and a member of LGBTIQ NGO Mozaika. We also had an extensive meeting with the board of Protests and happened to meet a former member of the French Young Greens living in Latvia.

Analysis

Membership criteria

The conclusions of the study visit and the analysis of the documents submitted by Protests for their application shows that Protests meets the Membership Criteria outlined in Article 1.1.2 of FYEG Internal Rules of Procedure.

Protests' values and political positions are fully in line with FYEG's. Protests has especially been active and has built a strong reputation on topics related to LGBTQ+ and human rights, mental health, climate and environmental protection. Protests doesn't use the label "green" so much in its external communication and considers itself as a social-democratic and green organisation. We believe it is mostly due to the fact that a conservative-populist party "Latvian Green Party" has claimed the "green" label for 30 years in Latvia and has defended policies opposite to FYEG values and political platform, making it hard for Protests to claim that label.

Protests and its members have been regularly engaged in FYEG since their funding, taking part in several educational events and to all statutory events in the last year.

Protests is an active organisation, which has organised or taken part in several actions in the past years. They are also involved in the elections that are planned to take place in Riga with one of their members being a candidate.

Protests is undoubtedly a youth organisation. Its statutes clearly state that one can't be a member if older than 35. We have also witnessed that most of their active members are either in their early twenties or younger. Their statutes also include a provision saying that at least one of their board member needs to be less than 25.

Protests appears to be functioning based on democratic principles. Their membership is open, their leadership is composed of 5 people who are elected by a General Assembly taking place every year. Members choose the political line of the organisation, without interference from the political Progresivie.

Political Criteria

Potential obstacles to a full membership of Protests to FYEG could be the small number of members and the fact that the party they are collaborating with is not affiliated to the EGP.

Protests has 17 official members and around 100 volunteers. This number of course has to be put in comparison to the population of Latvia (1.9M-2M inh.). This means that management of the organisations depends on a very small number of people, meaning there is a risk that the organisation wouldn't have the capacity to fully engage in FYEG in the long term. Protests has been informed of that during the Study visit and invited to check that the aim of becoming a full member is embraced by the whole organisation. Their decision to apply for FYEG full membership was taken during a general assembly. Many different members have been involved in FYEG or taken part to FYEG events, demonstrating that Protests' engagement to FYEG is a collective project and not the project of a few. FYEG EC

is confident that Protests will be able to continue its high level of engagement in FYEG and believes FYEG membership will also support the development of the organisation.

As outlined previously, Protests is on a regular basis collaborating with Progresivie, a political party that self-identifies as social-democratic and green but which is not officially aligned with the European Green Party. The fact of collaborating with a party that is not aligned with the EGP could be a source of tension. Nevertheless, EGP doesn't have a member party in Latvia, has regularly collaborated with Progresivie in the last years (for example inviting them to take part to several EGP Councils) and has identified Progresivie as the party most close to EGP values in Latvia. We believe that there is no risk of conflicts linked to a Protests FYEG membership on the medium-term.

Protests membership to FYEG could be not only beneficial to Protests but also to FYEG. Protests would become the first FYEG full member in baltic states in more than a decade, and we believe they can bring interesting perspectives to our political discussion. Their work on topics such as LGBTIQ+, climate, mental health or antiracism resonates with FYEG priorities and they will be able to contribute much to the activities and political work of FYEG.

Recommendation

FYEG Executive Committee enthusiastically recommends the FYEG General Assembly to grant Protests the status of full member. We believe that this full membership will be beneficial to both FYEG and Protests. Protests has demonstrated in the last years that they belong to the European Family of Young Greens and we want to invite our member organisations to make it official.