



SECRETARY GENERAL 2017-18 **REPORT**

GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
#FYEG30 **UTRECHT**
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TEO COMET



Being Secretary General of FYEG is one hell of a ride and I am immensely happy to have the opportunity to experience it.

As I started in this position in June 2017, I had an idea of what the responsibility entailed. And I am glad that there was so much I could not foresee and that this engagement and this job is such a learning experience. I will here list the main areas of work from June 2017 to April 2018, including thoughts on the office as a whole, not only the position of Secretary General.

I - MANAGING THE OFFICE

As Secretary General, I have the privilege to work with 4 amazing colleagues on a daily basis. The people occupying these functions have changed throughout my mandate and I will list the different positions here.

PROJECT MANAGER

Petra Skuljevic worked as Project Manager of FYEG from February 2017 to January 2018. During my time in the office, Petra's tasks included managing FYEG's educational activities (Summer Camp; Arts, Crafts & Politics; AlterCOP). Petra did an exemplary job in carrying out and reporting these projects. In addition, Petra also oversaw the successful application for a study session on demasculinisation of politics, scheduled for November 2018. Petra also performed other tasks, for instance related to supporting the EC, to the COP delegation and to statutory activities (notably GA 2017 but also other meetings). Petra's meticulous approach to her tasks set a standard for the whole organisation and her contribution to project management in FYEG will have lasting results.

In late 2017, Petra expressed an interest to move on with new responsibilities at the European Green Party. We started a recruitment process by opening a call for Project Manager. We received 18 applications and conducted interviews with three shortlisted applicants. The EC decided to appoint Katarina Pavlovic for the position.

Katarina started in February 2018 with the demanding task to manage the social commons seminar in Poland in March. In addition to this, Katarina has coordinated an extensive project application submitted to the European Youth Foundation on 1 April and has carried out her responsibilities as FYEG's nominee in the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe. Being a non-EU citizen, there has also been a bit of paperwork regarding Katarina's move to Belgium.

It is safe to say that the transition in the office was particularly smooth due to the similarities between the responsibilities of the Project Manager and those of the Office Coordinator of CDN, which was Katarina's previous job.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Gio Megrelishvili worked as Communications Officer from February to June 2017, after having worked as Project Manager from 2015 onwards. Unfortunately, I did not have much time to work with Gio in the office, but I cannot but recognise his immense contribution to FYEG's work in terms of projects, external communication, and shaping the identity, ideas and motivation of several generations of FYEGers (including myself) - in more and less stressful times.

In June 2017, Gio accepted a job at the Green European Foundation. We recruited a new Communications Officer over the summer. 72 applicants responded to the open call and nice applicants were shortlisted and interviewed. The EC decided to appoint Javier Larios as Communications Officer.

It took several months for Javier to move to Belgium and start working in FYEG's Brussels office. The EC was aware of this challenge when making the selection, but was also convinced of Javier's professional capacities and did not want to exclude an applicant due to European migration policies. Javier started to work half-time on distance in October, obtained his work permit in December 2017 and moved to Brussels in January 2018.

Javier's strengths are his creativity and his versatile multimedia skills. He produces audiovisual content, prepares and sends out the newsletter, manages FYEG's social media accounts and website, manages the technical equipment in the office, and works closely with the Spokespersons and the Secretary General on external communication. Javier has quickly learned many of the specificities of communicating the message of a European political youth organisation.

OFFICE ASSISTANT

Laura Krenzke worked half-time as Office Assistant from September 2016 to October 2017. She was the first person to hold this position and as such played a key role in setting up systems and procedures designed to make FYEG's financial administration more functional. The Financial Control Committee has noted the highly valuable contribution Laura made to FYEG.

In October 2017, Laura was offered a full-time job with a Member of the European Parliament and accepted it. We opened a call and received 11 applications, five of whom were shortlisted and interviewed. The EC decided to appoint Caroline Mathieu as Office Assistant.

Caroline knows financial administration, the administrative context in Belgium and IT tools very well and is very autonomous in her work. Her tasks include filing expenses, preparing requests for income, updating the budget, supporting the Treasurer and the Financial Control Committee and several ad hoc tasks related to Belgian administration, such as supporting staff members who need a work permit in Belgium.

INTERN

I have had the pleasure to work with three interns between June 2017 and April 2018. Until mid-July, Paz Serra was finishing her spring internship with FYEG and Greens/EFA in the European Parliament. Her tasks consisted of follow-up of the General Assembly in Madrid as well as preparations for FYEG Summer Camp. From mid-September to mid-February, Vesselina Bozhinova did a 5-month internship with FYEG and Greens/EFA. She worked on a project application for a study session (which was successful), helped with administrative tasks, set up an alumni database, and developed political content for communication around the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Eleanor Morrissey started her internship with FYEG and Greens/EFA in February 2018 and has until now worked on YO!Fest preparations, administrative tasks, writing statements, writing a project application and assisting with GA preparations.

Due to the particular nature of the internship, it is important to communicate with Greens/EFA regarding needs and practicalities around the internship. We have gotten positive feedback from the intern about the opportunity to see how both a political institution and a youth organisation work from the inside. I have also found the European Youth Forum's "Employers' Guide to Quality Internships" useful for preparing, accompanying and finalising the internships.

In general, the management of the office has been the most challenging and most enriching part of my job. It is a new field for me and it is complex and fascinating. We have many expectations on us from Member Organisations, FYEG bodies and our partners, and it is important that we live up to those expectations and prioritise our work optimally. In an environment where no day and no week looks like another, this requires constant recalibration of how we plan and use our time. We are, collectively, getting better at it and it is a true pleasure to work and learn in this team.

II - ADMINISTRATION

I have been responsible for managing our administrative grants. We receive administrative funding from three sources; the European Green Party, Erasmus+, and the European Youth Foundation. The EGP support is calculated on the basis of a percentage that is agreed upon. One of the specificities last year was that I took part in several discussions with the EGP and the European Youth Forum on plans to raise the cap that parties are allowed to give to third parties. The cap was raised by the European Parliament for 2018 which means that FYEG can spend the EGP support more autonomously. I have coordinated the application for a 3-year grant from Erasmus+ (we have previously had annual grants), the result of which the applicants have not been notified yet (we should receive a response later in April). I have also done the reporting for the 2017 Erasmus+ grant. Last but not least, we applied for another European Youth Foundation administrative grant in October. The response was positive, but the amount was lower than we had hoped, primarily due to unpaid membership fees to the Council of Europe from the Russian Federation and Turkey, which means less money for youth work.

I have also worked together with the Office Assistant and Treasurer on financial management, for example preparing the Financial Control Committee meeting in February as well as day-to-day management. In the next year, we should think about a system for optimal information flow and task division between office and EC regarding finances, budgeting and fundraising.

Some of my tasks have been related to general administration, such as registering the new EC and Secretary General with the Belgian authorities, purchasing new office equipment together with the Office Assistant, and discussing with the EGP about office organisation.

III - SUPPORT TO OTHER FYEG BODIES

From the beginning of my mandate, I found it very important that the EC can reach a high level of autonomy quite quickly. As a former EC member, I considered myself in a quite good position to accompany the EC in its work and mentor the EC members so they could get a good understanding of their responsibilities. I spent some time on this, in particular in the beginning of the mandate, and was very pleased to see how quickly the EC members were learning and becoming autonomous in their positions. This is one of the most proactive and productive ECs FYEG has ever had, which is also visible in the numerous results in e.g. the Activity Report. A devoted and hard-working EC also makes it particularly pleasant for the office as a whole to support it and try to deliver whatever the EC members might need to reach their aims.

My capacities to support other FYEG bodies have been rather limited. I have supported the Ecosprinter Editorial Board for the 1/2018 edition. I have occasionally attended meetings of the European Elections Campaign Team. Apart from the EC support - which happens on a daily basis and also includes a weekly evening meeting - there is not much more capacities to support different bodies. During the election campaign there will be a need for constant communication between EC, CT and office and we will organise ourselves in a way that makes this possible.

IV - STATUTORY MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

The coordinating responsibilities for different activities and statutory meetings are distributed among staff members. As a rule of thumb, the Project Manager is responsible for educational activities and the Secretary General for statutory meetings. The Project Manager was main responsible for Summer Camp; Arts, Crafts & Politics; AlterCOP and the social commons seminar. The Secretary General coordinated the Strategic Planning Meeting, in person EC meetings and GA preparations, as well as logistics around the Summer Camp. The Office Assistant organised the Working Group Meeting.

We have received positive feedback from our different activities since the last GA. Participants say the atmosphere is good and are motivated to get involved. Prep team members grow together and individually and find new ways to develop their political engagement. Partners find joint activities with FYEG valuable. This has been a joint effort from the office and in particular from the people responsible for coordinating project teams and educational outcomes and it is a very good basis to build upon.

We still have improvements to make in terms of planning and carrying out activities, and this need is only stronger in a high-intense campaign year. One of the most important tasks of the EC and the office after the GA will be to optimise our planning, both macro and micro.

V - REPRESENTATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

A significant part of my work has consisted of representing FYEG in various settings. I have attended meetings of the party political youth organisations at the European Youth Forum, meetings on communication and strategy of the Green Group in the European Parliament, General Assemblies of the Green European Foundation, and various meetings of the European Green Party (Party Leaders' Meeting, Committee, Future of Europe Working Group, Campaign Steering Group). We have had a good communication among the Spokespersons and the EC members responsible for the European Youth Forum, and FYEG has spoken with a unified voice and gotten our aims through.

Some of the main events in this regard have been the Council of the EGP in November in Belgium, where I assisted the FYEGers on the spot with various tasks, and the European Ideas Lab in March in Belgium, where we had 25 people present from FYEG EC, Working Groups and office.

I have also occasionally met with representatives of the coordination of the Progressive Caucus in the European Parliament, with colleagues from other European youth organisations, and with the preparation team of the European Forum of the European Left. Moreover, 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.

VI - SUMMARY

FYEG has been growing very fast in the last years and this is reflected in the capacities in the office and the expectations we are faced with. FYEG has never had this much paid staff, and each staff member is doing their best to deliver accordingly.

I am particularly happy to have had the opportunity to spend day in and day out with ten unique staff members since I started. Thank you Artur, Caroline, Eleanor, Gio, Javier, Kaca, Laura, Paz, Petra and Vesselina. It has also been a big pleasure to work, travel, laugh, cry and learn with the EC members Eka, Fabian, Frank, Kim, Paula, Pedja, Tariq and Zuzana. Not only has it been a personal pleasure, but I want to stress to the MOs the massive contribution you have made to this movement. Thank you. In particular, I want to extend my wholehearted gratitude to Kim, who was responsible for the office on behalf of the the EC and with whom it was very smooth to work on a very challenging part of FYEG's work. I also want to extend my recognition to an often invisible part of FYEG - the Financial Control Committee which consists of Miléna and Tornike - highly professional volunteers who perform a demanding task. Last but not least, I want to thank those activists with whom I have not had the chance to work with so closely this year - Ecosprinter Editorial Board, Working Groups, Strategic Planning Committee, Campaign Team, prep teams and Advisory Committee. The results FYEG has reached this year would not be possible without the invaluable contribution from dozens and dozens of devoted activists.

I am particularly aware of the need to continue developing our management of human resources, mentoring activists and teams, and finding a place for people with different expectations, skills and interests. The growth of our movement is essential for reaching our goals, and we must have a solid infrastructure to be able to do the politics that Europe needs right now.

In conclusion, I am particularly proud of the positive atmosphere we have in the office, with the EC and on our events. This makes even the most stressful moments enjoyable as there is a strong sentiment of mutual support to one another. Thank you to everyone who made the first year of my mandate one of the most thrilling and empowering years of my life.