

URA Youth Forum

Executive Committee Assessment of application for candidate membership

Context

The FYEG has for several years only had three MOs out of six countries from the Western Balkans, and Montenegro hasn't been one of them. This is mostly explained by absence of a Green party in Montenegro and rather unfavorable climate for the progressive movements and activist organisations.

After 30 years of an authoritarian hybrid rule, with highly corrupted institutions and a very strong criminal network, Montenegro has finally seen a change in the political dynamics which was considerably influenced by the efforts of the Civic Movement URA, a newly formed Green party that has also become a member of EGP. Youth Forum URA is a Youth Forum of a Civic Movement URA, one of the rare progressive political parties in Montenegro which has also appointed a deputy Prime Minister.

The first contact with URA came just before the Montenegrin elections, in 2019, when current EC member Milan went for a study visit to Podgorica (however not in a delegation of FYEG but of our sister's organisation CDNEE). After this, Youth Forum URA steadily got more engaged with the activities of CDNEE and later on with those of the FYEG as well. Youth Forum URA have attended a couple of FYEG activities and some of their members are active within FYEG's Democracy and Inclusion Working Group. Members of Youth Forum URA demonstrated strong appreciation for the Green values but also showcased political selfawarenes by recognizing areas they need to work on.

Analysis

Membership criteria

The conclusions of the different contacts we had with them and the analysis of the documents submitted for their application shows that Youth Forum URA meets the Membership Criteria outlined in Article 1.1.2 of FYEG Internal Rules of Procedure.

Youth Forum URA counts around 160 members that are active on a national level.

The statutes YF URA has provided to FYEG demonstrate the will to function democratically. Their leadership has been elected by its members and members are the only one influencing the political direction of the organisation.

Finally, Youth Forum URA is undoubtedly a youth organisation and consists mostly of young people. Most of its members and its leadership are in their 20s. According to their statutes, one can be a member between 18 and 30.

Political criteria

It is essential for the European Green Movement in general and for Young Greens in particular to be present and active in Montenegro further strengthening the Green movement and the livelihood of social and environmental movements in the Balkans, especially considering that it is a politically delicate area.

We believe a strong young green organisation can be a unique chance to think on the medium/long term, by training members, by enlarging the scope of the green movement, by strengthening ties with civil society organisations.

YF URA gathers amazing people and talented activists who seem determined and can do just that. It is important that the organisation keeps a certain level of autonomy to be able to navigate through the uncertainties of the Montenegrin Politics. In that regard, being a candidate member of FYEG can give YF URA the opportunities and the means it needs, by being able to have different members taking part in FYEG activities, by hosting events or by benefiting from the MO grants programmes.

Even though the political situation in Montenegro is harsh for activists, we are happy to see these young people being directly involved in political life in their communities. As Youth Forum URA is the Youth wing of an influential political party, we think that it would be beneficial for FYEG's MOs to get to know them better and learn from their political experiences. FYEG's events could be a space for Youth Forum URA to get to know young activists from Europe and learn about their political stands and struggles. FYEG's event could also be a space for the Youth Forum URA to gain further knowledge and experience on feminism and LGBTQI+ rights so they can encourage their non male and queer activist, for which they recognized a need for.

The different observations made during visits, their publications on social media and the documents they provided for the application show that Youth Forum URA values and political positions are in line with FYEG values and political platform.

Recommendation

FYEG Executive Committee recommends FYEG General Assembly to grant Youth Forum URA the status of candidate member. We invite the next EC to strongly monitor and support the development of Youth Forum URA. We invite Youth Forum URA to continue working on inclusion and building of safe spaces within its structure by further strengthening their feminist principles and support LGBTQI+ members and to use all opportunities offered by this status to support its development.