EC Report 2023-2024

Introduction

Ooft. What a year (and three months). We reach Dublin exhausted and proud of our work over a particularly important, long and intense mandate. We ran the most ambitious EU election campaign in our history in a relatively hostile political climate for Green politics. Overall, we evaluate our mandate as a success, with some lessons for the next era of FYEG, and the next generation of FYEG leadership. We’re particularly proud to have achieved this with a smaller EC than usual, after Srish ended his cooperation with the rest of the EC.

EC practicalities

At time of submission (July 25th), the EC has carried out 49 weekly EC meetings, and, in total, four long in-person strategy meetings in Brussels. At the first of these in-person meetings, we divided the different tasks of the Executive Committee. In the first quarter of the mandate, Sean also held one-to-one meetings with EC members to offer them a space to share how they were finding their work. The EC has used Slack as its main internal communication channel. All relevant documentation has been stored on the FYEG Google Drive.

In October 2023, Antonio González stepped down from the board for a mixture of personal reasons and a desire to refocus their activism elsewhere. They parted on good terms with the EC and federation - we would like to thank Antonio for their work, their kindness, and for their courage to realise when the right time to leave was.

Between October and November 2023, a competitive election was held to replace Antonio. Due to gender quota requirements, this election was only open to women, trans, genderqueer, and non-binary Young Greens. Anja Presnukhina was elected onto the EC.

EU election

This mandate, we engaged more people in our campaign than ever before. We spoke truth to power to the point that Ursula von der Leyen changed her email address and the lead candidate for the Socialists ran away from our questioning twice. We worked with grassroots movements to call for the end of fossil subsidies and unexpectedly were arrested in the European Parliament (oops). We reached record social media engagement. We held or supported events in Serbia, Scotland, Ireland, Finland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, the Czech Republic, Italy, Catalonia, and France. We supported dozens of young candidates, four of whom got elected, thereby contributing to the Green Group having more candidates under the age of 35 than any other political group. In short, we did a lot.

For more details on this, see the election campaign report.
Srish distancing himself from EC

On October 20th, Srish released a public statement distancing himself from the EC, claiming that the German Young Greens exercise “a veto on human rights” and saying they must “reform or leave this Federation”. While EC members have resigned in the past, an EC choosing to stop working as part of the EC without resigning is (to our knowledge) unprecedented. As we tried to navigate these unprecedented times, while also responding politically to the escalating crisis in Palestine, we found ourselves with very low capacity for our other areas of work. From an EC perspective, it is not ideal that responding to the crisis required such enormous capacity, to the point that many of us were working round the clock and yet we were unable to continue our normal responsibilities. It is worth reflecting how this can be improved for the future.

Srish’s choice to not resign and not be part of the EC left us two options: (1) consider suggesting Srish’s dismissal and activate point 3.5.1. of the IRPs, which would mean member organisations voting on whether to remove Srish from the EC; (2) to continue with seven EC members. To avoid an extremely toxic dynamic for the federation, for EC members, and for Srish, we opted to continue with a small EC that would be required to work even harder to deliver for our MOs. We did send a letter to member organisations, who were understandably looking for clarity, explaining the situation. At the same time, Sean and Lone made themselves available to speak to MOs to discuss what had happened, and Cinta undertook a process of organising mediation with an external mediator.

European Green Party

We continued our work collaborating with and influencing the European Green Party. Sean, Benni and Cinta shared between them the responsibility of following and giving input to European Green Party meetings. At the EGP’s online Congress in December 2023, we worked particularly hard to influence the resolution on Israel and Palestine to be more clearly in solidarity with Palestinian civilians. Likewise, at the Lyon EGP Congress in February 2024, our support for Dutch-speaking Belgian Greens’ motion on Palestine influenced the EGP to release a relatively strong statement on the issue.

We worked extensively to influence the European Green Party manifesto, with Sean being part of the manifesto working group and all seven EC members actively negotiating with member parties. In particular, our contributions on youth led to the the European Youth Forum’s analysis that the EGP had by far the most youth-friendly manifesto. On antiracism, we used the 2023 resolution on racial justice (the writing of which was spearheaded by the racial justice taskforce) to make this the most antiracist manifesto in the EGP’s history. On climate, we actively fought to avoid the German Greens watering down the text on climate neutrality, making sure that the manifesto was more ambitious on climate than it was five years ago. On security, Emil argued for and won one of the few votes at the EGP Congress on the manifesto, ensuring that the long-term goal of a security union was included. At the EGP Congress in Lyon, we put forward Benni as a contender for the position of EGP lead candidate, a campaign which did not result in the election of Benni as lead candidate but which nevertheless generated a lot of positive feedback and enthusiasm. In short, we maintained FYEG’s long history of being a constructive and influential actor in pushing the Greens to be radical.
FYEG and CDN collaboration was done at a reduced capacity as Srish was the FYEG EC responsible for CDN, which seriously hurt the relations between both organisations. At the start of this EC mandate, FYEG and CDN held a common study session on security. Later in the year, FYEG collaborated with CDN on social media posts. FYEG EC member Klāvs attended the CDN GA. FYEG and CDN ECs and both secretary generals met in the EGP congress in Lyon and set the basis for our future relations. We see a major potential for further collaboration with CDN and solving the long-term systematic problems in CDN and FYEG relations.

Other external relations

We strengthened our relations with the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO), working with them to push the Council of Europe’s Advisory Council on Youth (of which Sean is a member) to better address Islamophobia, and cooperated with them on a podcast.

Together with the Greens/EFA Group at the European Parliament (GGEP) we collected pledges through elections2024.eu with the message “You have the power”. This partnership collected 4603 pledges.

In December, Benni and Cinta met with Zaid Amali (Public Discourse and Communications Campaign director at MIFTAH) and Shahd Qaddoura (Senior Legal Researcher and Advocacy Officer at Al-Haq), a delegation of Palestinians visiting Brussels to discuss the crisis in Palestine.

Recommendations for the next EC

1. Harness the power potential of the volunteers at the EU level

One area of immense growth for FYEG in the last year is the number of volunteers we have engaged from member organisations in the work of FYEG. Now, with this election over, the logical step is to offer these volunteers the opportunity to campaign on EU-level issues, such as by proactively influencing legislative processes.

2. Improve EC-office communication

Often, the bodies of EC and office feel as if they are operating in isolation from one another, and with an absence of knowledge of what the other is doing. This should be improved by, for example, organising combined EC-office strategic meetings.

3. Invest in MO relations

Election year is an exceptional year in FYEG, where an overwhelming part of our worked is centred around the EU election. In previous years, we anticipated this by, for example, investing disproportionately in non-EU MOs in the mandate 2022-23. In this mandate, we worked closely
with those MOs who found value in working together on the EU election campaign. Now, the EC should reflect on which MOs they engaged less with in the last year, and prioritise those MOs in the coming year, such as by engaging in MO visits. It would also be useful to visit even more member organisations, since these are extremely useful for FYEG and for member organisations themselves, while recognising that they also take a lot of capacity for EC members.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

Benedetta Scuderi (Co-spokesperson)
After 3 years in the EC, this mandate was definitely the most remarkable. It was a bumpy road, it’s been incredibly hard at times, but I am extremely proud of the work of the EC.
I was not very present for many organisational aspects, especially in the second half of the mandate as I was running for the EU Parliament myself. However, I am so proud for what we achieved: the biggest event FYEG has ever done, campaign for an FYEG Spizenkandidat, an amazing campaign, so so many volunteers engaged, electing 3 of our 6 main young candidates, the green group is the one with the highest percentage of under 35, and we have the youngest MEP in the Parliament. While this was happening, our office was still going strong, winning grants and making everything work perfectly.
I am so so thankful to the amazing people this organisation has in the office and in the EC, from our new Secretary General Cinta, who managed to address all the issues we had with calm and cleverness, although she just started the role, she always knew what to do, to my other Co-Spokeperson Sean, who is a born leader, has basically done the work of two in this mandate without complaining, but with a huge enthusiasm and passion, to all the rest of the EC, they worked so hard and so well in such a difficult scenario: thank you.
I’m leaving this organisation (only my formal role, I will never really leave) with my heart full. FYEG brought me into politics, FYEG made me stick to politics, FYEG gave me an essential support for the good result of my first electoral campaign, FYEG motivated me and gave me the capability and tools to run for the European Parliament, FYEG taught me most of the things I’m proud to know and be in politics. I will do everything I can to make sure FYEG will always have the resources and impact to keep empowering youth around Europe. We need young greens now more than ever.
Once an FYEGer, forever an FYEGEer. Thank you.

Sean Currie (Co-spokesperson)
When I was thinking about running for a second mandate 18 months ago, I asked my partner what she thought, and she said "not running for election year would be like leaving a party before the dancing starts".

She was right - not in the sense that everything is rosy and fun, but in that this mandate felt like the main event of my life so far, and like a community coming together to push for something that could touch people and make the world a better place, to use a slightly tired cliché. I’m so proud of what our volunteers, office, and EC achieved with this campaign. It is remarkable that we did such a groundbreaking campaign in the political context we were operating in, and a historically small EC. We only managed this because of the quality of people in our EC and
office, and the courage of the volunteers who were willing to step up to the plate when it mattered.

Legends, every one of you x

**Emil Schenkyr (Treasurer)**

Reflecting on this mandate, I am almost shocked that it has only been my first. I feel both like it has been going on forever and like I'm just getting started!

Stepping into this mandate as treasurer and part of the administrative board of our federation I felt responsible for our federation as a whole from day one. I am extremely grateful for the outstanding work our office has delivered - supporting us every step of the way and enabling the EC as political leadership to reach beyond what has been done in FYEG before. From the financial perspective, I am especially grateful for Caro who took care of our finances for so long, for Flo who took over the job with wonderful enthusiasm, for Julie who gives us stability every step of the way, and for Cinta who brings it all together with her high sense of responsibility. Elections are stressful times for finances, and I am proud to say we have manoeuvred them successfully. Thanks to forward-looking planning the federation is in a good financial position even though the times are not rosy for Greens - because losses in elections come with budget cuts too.

A federation is made up of two things, MOs and people. It is every EC members responsibility to cater to the needs of these two.

As a federation, you as MOs are what defines us, and it is our job as an EC to ensure we have actual relations with each other. I am personally proud to report that I took the time to visit seven MOs in person, had individual calls with every MO I was responsible for, and held three regional meetings for the two regions I was responsible for. Meeting each other, speaking to each other, and sharing experiences is what creates said relations and I look forward to doing the same in the future.

As a federation, we cannot exist without individuals making us the community we are. In this mandate I was responsible for our Green Base, the largest digital community we have built thus far in FYEG. This is the first step into a closer, more connected community which I already cherish now.

In this mandate, we also saw an ugly conflict, partly taking place publicly, robbing us of a large share of our capacity. We saw personal, structural, and political issues intertwined to a point that rendered the situation unmanageable. This serves as a reminder that next to the campaigning we have elevated to another level, our conflict skills need to evolve as well.

My wish for the next year is that we learn to disagree again, that we elevate our political debates, disagreements, and differences to a new level. I want to see us argue over policy in the best possible sense, therefore enabling us to sharpen our arguments to their best possible forms, further developing our positions, and empowering us to meet our actual political opponents with the strength of a federation in our back.
What remains to say after 18 months is to say thank you, to each and every one of you active in our joint cause, to express my gratitude to my colleagues in the EC, and to gather strengths over a short period of rest to work towards a wish to come true.

**Lone Kristiansen**

What a year! After already having finished one mandate, I expected to feel a bit more in control this time around. But if one thing is certain it is that being in the EC is like riding a rollercoaster, and although I’m not the biggest fan of loops it has been a great ride. The biggest highlight for me this mandate is having had the chance to visit all of the MOs in the north region in one way or another. Seeing how much passion and how many people keep contributing to keep our organisations and federation alive is really humbling, and makes all the late night working very much worth it.

Looking back I think overall it has been a great year for FYEG, much because of our amazing office and especially Cinta who almost seems born to be Secretary General and who continues to impress with her wisdom and knowledge. Also of course my fellow EC members that keep pushing through, and dedicating every free moment to FYEG. It has been an honour getting to know all of you, and I’m going to miss seeing your faces every Tuesday. We also can’t forget about the group of really amazing volunteers that played a key part in the results of our campaign, in addition to all of the incredible young candidates that were running from all corners of Europe. I am leaving this mandate proud of everything we have achieved, and happy to know that FYEG will be in great hands.

The biggest thank you to all of you <3

**Klāvs Veseļuns**

This mandate was extremely challenging for me. I struggled to balance my FYEG responsibilities with my work in the Progresīvie election campaign and with graduating university. This EC was responsible for the massive European Parliament election campaign but also we had to face major difficulties and setbacks that directly affected the EC work for months. I am proud of what we have accomplished and I will forever be grateful that I was given the opportunity to work in this amazing EC. I am very thankful for Cinta always being there for us when needed not only on professional but also private capacity. I also want to thank the office for being so responsive and helpful, particularly Lena Anna, as without her I would not have been able to manage getting through the Green Rave and the European Train Tour.

During this mandate, nothing brought be more joy than to hear from member organizations that they felt listened to and cared about. I am particularly proud about my work with Možemo Youth working group, Bulgarians and Lithuanians. I believe that I am leaving FYEG in a better place than when I took over my responsibilities. I feel like the increasing rate of participation in FYEG events and first truly competitive elections since I have been active in FYEG shows that we have done a lot to make sure that FYEG continues to grow.

**Christina Keßler**

Out of the time I have spent in FYEG over the last years, it was in this mandate that I experienced the highest highs and the lowest lows. The problem with crises in an FYEG context is that they never only affect a professional work setting, they always ultimately end up bleeding...
into personal relationships and friendships with people. I was really struggling personally with the rift that happened in this mandate between Srish and the rest of the EC. What was even more horrible to me was how this affected relationships between the EC and the office. I am immensely grateful to Özge and Cri who both personally reached out to me during those hours, as well as to Sean and Emil who both were in Leipzig with me at that point.

But time went on, and after a few weeks of crisis management the EC had found a ‘new normal’ in which to work. I am very glad I stuck it out, because like I said, I also experienced a lot of highlights in the last mandate. My biggest highlight, no doubt, was the work I did together with Cri on the Young Candidates Platform. It was such a privilege to work with these amazing young people from all across Europe, and I have learnt so much from them about courage and resilience. For some of our young candidates, it was clear from the beginning that they would not get elected, but it did not matter, they threw themselves into their campaigns with incredible enthusiasm and put forward a vision that speaks to young Greens across Europe. Never would we have thought that out of our six young Green leaders, half of them would actually become MEPs!! I had a lot of fun at the EGP Congress in Lyon where we put forward Benni as a contender for lead candidate and I absolutely loved our campaign kick-off in Rome (despite our little friends).

It was a very intense mandate, and as an EC we were often lacking capacity. With Srish being distanced from the rest of the EC and with Benni running a campaign for the European Parliament, we were de facto an EC of six for large chunks of a mandate which already was very heavy in terms of workload due to the European election campaign. There are definitely things where we would have acted differently or done more if we had the capacity to do so. But considering the capacities we had, I think we did a really good job with our European election campaign, and I am proud of the work that we did. I am going to miss being in the FYEG EC a lot, a work which has shaped me and taught me so much over the last two mandates. This is definitely not the end of my FYEG journey though!

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to Antonio. Antonio and I both already experienced one mandate as EC members together, but a little bit into the second mandate Antonio made the decision that due to limited capacities, it would be best for them to step down. I have enormous respect for this decision and I know Antonio did not take it lightly. I was very sad to say goodbye (at least in the EC) to Antonio, and I missed their presence a lot in the following months. But at the end, taking this decision is an expression of how much Antonio cares for and respects our Federation.

Anja Presnukhina
This mandate started with a kick! After competing with four amazing candidates for the by-elections in the end of October, it was a huge honour to be able to step in the EC and continue the work that Antonio had gracefully started. Joining the team in the middle of a hard time was definitely a challenge, and without the great base work that has been going on for longer time I don’t think I would have managed. Therefore, huge props to Antonio and everyone in the EC and the office, you are stars!

I started the year in the Campaign Team as a member of the Green Base coordination and it
was very interesting to get and work on a bit different side of the campaign. Being the South MO contact point taught me a lot about how organisations from the other side of Europe function and what do they need, and it's worth to mention the warm welcome that I, as an East-Northerner got!

This time the elections were not as full of ecstasy and happy surprises as the last time around, but this did not take away even a spoonful of the proudness that I feel about each and every volunteer and candidate that we got. We are not to be taken for granted, and the power that we are fighting for is not to be taken as an easy prise - we, as young, progressive and leftist federation did an immensely great job!

Assisting the Office with the Annual Work Plan and the Strategy gave me a great opportunity to use the experience I’ve gathered in FYEG for soon to be four years. After getting to know the kitchen side of our work a bit better, I took a big step to rerun for the leadership of FYEG for the next year, applying to be one of the Co-spokes of the best political organisation in Europe!