Advisory committee report
2023-2024

Introduction
The Advisory Committee (AC) helps with the transfer of knowledge within FYEG and acts as a conflict resolution body. Our mandate is to support the Executive Committee and other bodies of FYEG to ensure organisational knowledge is not lost after generational changes. To avoid that the AC is interfering in the daily business of FYEG, the AC only gets active upon request by EC members of other Bodies of FYEG. The AC however has a one-way access to information channels of the EC.

Advisory Committee’s Members are elected at the yearly General Assembly of FYEG and serve a 2 year term. During the operational year of 2023-2024, the AC has consisted of Teo Comet (Finland, elected 2020), Eleanor Morrissey (United Kingdom, elected 2023), Predrag Momcilovic (Serbia, elected 2023), Stefanie De Bock (Belgium, elected 2022) and Wanja Kaufmann (Sweden, elected 2022). In total, 4 online meetings and 0 physical meetings have been held during the year. The AC also moderated a meeting attended by the EC and the SecGen.

Last year’s recommendations
The AC of 2022-2023 gave several recommendations for the EC to follow up on. Find the full AC report from last year [here](#). The AC recommended that the issues listed below would be addressed by the EC. The AC of this year advises that these points continue to be considered by future ECs.

Awareness of different organisational backgrounds and individual needs: It has been highlighted that discussions are dragged out way too long and that things take too much time and become tiring. It might be worth reminding the group in general to think about who takes up a lot of space and time and how this affects the motivation of the rest of the group. This also includes being aware that all people do not have the same English level, and adapting the discussions to become more inclusive, as well as different people having different approaches to and/or being varyingly comfortable with activism. Possibly discussions on this could involve revisions of the safe space policy.

Awareness of gender stereotypes: A general discussion about gender-based stereotypical role-taking and sensibility would be valuable. It has been highlighted that some female/non-male EC members often take a step back and become the “care-takers” while some male members take roles of external and political leadership.

Awareness of how relationships within the EC and Office can affect the working situation: It would be valuable to analyse what to do in order to avoid that relationships within the EC and office affect the work condition for the EC.
**Awareness of responsibilities:** Some EC members feel they can’t do their job because they’re bypassed by the office. An idea could be to have a policy for the office to always include the relevant EC responsible in the contact with MOs in order to not create confusion and a feeling of lack of control.

**What has happened during the year?**
During the year, the AC was contacted regarding two main issues – one of a more organisational and one of a more political nature. The organisational issue, regarding questions on recruitment processes, was raised in June and didn’t lead to any action by the AC, after a lengthy period of no communication by the EC member raising the issue. The political issue was raised mid-October, concerning internal divisions on the topic of Israel-Palestine in the EC (and office) after 7 October 2023. The situation involved the EC, the Office and several member organisations.

**The Advisory committee’s actions during the year and recommendations**
After being contacted by EC members, SecGen, co-spokes and office members separately and following up with questions to get a better understanding of the situation, perspectives and hopes moving forward, the AC compiled and handed over a comprehensive document with recommendations to the EC and SecGen, building on several internal documents (IRPs, Safe space policy, and Inclusion plan). This was followed by two meetings in late October/early November, set up with the purpose to discuss the AC recommendations. Both meetings were attended by the EC (minus one EC member who had stepped down prior to the meeting) and the SecGen. The first meeting was moderated by an AC member.

The AC’s recommendations focused on three overarching issues relating to the discussions on FYEG’s approach to the Israel-Palestine issue and the connected statement:

1. **Decision making processes:** What consequences does a consensus culture have? How should the approach to formal/informal vetoes be formed? What other ways forward are there than a consensus culture in situations where a consensus cannot be found? What do the IRPs say - what processes are appropriate?

2. **Inclusion of marginalised groups:** What does the safe space policy say? What ways forward may there be to ensure better inclusion and better processes in the future?

3. **The role of an EC member:** How is the balance between being a representative of an MO vs. being a part of the EC approached? What is appropriate? Does the IRPs say anything? If not, how can this role better be discussed and defined?

The AC assessed that it was not requested to advise on how discussions should be held, the political content of the statement or individual EC members’ (right to make) individual statements on the issue and did not provide any advice on those issues.
In summary, the AC advised the EC to:

1. Table an IRP amendment that states what voting quorum should be applied to EC decisions.

2. Amend the delegation order with a new point under 1.3 Communications: “Approval of new comms items/positions”. The AC proposes that this comes with the delegation “1. EC, and/or 2. Spokespersons”. This gives the EC the ultimate right to have the last word on particularly controversial issues, but that it can decide to delegate the decision to the spokespersons.

3. Define how decision-making procedures lead to a vote, according to the voting quorum. This can be an IRP amendment or a provision of the delegation order. For example, can an EC member call for a vote at any time? Or another procedure?

4. Introduce practices of timed speaking slots – timed interventions will help moderate and support efforts for a balanced discussion.

5. On anticipated large discussions, consider different methods to allow everyone to express their thoughts clearly. Some people prefer to hold these discussions in conversation, others feel more comfortable being able to write down their thoughts. Discuss together as an EC the preferred practice e.g. whether Slack should or should not be used for large political discussions where the absence of seeing each other’s faces can lead to more aggravated exchanges. It could be worth EC members preparing their input for such discussions in advance, if having your points written before you will help you to express how you want. This can also help those in privileged positions to consider the language they are using, as well as to assist marginalised persons in explaining issues that require emotional labour. While it can not be done for the whole meeting, it will help the initial kick off for discussions.

6. Consider facilitation training if not already done so. Moderating political discussions can be intimidating for anyone, but with tools and guidance in mind it can help the discussions proceed in a safer environment. A trained facilitator can recognise when people are taking up space, potentially repeating points already made, and guide everyone to a conclusion.

7. Reflect on: Does the EC check in with each other before and after highly political discussions? This can help empathy for all involved, and allows a space for frustrations to be expressed in a safe environment without direct responses expected. It will help the EC to reconnect after difficult discussions, and reduce feelings of agitation.

8. Reflect on: Does the EC use a buddy system? Some find this to be useful, whereas others do not so it can be difficult to facilitate. However, a buddy can be a method for people to check in and express thoughts outside the meeting environment.

9. Reflect on: how does the EC approach difficult political debates on platforms with other members present (physical or online)? Invite EC to reflect on how their interventions may impact the safe space.
10. Revise the safe space and inclusion policy would be an idea to determine whether it still serves its purpose or if it needs updating, potentially led by the Racial Justice Task Force.

11. Consider finding an external facilitator to deliver a workshop on taking up space/inclusive practices in meetings. It should not be designed to call individuals out, but invite everyone for group and individual reflection. If done, the facilitator would have to be someone aware of racialised experiences and adequately compensated.

12. Clarify whether all EC members and other involved parties are on the same page regarding the role of an individual EC member (what it entails, in which situations an EC member is representing FYEG).

Consider clarifying this role in FYEG’s statutory documents, if unclear.

Ensure that future EC members are introduced to their role as representatives of FYEG at the beginning of their mandate.

While the AC acknowledges the EC led a busy mandate with the European elections, we recommend that the EC keeps these recommendations in mind to allow proper follow up of issues faced, to avoid them becoming side-lined. The AC recommends that the list of recommendations above is followed up on by the newly elected EC at the very start of the mandate, including a discussion on whether any of the points above need further follow-up.

One challenge for the AC this year was keeping up with approaches from EC and Office - mainly stemming from individuals. It was not always clear to the AC whether there was a request to clarify an issue or take any other concrete action. While we find it important to keep a low threshold for reaching out to the AC, it would ease the AC’s work if requests specified what action was expected from it. The outgoing AC recommends that the next AC begins its term with a discussion with EC and Office on the AC mandate and procedures for requests.