AR Activity Report 2023

Proposer: Executive Committee
Agenda item: 4. Reports and Plans

Motion text

Bringing Eastern European Young Greens Together

General Assembly

The first event of the year was the General Assembly (GA), the highest decision-making body of our network. It was be hosted by Ostra Zielen in Warsaw, Poland, in March 2023. Throughout the four days delegates engaged in political and organisational debates, adopted reports & plans, voted for amendments and elected the new Executive Committee.

This year's GA was exceptionally important for two reasons. We updated statutes with several amendments, including a major change of structure in membership - we opened the door for Eastern European organisations from the EU to be more involved members instead of partners. We also took a moment to reflect on our journey and celebrate CDN's 20th anniversary with a lively panel discussion. Following documents were adopted:Reports & Plans:Activity Report, Financial Report, Activity Plan, Financial Plan; Statutes and Internal Rules of Procedure we updated, Stautes, Internal Rules of Procedure; Three resolutions were approved:Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Eastern Europe, CDN-FYEG Relations Paper Revision, Resolution linked to Statutes Amendments 2 - concerning the change of the membership structure; Delegates also amended following documents:Political Platform, Safe Space Policy, Strategy Paper 2022-24. We also welcomed new Observer organisation - Neoi Prasinoi - Young Greens of Greece. While with updating statutes, Ostra Zieleń (Polish Young Greens) andProtests became member organisations. And finally, the General Assembly also elected the new Executive Committee.

Minutes of the General Assembly.

Annual Work Plan on Climate: Bring Your Tote Bag But Smash the System

The realization of the Work Plan has passed successfully, with core elements of the first activity, Eastern European Climate Summer Camp, being the facilitation of space where young activists met, learned from the facilitators and each other about climate crisis and related adverse effects, and shared and gained skills necessary for tackling these issues on different levels of influence (political, societal, educational...), hence contributing to the aim of the Work Plan, which was to equip the young people from Eastern Europe with better understanding of climate crisis and skills for mobilising the youth around the issue, in order to empower them to bring systemic change in their local communities and regions.

Summer Camp lasted for 7 days and was held in Ulcinj, Montenegro, hosted by URA. It gathered 36 participants from 17 countries and 8 prep team members from 6 countries.

The second part of the Work Plan were Local Actions or Eastern European Climate Campaigns, where representatives of participating organisations of the first activity organised local and regional Campaigns with topics and activities related to the Climate Crisis. Out of 10 applications involving 15 countries, 7 Campaigns were selected involving 10 countries of Eastern Europe:

The Campaign in Bosnia and Hercegovina conducted by Revolt focused on education of youth and their mobilisation for the fight against contributors to Climate Crisis. Utilising NFE methods, they organised an internal training, 3-day educational event, and two activist gatherings. New Regions from Belarus took the educational approach as well, organising 5 events (3 online, and 2 in person) which focused on sustainable practices and countering the adverse effects of Climate Crisis. Young Greens of Georgia focused on raising the knowledge base about climate crisis in Georgian language with the creation of 6 articles and 3 educational videos. Green Youth of Ukraine opted for a concrete and relevant problem-solution approach, organising awareness raising activities in elementary and high schools about the adverse effects of burning crops in autumn and proposing composting as solution. Czech Young Greens worked on mobilisation and green movement building around climate issues, organising meetings, and producing a publication. Protest from Latvia took an artistic approach and developed a performance which was played twice, coupled with complementary street actions. Young Greens of Greece joined the regional Campaign conducted by Green Youth of Serbia and MODOM (North Macedonia) who, together with two partner organisations from Croatia (Green Window) and Montenegro (URA), organised a pan-Balkan “Let’s TRAIN” Campaign, focusing on advocating for improved and more sustainable railway infrastructure in the Balkans, directed at stakeholders in their respective countries. The showcase of Local Actions results can be found HERE.

Regional Focus

Regional focus remains integral part of our work. On that account, we organised feminist cross-regional meetingfor young women activists in Green political parties. Furthermore, each EC member is assigned entire region and MOs within now and is responsible to organise quarterly catch-up calls. The cross-regional meeting brought together dozen women from Green parties and youth wings across Eastern Europe. We used non-formal methodology as guiding tool for the session that were led by team of volunteers thus creating safe environment with peer-to-peer learning principle. We also had expert invited to deliver 1/3 of sessions that was highly evaluated by the participants. Our focus equipped young women from political parties with necessary skills to actively take part in political processes. One of the prep team members run for the local council of Belgrade and was elected in December 2023. Within the framework of the event, we organised public panel discussion with women politicians, including co-chair of Green-Left Front and MP Biljana Djordjevic, from Serbia to discuss their experience, challenges and hopes - livestream is available HERE.

Contributing to Green Peace & Security Debate

During the six days of the Study Session "Green Perspectives on European Security" that was held in the European Youth Centre in Budapest in October 2023, co-organised by the Cooperation and Development Network Eastern Europe (CDN), Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG), and Green European Foundation (GEF), in cooperation with Youth Department of the Council of Europe, 34 participants from 17 European countries, together with a team of 5 people from 5 countries, discussed, exchanged experiences, and generated knowledge about the state of play regarding the security situation in Europe, questions of what security means to people from different backgrounds and what areas of life are impacted the most by the security concerns, what frames of reference we need in order to interpret current security issues, and what the Green movement has to offer in terms of the way policies are formed around concerns of European security. During the session, we primarily focused on the following objectives:

- Fostering intercultural dialogue between youth from different European countries by providing a space to discuss the concept of security intersectionally;
- Exploring the concept of security as at the intersection of diverse societal factors, and the effects of the interrelationship of security with various societal factors on policy decisions;
- Deepening the participants' understanding of the current state of affairs of security in Europe, existing approaches to the concept of security and their strengths and weaknesses, and perspectives and lived experiences of those outside their lived contexts;
- Exploring the role of young people to ensure sustainable and resilient security and peace in European countries, and the tools and solutions at their disposal to do so, such as Human Rights Education and collective action;
- Through these explorations, working towards concrete outputs, such as a toolkit, that set out common learnings and understandings gained to act as a referential resource for future actions and initiatives of FYEG, CDN, their respective member organisations, and other organisations represented centred on these themes;
- Motivating participants to push organisations, be it FYEG, CDN, their respective member organisations, or other organisations they are involved in, to consider security issues on their agenda and further develop the topic in their platforms.

Being organised by both CDN and FYEG, this Study Session provided a unique opportunity for gathering of young people involved in the green movement from both (traditionally understood) Western and Eastern Europe, and engage them in discussions related to current concerns around European security, as well as for fostering a dialogue between young people coming from different political, geographical, economic, and social realities, and carrying with them a different set of experiences and historical baggage. The group saw a positive and fruitful

setting of the common ground, and common goals to pursue, while acknowledging the diverse perspectives and unequal needs of people from different parts of Europe.

With a common vision in mind: that of a peaceful, prosperous, cooperative, and green Europe, participants and the team behind the Session produced the Toolkit, to serve as a guiding document for organisations and individuals seeking to bring this vision into reality.

Professionalisation and growing internal capacities

Looking inwards and ensuring relevance and sustainability of the organisation was high on the priority of 2024 working year. As planned, we organised less in-person activities while focused to improve the quality of the events. We managed to this by better preparation, smooth logistics, as well as better content with invited experts to deliver several sessions.

There was a restructure in office and office assistant got promoted to Finance and Office manager that contributed to improved management and clearer division of roles with Secretary General. At the same time, we did not renew position of Project Assistant due to lack of relevance and need. The process of restructure is ongoing. 2023 was the first year during which we started fully using new accounting software that improved financial management as well as transparency and accountability.

In order to improve and better coordinate the work of the Executive Committee, we adopted “Delegation order” that outlines decision making authority for individual assigned EC responsibles. This has significantly improved the effectiveness of the work of the EC, collaboration between staff-EC and overall health of organisational management. Simultaneously, we developed more detailed Task List of the Executive Committee that includes all responsibilities throughout the year with descriptions that enables better understanding of their work by EC members. Task list corresponds with delegation order.

During 2023 General Assembly, we started the working on a new, four-year Strategy. We heavily invested in this process, organised strategic planning meeting attached to the GA to ensure its relevance for the MOs. Taking the report from SPM into account, the Secretary General led the process and together with an EC representative worked on the initial draft, which was subsequently reviewed and approved by the entire Executive Committee. In the second phase, the draft was shared with MOs and Partners with a survey to gather feedback, guiding further revisions. Simultaneously, Secretary General organised several meetings with stakeholders including in-person feedback session during Study Session in Budapest attended by 10 participants. Based on the input, Secretary General and a designated EC member further refined the strategy. The Strategy is ready for the amendments and final adoption by Member Organisations on the 2024 General Assembly.

Finally, process of updating Visual Identity and Website starting by the end of 2023 and finished in March 2024 from which CDN has a new logo, visual identity, and well-working website.

Building alliances and Networking

CDN continued the good cooperation with Young European Greens. We had joint study session "Green Perspectives on European Security". Throughout the year we took part in the FYEG activities (General Assembly, Summer Camp) as well as provided space for FYEG participants on our events. We planned the cooperation in the activities for 2024 (European Train Tour, Alter-COP) and scheduled the joint EC-EC meeting during the European Green Party Congress in Lyon, February 2024. Following the 2023 CDN GA decision, we revised the relations paper that was published in May 2023.

The EC and Office were invited for the European Green Party Congress in Lyon, February 2024 even though our role is limited as an observer the meeting brings different stakeholders together with whom it is possible to organise side meetings. We participated in other events organised by EGP and other European Green organisations: Secretary General took part in European Ideas Lab organized by EGP and Greens/EFA in March and together with two EC members in European Green Academy in November.

Other Green stakeholders remained on our radars. As the side event of our study session we met with Hungarian Green mayor, MPs and youth. We did not organise a study visit in the country where we do not currently have a member organisation and are underrepresented in our network – we moved it to 2024.

We also increased CDN's engagement with other stakeholders with whom we share basic values. Secretary General took part in the Consultative Meeting of Council of Europe and in the two Ulex training.

Executive Committee Work

All of the activities that are explained in the document are enabled by the work of the Executive Committee and office. Throughout the year we organised 4 live EC Meetings during which the EC decided on their responsibilities and tasks; discuss upcoming and asses past activities; map and establish the topical priorities for the next year's projects; share takeaways from the regional calls and feedback from the members; make other relevant decisions.

As mentioned in the strategy document, we want to strengthen the position of Treasurer within the EC. Based on the inputs of the 2022 treasurer meeting, we implemented the recommendations such as a financial overview during the EC meetings by the treasurer, closer communication between the treasurer and Secretary General; higher involvement of the treasurer in decision-making regarding the budgets. Treasurer visit took place attached to the second Executive Committee Meeting in May.

We adopted the important documents regulating the work of EC, namely the Task Delegation and Communication Strategy.

Digital Activities

Throughout the year CDN published 9 statements, disseminated the resolutions voted on 2023 GA, promoted young green candidates in elections in Poland and

Serbia and hosted two episodes of ElectionVisions on Turkey and Poland as well as scheduled the next episode on Serbia in January 2024. We continued the open space for others to suggest online activity that resulted in organisation of webinar on the relevant political issues ("Increasing russian influence in Georgia while waiting for EU candidate status" in August).

CDN started creation of social media campaign focusing on sanctions on companies still operating in Russia. The videos being part of the campaign were recorded during the study session and the campaign was scheduled for January and February 2024.