



Office Report 2009/10

This report is a summary of what has been achieved by the office for the last year since the last GA in Maastricht. Accompanied to this descriptive part you will find evaluation of it and further observations related to my mandate of 2 years.

1 Welcome to the Office!

This part is aimed at describing the various tasks achieved by the office. It's mostly descriptive.

1.1 Working with the EC Internships & Employees

I have participated in every phone conferences and meetings. Most of the time taking minutes, participating to the discussions and providing requested and needed information.

This year has been particularly challenging as most of the EC members did not have the experience in working in a board, for an international organisation and with low acquaintance to the FYEG work and insights. Guides, knowledge transfers, explanatory sessions were provided and repeated but this was not enough to enable an EC working efficiently from the beginning. It is recommended in the future to improve the guides and other measures to ensure a good transfer of all knowledges needed such as proposal of Advisory committee extension, joint ECM with former and new members.

Additionally to this lack of experience, the sense of responsibility of board members that can meet physically only 5 times a year in average was also a big issue. If once the office does not play its role of back up, ensuring therefore the functioning of the organisation or activities, it might have had a direct effect on the board to increase its awareness and act more as persons in charge and coordinating. Unfortunately this is a very difficult choice to assess as it will have for only consequence the cancellation of this activity.

The main issue of the Sec-Gen towards the EC is the frustration of not being in the board, elected by the GA and not being able to have a formal voting right in decisions while knowing more about the organisation. It's a difficulty that is normally balanced when only the EC is acting responsible and is able and willing to keep an overview of the activities. If this is not the case then you have the impression to have a classroom of pupils to take care instead of a team you are partner and working with.

1.2 Administrative Part

This part of the work is certainly the most important one, not only for the long term running but also in time consuming. If someone does not know what an office work means in a NGO, this person will just never understand by him/herself. There is no mystery solution for it. Every small tasks takes more time than you would imagine. As requested by the EC, I started providing them with a list of the tasks achieved per day every week. Even though I was detailing what I was doing, some EC members had still difficulties to concretely realise the type of workload in quality and quantity. This is unfortunately something that the last 5 office coordinators/sec-gen have been struggling with some EC members not enough experienced. I would strongly recommend to continue doing such list. It is very helpful in the sense that since the workload is high in the office it is difficult to take the distance enough from your work to be able to have a fair analyse and move ahead. This allows you to compare your To Do List from the Monday and your check list on Friday. It is also time-consuming to do such report but has an important added-value in auto-analysing your work.

Financial Tasks:

This year was very difficult regarding this part of the office work. Battal Erdogan provided the office with not detailed accountancy files only in September and explained at the same the accountancy system of FYEG. Unfortunately these explanations were not sufficient for the new part-timer to do the accountancy of 2009 properly and many bills and receipts were missing. After the explanations of the system done by Judith, member of the Financial Control Committee and former FYEG Sec-Gen, (explanations not provided to Bruno when the transfer happened) the accountancy for the last 2 years became the first priority of the office. The whole accountancy for the last two years and its system that improved was possible by the efforts of everyone in the office (including Anna and Zofia) and the Financial Control Committee (Pieter-Jan and Judith). However for the future and in a financially ideal situation it is better to require to the services of an external accountant doing the bookkeeping on a monthly basis and provide in the end of the financial year all financial statements. This external cost can be lowered by having the part-timer doing it but it will bring security, the possibility to know at any time exactly what is the situation of the budget, the liquidity and thus manage in a better way the expenses and realisation of projects.

Office Tasks:

- Responding to a huge amount of emails everyday for any kind.
- Regular correspondence with European agencies and institutions.
- Providing help to write and check grant applications and their final reports.
- Ensuring the legal base of the federation and doing all the obliged legal work (taxes, registration, etc...)
- Issue of the office's location which is really problematic at this moment.

1.3 Activities' involvement

The office provides usually all practical services for the well-functioning and preparation of every activities. However with only 1.5 employees it is not possible to carry the writing of application form and its report. Help and expertise are provided to finalise these documents, however if nobody from the EC takes care of the coordination and writing of all these documents, it endangers seriously the possibility of this activity. It was very disappointing and difficult from a professional point of view to see EC members not taking the responsibility of activity's organisation and thus coordination. The responsibility is on EC hands and is not the one from the office even though help and expertise are provided.

COP15 Training

I was part of the PT in charge of practicalities, some moderation and other content-wise tasks for the preparation.

COP15

Bruno and Fabio were constituting the office. All the preparatory work, fund-raising, coordination

beforehand, practicalities management and final report and evaluation was done by the office. Fabio spent all his time working on this project and provided some help in the content preparation too. Even though the preparation started only end of August, this project was a success for FYEG. The workload was too high for a smooth run of the office therefore for the future it is highly recommended to start the preparation of such event at least 7 or 8 months before. Indeed the office had to take care of the coordination beforehand but also during the event. Too often EC members were acting as simply young greens while there were supposed to act as young green in charge!

FYEG Future Meetings 1 & 2:

I was part of the PT in charge of practicalities.

Green Eco seminar:

I only followed the preparations and did financial operations. Anna worked very hard on the preparation, coordination and running of this seminar. Together with a PT made out of the Green Eco WG, she managed to make this project a success. The challenge is now to keep this WG motivated and enthusiastic to continue organising such events.

1.4 Representation and Networking

This is the part of the work that concerns the political mandate that is given by the GA delegates to the newly elected Sec-Gen. Unfortunately this is the smallest part of the work making the election at the GA a less important issue in the end.

CDNEE:

Constantly in touch with the CDNEE EC and Office for several project organisation or reports and various other tasks. It is very important to keep a good and close contact with CDN as their role is very important and relevant for the development of common project, receive more detailed info about MO in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and spread our common values.

European Youth Forum

- In general: if there is a request from the YFJ the Sec-Gen is either responding directly or ask for the decision of the EC if needed and/or requested.
- Political Party Youth Organisation: There is a meeting with the Sec-Gen of every European youth political organisation every two months. Usually it is a 2 hours long meeting to talk about European activities of the YFJ and/or cooperation with other PPYO. In practice this year has been focused on the creation of the Intergroup on Youth in the European Parliament and the Citizen Initiative.
- Other meetings: The Sec-Gen is going to various meetings if there are interesting for FYEG and if nobody from the Executive Committee cannot or do not want. The only meeting really important for the Sec-Gen to attend is the EU Funds information Day where it is possible to meet the persons who are dealing with the application for projects and administrative grants FYEG receives. It is also possible and very essential that either the part-timer or the Treasurer attend this meeting.

EGP

- In general: I meet the office staff, the EGP Sec-Gen often non-formally by passing by their office and so on.
- Councils: I have been participating in the Council in October (in March it was in parallel with the FYEG Future meeting 2) as a person taking the minutes with another EC member for the EGP in order to get in for free and get travel costs reimbursed. This enables FYEG to have a better visibility, lobby better and promote its activities. This informal discussions around meetings can also be helpful for the MO as we meet delegates of National party.
- Financial Fraud: I have been in constant touch with the EGP and EC as soon as FYEG, EGP and GGEP started coordinate the actions to handle this situation.

Green/EFA Group in the EP

Having the office in Brussels is a good choice to be able to fundraise more efficiently and to get an answer quickly from all these green people working in the European institutions. I usually meet them regularly and this year the cooperation was done on the COP15 and a conference on Youth unemployment and Poverty organised prior the EGP council.

It was very hard to fund-raise for the COP15 but with the support of other green partners it went easier. In contrary the cooperation on the spot with MEPs was not well coordinated. For instance it would have been the least to have walked together during the big action day.

With the initiative of the GGEP political adviser on social affairs and employment, the GGEP asked the cooperation of FYEG in participating to this conference prior the EGP council meeting. It was great opportunity for FYEG to organise an internal meeting on the side, to network with other young greens not familiar with FYEG and to show the youth face of the Green movement to the GGEP.

These two events had improved significantly the relations with the GGEP as they could see an FYEG active, useful and various.

Other youth organisations

During various meetings we meet always various representatives of youth organisations whom are interesting to know to keep in touch in case of common future activities.

European Institutions

It happens so many times the Sec-Gen has to be in touch with youth department of the European Commission and the Council of Europe in order to fix small problems or whatever.

1.5 Internships & Employees

Through our internships, we give youth a unique possibility of being exposed to the European political environment. We intend to increase their knowledge thereof, but at the same time we stimulate them to utilise this opportunity to raise the visibility and influence of youth in European decision-making processes. Furthermore, FYEG benefits from the input of interns, who we normally give the freedom to develop their own initiatives and suggest organisational and strategic improvements. We aim to recruit our interns in a gender and geographically balanced fashion, meaning we attract on a rotating basis participants from Western, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. Therefore, our internships also have an intercultural element, in addition to individual capacity building. For this year, we had two interns to work on the following issues:

The first intern (October-December), Fabio from Italy, worked mainly on preparing all FYEG activities to the COP15, its legal and policy positions, arranging practicalities and assisting the Secretary General. He participated as well as Official Delegate during the COP15 and had as main responsibility to coordinate and provide support to other delegates.

The second intern (October-April), Anna from Ukraine, worked mainly on preparing all FYEG positions on Green Economy, drafting application forms to grant activities in this field and setting up a Working Group on Green Economy for FYEG. She also helped sometimes in assisting the Secretary General for financial and accountancy work. She finished her internship by coordinating and organising the seminar on Green Economy for beginners in Serbia. Her internship was divided in 2 parts due to the fact that she was working half time for the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament.

We were supposed to have two more interns during the last year but unfortunately during the last GA in Maastricht, Esra had to end her contract due to a very serious family issue, it was then too late to hire an intern as the summer break was approaching. Finally after Fabio an other intern should have followed but with the discovery of the not-done accountancy for the last 2 years and the possibility of a fraud, we did not take the risk to increase any expenses.

This year one of the failure is that we did not manage to improve this badly paid position to a European Voluntary Service which will allow us for the same investment to provide accommodation, food, language course and pocket money. The application will have to be re-written and adapted to FYEG European work.

Advices will be asked to other European NGO that are hosting volunteers under the EVS programme.

As part of the criteria agreed with the administrative grant from the European Commission we had to have 1.5 employees in order to receive the full amount. In September a first part timer was hired, Tomek Kupka, from Poland. It was a difficult situation for him to do the accountancy of 2009 and even more difficult due to the fact that he did not have experience in NGO accounting while it was a needed employment criteria. In parallel he helped in the drafting of the application of the Study session on Gender issue for 2010. In January he had to resign for personal reasons and Zofia Hawranek, from Poland too, was hired beginning of March 2010. Since she entered in the office the main tasks of Zofia have been to helping with the accountancy of 2008 and 2009, doing the one for 2010, creating the first newsletter and helping drafting the application for the FYEG spring break 2011 and other administrative tasks.

Finally my human resources management improved by having more regular evaluation meeting (weekly basis instead of monthly) and by briefing the worker of the challenges and objectives to achieve for the week. It increased their sense of responsibility and let the place for any personal initiative that could be helpful also for FYEG.

To conclude this section, being Sec-Gen has been a position where the work is concentrating on too many little things from the administration or finances sides. This part is essential for the functioning of the organisation but is always difficult to be understood from some volunteers and among them EC members. This must be explained several times in the beginning and on a weekly basis to give the most accurate information in order for non-experienced people to realise what all these tasks are and the time that it consumes. However this is a reality that can be understood only if both the Sec-Gen provides with these insight explanations and if EC members are doing the effort to understand. I personally was disappointed sometimes by the not-productive reactions from some EC members, having difficulties to understand, problem of mis-interpretation and other complexes that goes beyond my capacities of analysis. Activities are the second main area of work of the Sec-Gen, this is also the core purpose of FYEG and thus it is very interesting and motivating to work in this area. For the past two years it was however sometimes very difficult to have to run after EC members to make sure the reports were done on time and properly. For any project I had to check final reports and application to correct mistakes and finalise the content to make it well adapted to the grant providers' conditions. An EC member and moreover PT members should not be reminded to run an activity by coordinating it until the end of the final report production. The sense of responsibility should be automatic for the persons in charge, unfortunately this is not the case and especially when you face persons not taking this responsibility on, the Sec-Gen and the office end up by working on this activity not to make it happening and successful but to save it, which is absolutely not the right way to go. The political work is the 3rd pillar of responsibilities the Sec-Gen has, after the office management and activity expertise. As working for a political organisation and having a political mandate should give to the Sec-Gen the possibility to do some political work such as following European issues, networking with other organisations, participating in various meetings and working together with the EC to the political development of FYEG. Unfortunately this rarely happens as too many administrative and activities tasks are loaded on the office. This position and the way the EC has been working with made the political work nearly non-existent and was source also of tiredness in the end. The burden should be better divided among the office and the EC, not only a few people should behave as "activist consumers" waiting for the work to be done and just show up at meeting or events with the only duty to do a speech and moderate a discussion. This last part of my work was one of the most difficult one and several times this was explained without any real commitment and help from the EC side.

2 FYEG development from 2008 onwards

After having been working for more than 2 years and a half in the office, I had been able to observe some evolutions and assess some permanent needs of development for the organisation. This is of course only a personal point of view for which I am sure I will be able to improve after taking more distance from the desk! In a non-necessary logical manner I expose a few main issues that have been part of the development of FYEG.

- Expansion to the East: in 2008 the Slovakian, Georgian and Armenian young greens became candidate members of FYEG. in 2009 FYEG welcomed new organisation from the Caucasus and the Balkans. Stronger relationships with youngsters from the East part of Europe have been reinforced with the work of FYEG sister organisation CDNEE (Cooperation and Development Network Eastern Europe). Within FYEG there are various political and cultural differences and sometimes it can happen that some organisations have the tendency to imitate what is done in the West without developing the principles of political ecology and youth activism in an adapted way to their social environment. Meanwhile Western European young greens are still surprised by and have some difficulties to understand the difference of mentalities with their friends on the other side of the continent. Huge differences can be noticeable between the way young greens are acting in the West and in the East. It's mainly due to strong cultural differences and different ways of development of the NGO sector and the political sphere. It has been the focus in 2009 to tackle these issues and even though this is a process that will take several years, we could notice positive consequences from some of our activities such as the summer camp which was designed to make the participants bringing up these difference by themselves, that way making them aware of them and start discussing them. Also the COP15 event during 2 weeks gathered so many young greens that for several days they had the opportunity to work together on one objective, discovering by themselves their differences and learning from each other without any complex or tendency to copy each other. These differences must be a source of richness and diversity, there is not only one way to live politics and animate it by actions and discussions.
- Number of activities: more activities were organised in 2008 than before (20% more than 2007, 40% more than 2006) less activities were organised in 2009 (30% less than 2008). FYEG activities became more diverse, including new forms of activities such as trainings, participation in several short meetings and other green events. This evolution matches better some expectations from lots of young greens. Entering in the European world through seminar, camp or actions is considered as a big step for young activists. The second sphere of volunteers that FYEG can spread its virus to is composed mainly of young green already very active in their organisation and have little time left. Therefore it is relevant to organise shorter and more specific activities. Behind the scene FYEG is evolving in a specific grant arena where there is lots of financial possibilities but that require so much administrative work (in constant increase btw) and very long time planning (7-12 months). If at a certain moment there is a lack of involvement or long term planning coming from the office or the EC, the activity load of FYEG will be affected from half to one year after. It is therefore extremely essential to follow an activity structure that is mostly led by the various deadline grant providers are setting.
- Representation of FYEG: We took more part in various meetings organised by the European Youth forum, other youth organisations (JEF, LYMEC, EFAY, FoEY, EYCM, YOUNGO, etc...) increasing our visibility and legitimacy as we not only attend these meetings but be really active. The participation to international events boosted the FYEG representation and active role in platform of NGOs very relevant to FYEG and its activities. The major improvement is FYEG representation and role within the European Green family. With a permanent representation in the European Green Party Committee and a voting right during each of its Council meeting we managed to make adopted one resolution on youth participation and representation in the European Parliament and one policy paper on the European Migration Policy in 2008, only one year after having become its official youth wing. After a successful 2008, in 2009 the EGP Board changed to welcome more youth-wing friendly people. This has extremely improved our relations and gave the essential ground for real cooperation. FYEG continued also to stay active by proposing for each council meetings various resolutions or policy papers and managed to pass some of its ideas through.

- Cooperation with other organisations: With the exchange in Slovenia on Regionalism, FYEG managed to create a successful cooperation with the European Free Alliance Youth. With the COP14 and 15 participation at different levels FYEG developed fruitful relations with other NGO and not only in the youth field. In 2009 the number of activities did not increase but its variety did. Additionally to FYEG main common activities such as training, seminar and exchanges, young greens from different states managed to coordinate actions together and to participate in international conferences or events (NATO summit and COP15). Now FYEG is playing an active role in the European Youth Climate Movement, is about to become member of the YOUNGO constituency group in the UNFCCC and increased some relations and contacts with youth NGO in the Middle-East and in Africa. The challenge and opportunity for a near future would be to enhance enough enthusiasm and motivation from young greens to follow and enjoy themselves developing project among these networks.
- More political: Indeed after 3 years being the youth wing of the EGP, FYEG increased its political level within its activities. This is also shown during various meetings when the youngsters give more importance to political speech rather discussion more focused on affinity. The last proof of this evolution is the type of activity organised, international events and institutional participation and representation increased the success of FYEG activities. FYEG has started becoming a good and effective channel to give the young people a voice where the decisions are taken and this is very much appreciated. This topic has however a dark side that still remains unsolved. The political voice and stand of FYEG are still only looking like statements of a boring institution. The main factor explaining these difficulties to shape a European Green voice is the structure of Europe itself as a group of nations rather than a whole entity which has as a main consequence a difficult access for anyone, including young greens, to a European sense of belonging and perception limited to states' borders due to the narrow minded public debate and its media treatment. This is a long term process of tearing down the nation-states borders in our heads to leave space for other realities than the one that it used to be for centuries. One way that is the most efficient would be the communication, developing an attractive communication giving the sense of curiosity to read and see what others are living. The Ecospinter online is a very good first step and needs to be followed by others. One of my objective when I presented myself two years ago was to help developing FYEG to be more political. One of the solutions that I was foreseeing to put in place was to provide a source of information on European topics. Unfortunately the position of Sec-Gen with these resources did not leave me enough time to take care of this idea. I believe that receiving on a regularly basis a selected sample of European news targeted to young greens would help the development of a truly European awareness.

This old Europe of Nations, the high turn-over of volunteers and persons in charge, the youth behaviour highly versatile and the long distance connections are refraining and even breaking the development of our organisation. These difficulties challenge every new comer in FYEG and are source of many frustrations and disappointment. At this European level and with our current resources things take more time to evolve, develop and organise. It is necessary to acknowledge that FYEG lives in an environment that is too slow for the energy of young people. Very easily initiatives end up regularly to try to overcome these difficulties by changing structures, pushing away members we are disappointed with, inventing new rules, new procedures and everything wrapped-up in a nicely and friendly discourse. These excitements are source of interesting ideas but is not the only path to follow and ensure long term development of FYEG. There is a need at the same time of stability and fast adaptation. The stability must be present to ensure the original objectives of FYEG, to avoid any generational gap and non-coherent political reorientations. This can only be achieved firstly by observing a certain regularity in the activities proposed, the activities concept paper that was adopted 4 years ago is still relevant to the needs of the organisation. Secondly to ensure a permanent run of the organisation not depending on a handful number of volunteers or even a lonely office, it is more than necessary to increase the autonomy of other active sources such as the working groups, the internal network and most of all the cross-border initiatives, which are easier, less scary and closer to the interest of individuals and localities. These decentralisation of activities and specific groups will motivate ten times more its members and create activities that are adapted to the needs of the young greens active at a certain time. Finally to get rid of this feeling that European level and affairs are the business of experienced activists and to be aware of the European dimension that influences 80% of our life, the

communication of FYEG must become a core priority. An attractive and easily accessible communication will reach and engage more youngsters, avoiding to see coming and leaving activists without increasing its base. To conclude FYEG is not a company that provides services to its member but a cooperative that provides an attractive place of exchange and creativity among its members. In the meantime the needs of the young greens must be answered.